

Green groups ponder next move on Adani

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The threat of legal action still hangs over the future of Adani's Carmichael mine despite its green light from the Queensland government.

The Indian coal giant yesterday said the approval of its Galilee Basin mining leases helped provide certainty for the \$16.5 billion project, which continues to be vehemently opposed by lobby groups. Adani has predicted its six open-cut pits and five underground mines will produce 60 million tonnes of thermal coal per annum for up to 60 years.

The company told the Land Court last year royalty payments to the state government would be in excess of \$20bn and the mine would generate more than 10,000 full-time-equivalent jobs across Queensland by 2024.

During an environmental challenge against the mine it was argued, among other things, that Adani's economic forecast was "unjustified and unrealistically high". The court also heard the royalties were "highly dependent" on the coal price, which would be impacted by the fluctuating Australian dollar.

In striking out the challenge, Land Court president Carmel MacDonald found that while it was likely Adani had "overstated certain elements" of the mine's economic benefits, that was not enough to warrant a recommendation that the lease applications be refused.

The long-awaited mining lease approvals mean Adani can now move towards a final investment decision.

An Adani spokesman told *The Australian* the company and its

partners would "provide additional detail regarding the next steps for the logistics and labour requirements of the project" in coming months.

Some Galilee Basin traditional owners yesterday applauded the state government's decision.

Wangan and Jagalingou native title applicant Irene Simpson said the group's nearly 300 members would vote later this month on whether to ratify a land-use agreement with Adani.

If passed, it would be the last of Adani's four agreements with traditional groups on whose land the Indian giant's mine, rail and port project would be built.

Ms Simpson said she was hopeful the land-use agreement would receive the support of the rest of the group. But a breakaway element of the Wangan and Jagalingou people, financially backed by the conservation movement and led by native title claimant Adrian Burragubba, continues to oppose the mine.

Describing the decision as "shameful", Mr Burragubba last night vowed the "act of infamy will be challenged all the way to the High Court if necessary".

Environmental Defenders Office solicitor Jo-Anne Bragg also said the legal group was carefully evaluating the legality of the decision and would provide advice to potential litigants, namely conservation groups, about whether a judicial review could succeed.

Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg is due to meet Adani chairman and founder Gautam Adani in India on Friday. Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk met with Mr Adani on March 31 last year.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING:
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