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MEDIA RELEASE

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Newman backing a loser

In announcing its intention to financially support the coal industry, the Newman government is demonstrating it is prepared to back a loser, according to North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) Coordinator Wendy Tubman.

‘The market continues to demonstrate that demand for coal is drying up, India’s Minister for Energy has announced that India is unlikely to import any more coal in 2-3 years, the banks are walking away from the industry, the world is transitioning to renewable energy, and yet our government is proposing to pour hundreds of millions of dollars into this dying industry.

‘This makes no sense. It is like a backing a horse after the owner, the trainer, the jockey and the vet have all said it hasn’t a hope – and backing it with other people’s money.

‘This is a sign of a government that is too small to admit that it was wrong; that what may have seemed like a good idea some years back is no longer a good idea.

‘This proposed corporate welfare for an already heavily subsidised industry, will destroy good agricultural land, use vast amounts of Queensland’s water, result in industrialisation of the Great Barrier Reef coast and contribute massively to climate change, the greatest threat to the Reef according to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. As was made clear at the G20 last weekend, it will also make Australia a pariah in world circles.

‘And this is not a case of jobs or royalties for Queensland. Queensland Treasury and Australian Bureaus of Statistics data show that the coal industry employs one tenth of the number of people in the Queensland health industry and accounts for just 4% of Queensland government revenue. At the same time, the industry is working to cut Australian jobs, with driverless trucks, increased mechanisation and the use of foreign workers.

‘To suggest that the infrastructure will be multi-user is misleading. Adani have already said that they would use a rail link from the Galilee Basin to Abbot Point 24/7’ Ms Tubman said. ‘This proposal is to help out Indian company Adani and save government face, no more no less.’

‘There is nothing in this for the people of Queensland. The government claims that royalties from the project would allow the later building of much-needed hospitals, schools and roads. Rather than gamble the money on an unlikely return, why not invest those taxpayers’ funds into hospitals, schools and so on now?’ Ms Tubman said.

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