

## **Support the Galilee Basin (Coal Prohibition) Bill 2018**

While Australian Federal governments of different political ideologies have been disputing the shape of policies to tackle Australia's emissions over the last decade, the world has been growing warmer by the year, weather events such as droughts, bush fires and cyclones have been becoming ever more extreme and the world's oceans warmer and hence more acidic. Our treasured Great Barrier Reef has been subjected to greater stresses by the year and is struggling to survive in the short term, let alone the long term.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, in recent weeks has affirmed yet again the need for governments all around the world to take concerted action to reduce carbon emissions much more drastically in order to avoid temperature increases of more than 1.5 degrees, and still our Federal political parties cling on to the promised wealth that comes to Australia from coal exports.

The plan to mine the Galilee Basin hangs in the balance: the water triggers that should have alerted the Coalition to the dangers of allowing the proposed Adani coal mine to draw down enormous quantities of water have failed to gain the attention of our current Minister for the Environment Melissa Price, while the Queensland Labour government has allocated this mega mine sixty years of unlimited free water for its operations, and royalty holidays to encourage its proposed construction.

How can this be possible in a world that estimates water as the most precious resource of the future, the resource that may, sadly, spark the beginnings of future wars? The lure of export dollars is real, but the need to preserve our precious water resources for Australian farmers and the Australian people now, and for future generations, exerts a far greater pull. When those easy export dollars are spent and the wetlands of the Great Artesian Basin are drained, devastating not only agriculture but our rich biodiversity, who will take the blame for this most reckless sacking of Australia's true wealth?

Larissa Waters' bill deserves the support of all long-sighted and responsible ministers. Opening up the Galilee Basin to coal mining- a move that represents spending an enormous 15% of the whole world's future carbon budget, the volume of emissions that can be added to the atmosphere before we

reach total climate catastrophe- is a step too far that our political leaders cannot take.

Australia has to say “No” to new coal mines because ignoring the clear science which points to catastrophe is too wicked an alternative. No job, no miraculous pouring in of export dollars to win votes can justify such reckless behaviour. New jobs outside coal will be created- they are already being created- and Australia has to take up its rightful position at the head of enlightened thought on energy, not at its cringing, tail-end of wilful climate change deniers.

Margaret Roberts

Volunteer, 350 Canberra