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Media Release

The coal industry and the ETS - the big picture

Mining in Central Queensland simply cannot continue at the projected rate of growth if Australia is going to get serious about its responsibilities with climate change. That's the message that Capricorn Conservation Council says should be sinking into the government and mining companies by now.

CCC spokesperson, Janet Barrett said, 'Rather than focusing on existing operations and long-term plans for a future low-carbon economy, the coal industry has ramped up expansion substantially in CQ - all encouraged by the Queensland government, even at the expense of productive farmland.'

'These are certainly very challenging times when we have an economy built on the back of coal exports, but because of our geographic location, Australia will feel the effects of climate change before our Northern counterparts'.

'CCC supports the message given by Senator Penny Wong at the Gladstone Carbon Forum on Thursday, which is that we only have a short window of opportunity to respond to climate change. We need to stabilize CO2 emissions by 2015 to prevent more than a 2 degree celcius rise in temperature. If we fail, we will lose one of the world's greatest natural assets, the Great Barrier Reef,' says Ms Barrett.

CCC believes that the coal industry has the capacity and ability to improve operations and efficiencies in response to emissions' trading, just as many other industries will have to. Businesses constantly evolve in response to regional, national and global economic triggers (e.g. the global economic crisis) and it's no different with the introduction of a carbon tax. Climate change is inevitable and optimistic industries that plan ahead will survive.'

CCC feels that an ETS is the only way to secure funds for investment in renewable technologies and curb Australia's addiction to carbon. But, there must also be a global consensus and that is why Copenhagen is so important.

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