

Bimblebox Nature Refuge

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday December 20th

HUNT CONDEMNS NATURE REFUGE WITH MINE DECISION: OWNERS DISMAYED

Landholders of Bimblebox Nature Refuge are dismayed by Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt's decision to conditionally approve Clive Palmer's company's controversial mega mine in the Galilee Basin this evening, condemning their nature refuge to obliteration.

The owners of Bimblebox have opposed the mine proposal since 2007 when the exploration title was granted and they say they will not give up the fight.

Spokesperson for the group Mara Rogers says, "We are deeply disappointed with this decision. Minister Hunt is clearly cow-towing to mining interests over the conservation outcomes we have been working towards for years."

One of the co-owners of the property Paola Cassoni said, "Nature Refuges and private conservation areas are the most cost effective way for the Government to meet its international obligations to preserve biodiversity. But I wouldn't recommend anyone sign one of these agreements now. Both State and Federal governments have proven they are worth less than the paper they're written on."

"For the past six years we have insisted that the perpetual conservation covenant that covers the Nature Refuge be upheld. Countless letters and submissions have been written in an effort to engage with formal processes of decision making. But this decision shows decisively that Australian governments would rather court coal interests than respect agreements that they have signed with committed landholders aimed at protecting Australia's precious biodiversity." Said Ms Cassoni

"Despite this decision, we will continue to stand for the protection of Bimblebox, together with the people that have supported us thus far", Ms Rogers concluded.

- Ends-

- For further comment contact Mara Rogers on 0447784207
- Paola Cassoni can be contacted via email only at bimblebox@gmail.com
- A copy of the decision conditions can be downloaded here http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=4737

Notes:

- 8000 ha Bimblebox Nature Refuge is subject to binding perpetual agreements with both the Commonwealth and Queensland Government. These agreements will have to be revoked in order to proceed with mining on the property. More information can be found here: <http://bimblebox.org/>
- The Nature Refuge branch of the Queensland Government advised the Coordinator General that mining at Bimblebox would represent the most significant impact experienced on a nature refuge to date, and that Bimblebox is a highly valuable conservation area in a region that is underrepresented in the National Reserve System.
- Due to an amendment to the EPBC act passed by the Federal Government and the ALP earlier this month, judicial review of this decision will be very difficult.