22 August 2019

The Honourable A. Palaszczuk MP
Premier of Queensland
PO Box 15185
CITY EAST QLD 4002
thepremier@premiers.qld.gov.au

Dear Premier Palaszczuk,

The World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) supports the statements of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) and the Doctors for the Environment of Australia (DEA) expressing their concern regarding the opening of new coal mines such as Adani’s Carmichael mine in the Galilee Basin of Queensland. As the only international Public Health Federation that includes the PHAA, this is of the utmost importance to our values and goals. We believe that health is a fundamental human right and a global public good.

We are concerned with the public health impacts this decision could have for employees and the regional population, as well as more broadly, Australia and the world. The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) has conducted extensive research into the detrimental health effects of coal and climate change and has issued an open letter outlining their concerns to all political parties and candidates on this matter. Each phase of coal’s lifecycle (mining, disruption of water underground aquifers, disposal of contaminated water and tailings, transportation, washing, combustion, and disposing of post-combustion wastes) produces pollutants that threaten human health. Although most of the coal mined by Adani is intended for export to India, the net effects for Australians will be negative. The air pollution produced by coal industry travel vast distances, putting the health of countless people in jeopardy. The Greenhouse Gases generated will inevitably contribute extensively to climate change, which is already causing intolerable heatwaves, severe droughts, extreme storms, and unquenchable bushfires across the country. The Great Barrier Reef, Australia’s most prized natural wonder and an economic tourism hub, would be put in further danger due to increased ocean temperatures, acidity, as well as more extreme weather events. The loss of the Reef would significantly damage Queensland’s economy, risk thousands of jobs, placing your voters into poverty which is harmful to health and wellbeing.

In a time in which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is calling for a reduction in emissions to prevent a global catastrophe, we urge you to reconsider your decision to allow Adani to break ground in the Galilee Basin. When all of the health, economic, and environmental effects are taken into account, this decision will have grave consequences for the future of Australia and the world.

Yours sincerely

Professor Laetitia Rispel
President: World Federation of Public Health Associations