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## Media Release

### **Xstrata coal port in Keppel Bay on collision course for disaster**

Capricorn Coast and Rockhampton residents should be worried by Xstrata Coal's plans for a coal port at the southern end of Keppel Bay. According to Capricorn Conservation Council (CCC), warning bells are ringing loud and clear and the community needs to listen before it's too late. There is high potential for this project to impact the marine environment of a World Heritage Area, including valuable commercial and recreational fishing, tourism, and beaches.

In addition to the impacts from a 20km dredged channel for coal ships to reach the port, CCC is appealing to the public not to forget the potential risks from an increase in shipping traffic. Citing the recent grounding of the coal carrier, the Shen Neng I, CCC spokesperson, Janet Barrett said, 'The localised damage caused by this fully-loaded ship was bad enough, but it could have been much worse. The risk of it reoccurring will definitely increase if we open the doors to mining companies like Xstrata to come into Balaclava Island. Let one company in and it will be like issuing an open invitation. Before we know it, we'll have another Gladstone in Keppel Bay.'

CCC believes that Rockhampton Regional Council and a number of other sectors really need to acknowledge the long list of impacts Xstrata Coal will create before hailing it as 'exciting' - as Mayor Brad Carter did last year.

'It won't be exciting if the Fitzroy Delta's commercial fishing industry declines due to impacts to juvenile feeding and nursery areas that are declared under the Fisheries Act,' said Ms Barrett. 'It won't be exciting for the tourism industry if the next grounded coal carrier loses its load off Great Keppel Island. Nor will it thrill the public if the beautiful and endangered Snubfin Dolphins that inhabit Keppel Bay and the immediate coal port area, are wiped out.'

Ecologically sustainable development demands that economic benefits are balanced with social and environmental considerations, and that one is not achieved at the expense of the others.

Ms Barrett said that CCC will oppose Xstrata's coal port plans for Keppel Bay and urges the community to get involved with their campaign.

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