

Mining Giant Credits Activists with Possibly Saving Great Barrier Reef

by Lauren McCauley via jaxie - CommonDreams *Wednesday, Aug 12 2015, 12:32am*

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Fierce environmental activism is being blamed—and credited—with spurring the potential demise of Australia's [controversial](#) Carmichael coal mine project. Indian mining giant Adani on Tuesday [lashed out](#) at activists, accusing them of causing delays that prompted financial backers to withdraw their support for the vast Queensland mine and port expansion along the Great Barrier Reef (GBR).

The project, which environmentalists have [long warned](#) would irreparably harm the GBR, has faced significant hurdles, the latest being the [announcement](#) by the London-based Standard Chartered bank on Monday that it was withdrawing from its advisory role on the project.

And last week, Australia's federal court revoked government approval of the mine, siding with conservationists who argued that the license given to the project in 2014 did not account for the significant environmental impacts.

The court's decision was "based on a failure by the minister to have regard to the conservation advices for two federally listed vulnerable species" —the yakka skink and the ornamental snake—[according](#) to Sue Higginson, principal solicitor of the Environment Defenders Office NSW. The lawsuit also alleged a failure "to consider global greenhouse emissions from the burning of the coal."

If built, Carmichael would be Australia's [largest coal mine](#) and one of the biggest in the world. The construction itself would require massive seafloor dredging along the GBR, while the mine would produce 121 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions yearly at maximum production.

On the same day as the court order, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia also announced it would not be supporting the mine, prompting Greenpeace Australia Pacific climate and energy campaigner Nikola Casule to call the Carmichael project: "unbankable, unprofitable and unconscionable."

Reeling from those setbacks, Adani on Tuesday released a statement saying that it had, in fact, terminated the contract with Standard Chartered "on the basis of Adani's own concerns over ongoing delays to a now five-year-long approvals process in Australia."

Then referencing the recent court ruling, the statement continued: "In the event Australia's federal approvals framework is not further undermined by activists seeking to exploit legal loopholes, enabling the project and the thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of investment it would bring to be delivered, Adani would happily work with the bank in future."

The threat of a new, major coal mine comes amid a pending climate crisis while countries struggle to enact new greenhouse gas regulations. On Tuesday, the government of Australia [released](#) a copy of its greenhouse gas reduction goals ahead of the Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21) climate talks in Paris, which critics decried as being "weak" and overly friendly to the "big polluters," including the coal, gas, and oil industries.

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