

Joyce fires up over Adani road blocks

Acting Prime Minister hits out at state government

Emily Smith

emily.smith@dailymercury.com.au

THE legal office fighting against Adani's Carmichael coal mine must believe 'it's morally right that people are poor', Acting Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce believes.

During a trip to Mackay yesterday Mr Joyce welcomed an agreement that will see Adani take full control of the Abbot Point Coal Terminal.

But he believed the state government wouldn't share his excitement, as it continued to provide finance to the Environmental Defenders Office, which handled much of the legal action against the project.

During the 2015-2016 financial year state government reinstated funding of \$200,000 to the EDO.

The office was funded for 20 years previously by the state and federal governments, but this was cut in June 2012.

The \$200,000 has been allocated for five consecutive financial years.

"(The EDO are) basically trying to stop development in Central Queensland because they think it's morally right that people are poor," Mr Joyce said.

"We believe that it's morally right that you give people the chance for economic advancement."

EDO Queensland chief executive officer and solicitor Jo-Anne Bragg made the point that it defended many more people than just those opposing the Adani project.

Attorney general Yvette D'ath pointed out that the EDO was not prohibited from representing clients in court or tribunal proceedings against the State. But she said at the same time the government was committed to supporting jobs in both the resources sector and renewable energy sector.

"The Federal Government should focus its attention on reversing the cuts it has made in the Mackay to health, education, and Community Legal Centres that are a frontline service in combating domestic violence," she said.

Deputy state opposition leader Deb Frecklington joined Mr Joyce at the Mackay Canegrowers office

yesterday, along with Member for Whitsunday Jason Costigan and Federal Member for Dawson George Christensen.

As part of the Carmichael mining lease approvals in April, Mines Minister Dr Anthony Lynham said there would be no dredging at Abbot Point "until Adani demonstrates financial closure". But Ms Frecklington questioned how Adani could go to financial backers for money without having these secondary approvals in place. "The state government in particular need to get out of the way of this project," she said.

“They think it's morally right that people are poor

— Barnaby Joyce