

MEDIA RELEASE



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Environmental engineers urge Minister to re-examine Galilee Basin proposal

The Sustainable Engineering Society has today written to federal Environment Minister the Hon Greg Hunt MP recommending that Waratah Coal's Galilee Basin proposal be re-examined on environmental impact grounds.

“This proposal presents clear and significant risks to surface and underground water, vegetation and ecosystems, pollution from dust, gas and mine tailings and fugitive methane emissions. The public needs assurance that these matters have been comprehensively addressed,” said Sustainable Engineering Society Chair Dr Alice Howe.

“With the rail line, Abbott point terminal dredging and Kevin’s corner project already approved, the combined mining operations pose a real threat to the Great Barrier Reef and will add significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.

“Our concerns range beyond the domestic effects of this proposal. When Galilee coal is exported and burned, the greenhouse gas emissions could be up to 705 metric tonnes per annum, or 1.5 times Australia’s total emissions level.

“Environmental engineering is the integration of science and engineering principles to improve the natural environment. Environmental engineers are also involved in removing problems caused by past activity, including creating solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change.

“As the world looks for alternative energy sources and a transition to a low carbon economy, environmental engineers have questioned the wisdom of major new investment in coal mining in the absence of major investment in low-carbon alternatives.

“Australia desperately needs a viable long-term plan to transition to a low carbon economy. Sustainable technologies to provide base-load power are available now. These renewable energy technologies can be implemented by the engineering community if there is the political will to do so.

“The Sustainable Engineering Society believes the Australian Government must show leadership and move forward with low emission technologies as an alternative to expanding Australian coal mining operations,” said Dr Howe.

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Available for Interview:

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