



Media release:

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Territorians do not want this cotton gin: Environment Centre

The Environment Centre NT has responded with alarm to today's announcement of industry plans to build a massive cotton gin at Tarwoo, just north of Katherine on the Stuart Highway.

"People in the Top End have made it abundantly clear: we don't want the cotton industry anywhere near our rivers until they've fixed up their Murray-Darling mess. Do these companies think they can ignore Territorians like this?" said Kirsty Howey, Co-Director of ECNT.

In a uComms poll of Top End residents in February:

- 69.4% of Territorians polled said that the cotton industry shouldn't be allowed into the Territory until they fix up their mess in the Murray-Darling basin.
- 60.8% of Territorians are opposed to the NT Government giving taxpayer funded subsidies to the cotton industry to establish operations in the NT.¹

"We need the Northern Territory Government to listen to Territorians - many of whom have grave concerns about what such a large expansion of the cotton industry would mean for our rivers, our fishing and our lifestyle."

"The big cotton companies need to stop their doublespeak. They've been asking for public money to build this gin for years. When they didn't get it, they switched to asking for taxpayer money to build new power lines and roads on private property."

"That's still public money going straight to a private company, to fund the most expensive part of building a damaging cotton gin and prop up their operations. Why should Territory taxpayers fork out our money to prop up big cotton companies when remote communities still lack basic drinking water protections and energy security?"

"A cotton gin of this size would require large amounts of water, land and power. In full operation, a cotton gin like this would need at least 832,000 litres per day of water just to keep it running. Where is all that water coming from? How will that impact on local farmers and growers in Edith Farms and the Katherine region?"

"We also remain deeply concerned about the electricity requirements of such a massive operation. Where will that power come from? Who in the Territory will miss out on power generation if the cotton companies get their millions in taxpayer handouts?"

"Today's announcement by industry flies in the face of community concerns and puts the future of Top End rivers at risk. Territorians know that cotton kills rivers. We don't want to see the same mistakes from down South, happen up here."

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¹ Polling commissioned by the Environment Centre NT and undertaken by uComms, who conducted a survey of 837 residents in the Northern Territory seats of Blain, Brennan, Casuarina, Daly, Drysdale, Fannie Bay, Fong Lim, Johnston, Karama, Katherine, Nightcliff, Port Darwin, Sanderson, Spillett, and Wanguri during the nights of the 10th & 11th February 2021.