



1 June 2018

Notice to the Christmas Island Community

The decision by the Minister for the Environment and Energy to reject PRL's application to re-clear a total of some 6.8 hectares of historic drill lines on Christmas Island is a slap in the face for PRL employees, shareholders and long-term Island residents wanting the Island to maintain industries capable of providing jobs well into the future. The application was intended to be the first step in the evaluation of further economic resources and the possibility of making a future proposal for mining, which could have guaranteed the continuation of mining jobs and investment beyond 2030. The application was based on the low impact activity of establishing 5 m wide temporary access tracks within previously cleared forest. Extensive environmental surveys and planning were undertaken to avoid and minimise impacts to the Island environment.

At a time when the island is facing an uncertain economic future with the impending closure of the Immigration Detention Centre, the Turnbull government seems determined to ensure that other potential job prospects are choked off before being properly considered. Clearly, the Government have no desire to provide a future, which balances both economic development and environmental protection.

The Minister's decision is economically irresponsible and based on misconceptions. Disappointingly, it appears to have been made in response to a scare campaign promoted by Birdlife Australia. The Minister is clearly more interested in appeasing conservation interests on the mainland than caring about the residents of the Island and providing future employment for their children.

The Minister's claims that the proposed drilling program will adversely impact on the island environment seems to contradict the information provided to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and the Communications Legislation Committee. The Committees were advised that it is unlikely that the proposed action will have an impact on or interaction with Frigatebirds and Abbots Boobies.

It is simply not true that the application would have a profound impact on red crabs as reported in the media. Accepted and published research shows the red crab population has been devastated by yellow crazy ants, not mining. It is worthy of note that the red crab population remained relatively stable for the first ninety years of mining. The population declined from around 100 million to 40 million as a consequence of the changing yellow crazy ant behaviour. It is unfortunate that the Minister does not recognise the primary threat to Christmas Island's biodiversity are invasive species including yellow crazy ants, cats and rats. Native species continue to go extinct on the Island despite the majority of the Island being national park demonstrating that it is not habitat protection that is the issue but rather lack of control of invasive species. No doubt the Minister will make substantial funds available to fund the much needed invasive species eradication programs to prevent further extinctions.

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This decision puts at risk any future investment on Christmas Island, including the prospect of crown land being made available for development under the recent Australian Government expression of interest process. It is difficult to see how the parcels of land made available under the expressions of interest process will ever be permitted to be developed if the government adopts the same criteria which has been applied to the proposed exploration application

Despite this unfortunate decision the Company remains satisfied that based on the Company's estimation of indicated and inferred resources and best judgements on current commercial parameters, it is reasonable to forecast sustainable viable operations through to the mid-2020's.