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MEDIA RELEASE

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Backroom changes to environmental rules for Glencore of concern

Claims by State Environment Minister Powell that changing environmental legislation to enable a mining company to continue working shows 'strong environmental standards' are absurd, according to North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) Coordinator Wendy Tubman.

Mr Powell has promised to amend legislation to let Glencore renew its existing environmental licensing.

'Environment Minister Powell was reported in the Townsville Bulletin (19/1) as saying that only 'extreme greens' would oppose this backroom deal between the government and the mining company Glencore' Ms Tubman said.

'The Minister obviously doesn't realise that the community at large is not happy with environmental laws being changed without transparency and without the opportunity to have a say. This is a repeat of the changes to environmental legislation that were pushed through Parliament at four minutes to midnight one night late last year and by which community rights to challenge many large mining proposals were scrapped.

'Changing environmental protection laws so that mining jobs can be created or maintained does not, despite what the Minister claims, show that you can have jobs and a healthy environment. It shows that, when push comes to shove, environmental protection will be ditched for the sake of the economy.

'NQCC is not against copper smelting and refining *per se*. It is against backroom changes to environmental protection laws being stitched up to advantage individual companies or specific industries', said Ms Tubman.

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