

Media Release

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Environmental scapegoat sought for government's poor economic performance

Since Tony Abbott took office, 101,900 more Australians are unemployed, but the Prime Minister is determined to create a new scapegoat – that of environmental legal victories – rather than face up to fundamental issues in the economy.

“We’re seeing a deliberate effort from the Government to blame environmental law for job losses, despite all evidence to the contrary,” Executive Director of The Australia Institute, Ben Oquist said.

“Growth is slow, mining jobs are down because of dropping resource prices, manufacturing and agriculture employment is in full retreat, and Abbott is choosing to ignore all of these issues.

“Even the Prime Minister’s fallacious, exaggerated job loss claims arising from court findings pale in comparison to larger factors in the Australian economy. Mr Abbott has repeatedly stated that the Adani project will create 10,000 jobs. This is wrong. The court and Adani has agreed it is 1,464 jobs.

Between May 2014 and May 2015 the mining industry, beset by falling resource prices, has [shed 33,000 jobs](#) in Australia.

“We’re exporting 39 million more tonnes of coal than we were in 2013, and yet we’ve seen huge reductions in the coal mining workforce. So the answer is not as simple as ‘dig up more coal’.

“It should also be noted that recent NSW ICAC investigations identified third party appeals as an important anti-corruption safeguard,” Oquist said.

The ICAC report [Anti-corruption safeguards and the NSW planning system](#) recommended (pg 7) that third-party appeal rights be expanded.

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