

**EMBARGOED: 21 February 2024 00:01 AEST**



## **Political leaders have a duty to all Australians to stop the nation's largest freshwater resource from being a mining waste dumpsite.**

Federal, State and Territory Labor leaders must step in to prevent Australia's largest freshwater resource, the Great Artesian Basin, from being pumped with dirty emissions from a coal-fired power station owned by subsidiary of mining giant Glencore, Carbon Transport and Storage Corporation (CTSCo).

Under a proposed three-year trial, Glencore subsidiary CTSCo plans to liquefy CO<sub>2</sub> from the Millmerran coal-fired power station and inject up to 330,000 tonnes of it into the Precipice Sandstone, a groundwater formation in the Great Artesian Basin.

Queensland's agriculture advocacy group AgForce says while it awaits an assessment by the Miles Government of an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposal, every State and Territory Labor leader should oppose the carbon capture and storage (CCS) plan, which could devastate the Basin.

The Great Artesian Basin generates approximately \$13 billion each year and supports communities, industry and the environment across QLD, SA, NSW and the NT – it's the lifeblood of inland Australia and has been relied upon by indigenous populations for thousands of years.

AgForce CEO Michael Guerin says Australians should be outraged that one of the natural wonders of the world could be under this kind of threat and any risk at all to such a vital water supply cannot be accepted.

"The decision to green light this unthinkable trial should not just be a decision for the Queensland Government. I plead with NSW Premier Chris Minns, SA Premier Peter Malinauskas, and NT Chief Minister Eva Lawler – you have the future of your own communities to fight for and can help prevent this from going ahead," he said.

"This proposal is akin to pumping industrial waste into the Great Barrier Reef – would any Australian leader sit back and let that happen? No way! As far as we're concerned the Great Artesian Basin is a 'no go zone' and what's proposed by Glencore should be scrapped immediately.

"There is concrete scientific evidence that CO<sub>2</sub> reacts with underground rock, releasing stored toxins including arsenic and lead to levels present in the water, that makes it unsafe and even lethal."

National Farmers' Federation President David Jochinke says inland rural and regional communities are deeply concerned about the potential impact of the proposal on human and animal health, as well as their livelihoods.

"If this plan ever got off the ground, it would seriously threaten essential water aquifers and food production land across nearly 1.7 million square kilometres – it's madness. The Minister for the Environment and Water, Hon. Tanya Plibersek, must realise the absurd contradiction in waving through such a seemingly well-intentioned development that could cause irreparable damage to such a precious natural resource.

"We're urging the Federal, State and Territory Labor Governments to listen to reason and scrap this proposal immediately because the risks it poses are simply too great to ignore."

AgForce is pleading with the Federal Albanese Government to reverse the former Liberal Government's decision that Glencore's project does not fall under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

While the anxious wait continues for a response from both the Federal and Queensland governments, AgForce is preparing to take the matter to the Federal Court and is urging members of the public to get behind the campaign.

"It's not every day that rural and regional communities, environmentalists and farmers stand united on an issue, but as a collective we are willing to go all the way to fight this plan," Guerin said.

"We need your help, so make your opposition to this proposal known by signing AgForce's petition, and if you can, chip in to help fundraise for potential court action."

Ken Cameron from Cameron Pastoral Company says the company was quick to throw its support behind AgForce's efforts to fight the controversial plan.

"We proudly stand with AgForce as one of 17 Australian companies who have already pledged financial support for its campaign to stop industrial waste being pumped into the Basin – it's a no brainer," Ken said.

For more information on AgForce's petition or fundraising to fight Glencore's carbon capture and storage proposal for the Great Artesian Basin, please go to [www.agforceqld.org.au](http://www.agforceqld.org.au)

(ENDS)

**For Interview VIDEO/AUDIO of AgForce CEO Michael Guerin please click [here](#) to download.**

**Media Enquiries:**

Shaun Devitt

Mobile: 0400 906 451

Email: [shaun.devitt@seftons.com.au](mailto:shaun.devitt@seftons.com.au)