

Environment Minister Fails on Two Counts

The Federal Environment Minister, Greg Hunt, has failed the nation by approving the country's biggest coalmine and by refusing to attend the international talks on climate change starting in Warsaw next week, according to Climate Action Monaro.

Minister Hunt approved the approved the 37,380-hectare Kevin's Corner project last week. It will be operated by a joint India-Australia consortium, GVK-Hancock. This week he has indicated he will not attend the Conference of Parties (COP19) in Warsaw, Poland, which is the chief annual meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

President of Climate Action Monaro, Jenny Goldie, says Kevin's Corner mine will use nine billion litres of water a year though there are still concerns about the impact on water resources of the Galilee Basin.

"Water scientists have been urging Minister Hunt to reject any proposals that would damage aquifers, rivers and water catchments," says Ms Goldie. "Yet despite the introduction of the water trigger rule by the previous government and lack of adequate data on the effects, Mr Hunt has gone ahead."

Ms Goldie says the failure to attend the COP19 talks or to send another Minister is an insult to the international community.

"It is a conference of Parties, that is, governments, who are the ones that signed the Convention. The Climate Ambassador Justin Lee is a very admirable man but he is an appointee, not an elected member of the government of the day."

Ms Goldie believes the Minister lacks the courage to face the justified reaction of fellow Ministers who are highly likely to show contempt for Australia's current efforts to repeal the carbon tax.

"It is doubly insulting that the government is bringing in this legislation the very same week as the meeting in Warsaw," says Ms Goldie.

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