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Unprecedented Use Of Legislation Threatens Australia's Energy Security And Jobs

Kevin You, Institute of Public Affairs
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"The Federal Environment Minister's unprecedented decision to cancel a vital natural resource project highlights, yet again, that fringe activists are now dictating Australia's energy policy," said Dr Kevin You, Research Fellow at the Institute of Public Affairs.

The decision by Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek to reject the Central Queensland Coal Project is the first time that s130(1) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* has been called upon to reject a vital resource project.

"The Federal Government's decision will cost workers their jobs, threaten the viability of regional communities and further increase household energy bills," said Dr You.

Institute of Public Affairs research estimates that the economic cost of the cancellation of the Central Queensland Coal Project amounts to \$430 million in foregone economic activity and the cancellation of 814 new jobs in the Central Queensland community.

Worryingly, the Federal Minister for the Environment's capitulation to the demands of fringe environmental activists following the election means that a further 18 vital resource projects, critical to our energy security, are now under more threat than ever.

"The cancellation of this project sends a dangerous signal to investors that the Albanese Government is in the thrall of activists who wield significant influence over government decisions on critical resource projects and that Australia is closed for business," said Dr You.

"The Minister must immediately declare whether or not the 18 projects she has committed to review at the behest of fringe environmental activists, and her political mates, will also be cancelled."

A key IPA research report, released in April 2022, *The Economic and Employment Consequences of Net Zero Emissions by 2050 in Australia*, found

that achieving net zero by 2050 requires the cancellation of all coal, gas and oil projects currently in the construction pipeline.

"The cancellation of this critical resource project is exactly what the Federal Government's net zero agenda looks like in reality," said Dr You.

"IPA research shows that, at a minimum, net zero will see up to \$274 billion in foregone economic output and the cancellation of over 478,000 new jobs, largely in regional Australia," said Dr You.

"The Prime Minister has a clear choice: back in his Minister, who is controlled by fringe environmental activists, or back in Australian families with the new jobs and lower household energy bills these vital resource projects deliver."