



The Greens activist working within Palaszczuk's ranks

EXCLUSIVE

JARED OWENS

A senior climate change adviser to Queensland's Labor government is also a key strategist driving the Greens' aggressive federal election campaign attacking the state's coal industry.

Kirsten Lovejoy is one of a clutch of veteran environmental activists now holding influential positions within the state Environment Department, which has

stalled Adani's Carmichael coal project in central Queensland.

Ms Lovejoy, principal policy officer for the department's climate change and sustainable futures section, was last year appointed to the Queensland campaign committee of the Greens, who want the mine stopped.

The three-time Greens candidate holds the position with former Queensland Conservation Council chief executive Tim Seelig, an avowed opponent of the Adani project who was last year appointed principal adviser (strategic

policy) to the department's director-general.

Fellow serial Greens candidate Gary Kane also works within the regulatory branch of the department, which last month ordered a review of Adani's management plan to protect the black-throated finch that has stalled the project.

The revelation of Ms Lovejoy's position has heightened the resources industry's suspicions about contradictory agendas in

Continued on Page 7



LIAM KIDSTON

Kirsten Lovejoy prepares for voting in November 2017



State Labor climate guru an anti-coal Green

Continued from Page 1

the environmental bureaucracy.

Minerals Council of Australia chief executive Tania Constable yesterday said public servants needed to separate themselves from partisan politics.

"They should not be participating in the public sector and be a card-carrying member of a political party," Ms Constable, who has worked as a senior federal bureaucrat, said.

"All government agencies, all government regulators, must be seen to be impartial and must be impartial."

The Environment Department said Ms Lovejoy had no role in assessing resources projects, but the opposition said she should not hold both positions at the same time.

Liberal National Party frontbencher Lachlan Millar said: "It is inappropriate for a member of the Greens' campaign committee to be part of the independent regulator. The regulator needs to be independent and impartial."

"The resources industry and the people of Queensland can't have faith in the system if ideology is put before independence."

Environment Minister Lee-anne Enoch said Ms Lovejoy, Dr Seelig and Mr Kane were appointed after a "merit-based appointment process".

Ms Enoch's department said Ms Lovejoy and Mr Kane were "longstanding employees" who had served Labor and LNP governments. "(Neither) has had or will have any role in assessment or decision-making on resources projects," a spokesman said.

Ms Lovejoy contested state elections in 2015 and 2017 for the Greens, as well as the 2016 federal election. In 2017 she campaigned to revoke Adani's approvals, accusing the Labor government of telling "lies" about the coal project's potential job creation.

She said at the time: "We all know the lies that are being perpetuated by Adani in the first

place and now by the Queensland government and the federal government that this is not true.

"All the people ... pinning their hopes on this mine will be ... impacted by a full sense of loss when those jobs don't eventuate. It will be a disaster for them too."

Ms Lovejoy came third in the inner-city seat of McConnel, held by Labor minister Grace Grace, with 27.1 per cent support.

Adani's mine shapes as a federal election issue in Queensland, where Labor is targeting eight marginal Coalition-held seats.

The Greens are targeting three inner-city seats — Griffith, Brisbane and Ryan — but their main objective is the re-election of deputy leader Larissa Waters, whose Senate seat is in peril.

Mr Kane, principal community response officer for the regulatory support section, ran against then premier Anna Bligh in South Brisbane at the 2009 state election and, three years later, sought election to Brisbane City Council for the Greens.

Australian Mines and Metals Association head of policy Tom

Reid cautioned against disqualifying individuals from the bureaucracy for being environmentalists, but said anti-coal activists should be kept away from decision-making roles requiring objectivity and balance.

"Of course the Premier could put all this to bed by declaring her government's support for Queensland's coalmining industry," he said.

Adani's spokeswoman said the company expected the government to demonstrate the officials had "declared conflicts of interest

and excluded themselves from decision-making roles".

Ms Enoch said: "The decision

to seek an independent expert review of the black-throated finch management plan was made by the department, free of political interference."

Federal Resources Minister Matt Canavan said there were "questions over the potential for political interference" inside the Environment Department.

"Labor seems more interested in creating jobs for greenies than jobs for miners," he said.



JOSH WONING

Former Greens candidate Kirsten Lovejoy, who is now a senior climate change adviser to the Labor state government