

## Australian Greens' Additional Comments

1.1 The Australian Greens support the majority report and all of the recommendations of the Senate Standing Committee on Economics inquiry into the governance and operation of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF).

1.2 The Australian Greens encourage the NAIF to engage far more comprehensively with communities in Northern Australia and to consider supporting approaches to the development of Northern Australia beyond the traditional and often outdated and unsustainable suggestions of mines and dams. The suggestions provided by the Environment Centre NT in their response to a question taken on notice at the Committee's Darwin hearing give good examples of alternative approaches which can provide more sustainable long-term benefits to communities in Northern Australia.<sup>1</sup>

1.3 While the Australian Greens recognise that the NAIF is not directly responsible for environmental assessment and approvals, the current reality is that our federal and state environment laws are inadequate and need significant and urgent reform. As such the NAIF should be required to give some degree of consideration of the potential environmental and climate impact of any project as part of assessing its suitability for investment.

1.4 The Australian Greens note the large number of submissions that raised concerns regarding the possibility of the NAIF providing funding to the Adani Group for the North Galilee Basin Rail Project. This example provides good grounds for requiring the NAIF to include a suitable person test as part of its assessment processes.

1.5 This could be done via means such as those outlined in the Environment and Infrastructure Legislation Amendment (Stop Adani) Bill 2017 introduced by former Senator Larissa Waters. This Bill is currently before the Senate, and requires the NAIF to assess whether an entity is a suitable person for the purposes of providing financial assistance for Northern Australia economic infrastructure; and provides that in undertaking an assessment, the facility consults with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and the Australian Crime Commission.

1.6 The Australian Greens share the concern raised in several submissions that public comments of support for the Adani Carmichael mine project by current and former government ministers, including the minister responsible for the NAIF, Senator Canavan, has the potential to prejudice the decisions of the NAIF and place unreasonable political pressure on their assessment process.

1.7 The NAIF must consider the Australian government's policy commitment to the Paris Agreement, both its current domestic pledges and international goals under

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1 Environment Centre NT, Additional Documents; Answers to Questions on Notice 7.

that agreement. As such, the NAIF should be prohibited from financing infrastructure primarily to be used to extract, refine, transport or burn thermal coal or gas, as recommended by The Australia Institute in its submission.

1.8 The Australian Greens, while supportive of Recommendation 4, consider that it would be appropriate to specify that the expanded eligibility criteria for the NAIF board include expertise from the *environmental or climate* sciences.

### **Recommendation 1**

**1.9 That the Environment and Infrastructure Legislation Amendment (Stop Adani) Bill 2017 be passed by the Parliament so that a suitable person test is added to the NAIFs consideration of a project.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**1.10 That the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Act 2016 be amended to require NAIF to consider the Australian government's policy commitment to the Paris Agreement, the climate impacts of a project and to prohibit the NAIF from financing infrastructure which would facilitate the extraction, refinement, transportation or burning of thermal coal or gas.**

**Senator Andrew Bartlett**

**Senator for Queensland**