



**CITY LEADERS SLAM**  
**ENVIRONMENT REVIEW**  
**MINE**  
**GAMES**  
**RISK**  
**JOBS**

**CLARE ARMSTRONG**

THE State Government has been accused of jeopardising hundreds of North Queensland jobs by allowing conservationists with “deep hostility” towards coal

to review one of Adani’s final environmental plans.

Townsville community leaders and peak industry bodies are outraged at the appointment of an apparent anti-coal environmentalist to review Adani’s black-throated

finch management plan, needed for its Carmichael mine in the Galilee Basin to progress. But Environment Minister Leeanne Enoch rejected claims the Government was treating Adani unfairly.

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# Mining jobs at risk

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Ms Enoch said the Department of Environment and Science’s decision to seek an external review of the finch management plan was “free of political interference”.

Director of the Threatened Species Recovery Hub Brendan Wintle has been engaged to lead the review, and is able to appoint up to six people on a panel to examine Adani’s plan.

Prof Wintle last year participated in a “climate strike” and has authored several articles critical of governments using biodiversity offsets to allow development.

A spokeswoman for Adani said the company held “serious concerns” about the independence of the review, which had been understood to involve several Hub researchers.

An email, seen by the *Bulletin*, sent to Adani by the DES on January 18 said the review was “being undertaken by the Threatened Species Recovery Hub of the National Environmental Science Program and

led by its national director, Professor Brendan Wintle”.

Prof Wintle yesterday indicated other researchers from the Hub were not involved, which was later confirmed by the DES – in contrast to the directive emailed to Adani.

Townsville Mayor Jenny Hill said the Queensland Gov-

ernment needed to demonstrate the process was “fair and transparent”.

“If the news reports are correct, it is very concerning that a group with very limited local representation and deep hos-

tility to the coal industry holds such enormous power over the future of the project,” she said.

“This process needs to be fair to North Queensland, and the Queensland Government must ensure it is accountable to the whole region – not just the environmental movement.”

Townsville Enterprise chairman Kevin Gill said shifting the goalposts for Adani could negatively affect other projects.

“Our concern is that it could

set a precedent for the multi-billion (dollar) pipeline of projects that have already been through rigorous approval processes, as well as sending an unfavourable message to potential investors,” he said.

Burdekin LNP MP Dale Last said Townsville’s State Government representatives needed to stand up to their colleagues in Brisbane.

“The three Labor members in Townsville need to lay their cards on the table and if they support the project then they need to take that

message very loudly to Brisbane and demand the Premier support them.”

Townsville Labor MP Scott Stewart said the community wanted to see the process “move forward”.

“We just want to get this resolved and we don’t need to have the finger pointing, people just want to see this resolved,” he said.

A DES spokesman said third-party expert reviews had previously been engaged on projects related to mining activities in North and North-west Queensland.

But Australian resources and energy group AMMA’s acting chief executive Tara Diamond said outsourcing environmental review responsibilities “undermined typical government processes”.

“Queenslanders deserve a State Government which supports its major job-creating industries, not one more interested in appeasing minority activist views and chasing inner-city votes at the expense of the regions,” she said.