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ACF Background Brief: Adani's latest plan further weakens protections for our clean water

- Adani's latest plans represents a material weakening of protection for Queensland groundwater.
- The plan fails to address Queensland regulator demands to identify the source of the nationally significant Doongmabulla Springs Complex.
- Adani plans to use up to 9.5 billion litres of groundwater and 12.5 billion litres of surface water for its proposed new coal mine in the Galilee Basin.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has obtained a copy of the [latest version of Adani's Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem Management Plan](#) (GDEMP), dated July 2018. The plan, which will need to be signed off by the Queensland and Federal governments, is the latest iteration of Adani's proposal to use groundwater for its new coal mine in the Galilee Basin.

In May, the ABC reported that Adani's groundwater plan for its coal mine could [permanently dry up the pristine and nationally recognised Doongmabulla Springs Complex](#). A follow-up story in June, highlighted advice from independent water policy experts that these [management plans are virtually worthless](#).

At the time of this second story Queensland Environment Minister, Leanne Enoch, announced that Adani would be [required to identify the source aquifer of the Doongmabulla Springs Complex](#) before the State Government approved the management plan.

This was confirmed by the Minister during [Budget estimates hearings on 1 August](#) (pages 44-45):

Mr BERKMAN: Obviously I do not mean to press the point any further than you are able to answer, but can you provide the committee with any more information about the issues that are under investigation or the nature of the work the department is doing?

Ms ENOCH: No. What I can say is that one of the plans that is still outstanding is the Groundwater Dependant Ecosystem Management Plan. For the information of the member, Adani is required to identify the source of the aquifer at Doongmabulla Springs prior to the approval of that plan. Obviously there is a great deal of interest in this project from many sides,

but as I have said—and as you have heard many times from this government—this project, like any project, must stack up on its own merits both financially and environmentally. It will be held to account to the same measures as any other project.

Mr BERKMAN: Based on your response, as I understand it you said that the GDMP is still outstanding. The source aquifer for Doongmabulla Springs does have to be identified before that plan will be approved. Will Adani be required to undertake specific seismic surveys in that area to identify the source aquifer, or what other activities will the department require to ensure that it is properly identified?

*Ms ENOCH: **At this stage what I can say is that we have made it clear that they will be required to identify the source aquifer.** The department will obviously look at all of that in terms of the final plan that is submitted.*

A review by the Environment Defenders Office Queensland of the latest management plan shows that the new GDEMP:

- Does not identify the source aquifer of the Doongmabulla Springs Complex;
- Reduces Adani's responsibility for the introduction of invasive weeds and pests by limiting impacts to those that occur on the Mining Lease site, and noting that Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs) are located on the properties of other landholders;
- Removes discussion of impacts from increased human traffic at the Springs.

Not only do these changes fail to apply the Minister's directions, they also represent a material weakening of Adani's groundwater plans.

These management plans are important because Adani's Carmichael coal mine will have a substantial impact on groundwater aquifers. Adani's mine will draw up to [9.5 billion litres of groundwater from the Great Artesian Basin and 12.5 billion litres of surface water](#).

In India, *The Wire* has revealed that Adani's Para East & Kanta Basan coal mining operations have [completely eliminated groundwater in the vicinity of local villages](#).

Quotes that may be attributed to ACF Stop Adani Campaigner, Christian Slattery:

- "Adani's new groundwater plan is even weaker than the last. At a time when much of Queensland is in drought, we need to be protecting our precious water sources, not squandering them on dirty coal mines."
- "Time and again, our elected representatives have claimed that Adani is subjected to strict environmental conditions. These management plans show that Adani is treating our environment laws with utter contempt."

- “We need our politicians to side with the Australian public and make a commitment to stop Adani’s dangerous coal mine.”