

Science Museum Group Senior Leadership Team and Board
c/o Dame Mary Archer
Science Museum
Exhibition Road
London
SW7 2DD

1st December 2021

Dear Science Museum Senior Leadership Team and Board,

We are writing to you as representatives of Indigenous communities - and organisations that support them and other mining-affected communities - in India, the Pacific, Indonesia and Australia. We want to express our concern that, in your decision to partner with Adani Green Energy, you are not taking Indigenous voices and experiences seriously.

In choosing to partner with Adani Green Energy you are choosing to partner with its parent company, Adani Group, which is responsible for coal mining and coal power stations in India, Indonesia and Australia. Indigenous communities in all these countries are bearing the brunt of Adani's destructive coal expansion activities, experiencing land-grabs, repression, the destruction of sacred lands, pollution of air, land and water and, of course, the worsening impacts of climate change exacerbated by burning coal. By putting the Adani name on your new energy gallery you are unavoidably legitimising these aspects of the company's activities.

But when the Science Museum Group's director Ian Blatchford appeared on BBC Radio 4's Front Row on October 26th, he was asked to respond to comments made by Adrian Burragubba, spokesperson for the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council and senior cultural custodian of land that is currently being mined by Adani in Australia, that *'by putting this company on a pedestal, the Science Museum is complicit in Adani's violation of our Human Rights and destruction of our ancestral lands'*.

Rather than making reassurances that the Science Museum Group respects Indigenous rights, Blatchford responded:

'Adani and their coal interests in Australia do get accused of a whole variety of things but the company would push back very strongly on those accusations... So, although you're quoting one voice, I would not say that that is a definitive intervention on the issue, because we've thought about two things: not only [Adani's] response to that and the truth of it – and there is certainly a great tendency for some campaigners to exaggerate very significantly those issues – but also we're looking at other voices.'

To defend Adani's controversial business operations in this way, and to dismiss the concerns of Indigenous peoples, is completely unacceptable for any publicly funded institution, and particularly concerning coming from a museum of science. When Indigenous peoples approach the Museum with deeply held concerns that their rights are being violated by one of its partners, they must be respected, listened to and acted upon, not dismissed as exaggerated and untrue.

Adani in Australia:

Adani Group is now mining its first coal at the Carmichael coal mine, in the Galilee Basin in central Queensland. It is planned to be the biggest coal mine ever built in Australia and amongst the biggest in the world. The coal will be shipped to India and burned at the Godda coal power station.

The Traditional Owners do not consent to Adani's coal project. Adani's mine will destroy the ancestral lands, water and culture of the Wangan and Jagalingou people. Adani does not have their Free Prior and Informed Consent. It used the Native Title process to breach their human rights and obtain an illegitimate Indigenous Land Use Agreement and an unlawful mining lease without their approval. They first said no to Adani in 2012 and will always continue to say no.

Adani actively worked to divide Wangan and Jagalingou people to claim they consent to the mine, [engineering sham meetings](#), stacked with people who were not a part of the native title claim group. [Adani bankrupted](#) Senior Traditional Owner, Adrian Burragubba and even filed a court order [making it illegal for their people to practice culture on their own country](#). This year, Adani tried to bury a [RMIT study](#) that found Adani violated international human rights law in their interactions with Wangan and Jagalingou people and recommended that mine construction be suspended. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has also [requested Adani's mine be suspended because it may violate Indigenous rights](#).

Right now Wangan and Jagalingou people are present on Country, at the edge of Adani's coal mine, to conduct a cultural ceremony Waddanangu - meaning 'the talking'. They are making ceremony and will remain on Country for as long as it takes to protect their ancestral homelands, including their sacred Doongmabulla Springs, from Adani's destruction.

In the words of Adrian Burragubba, spokesperson for the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council and senior cultural custodian:

'The Science Museum should be respecting the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples. Instead, director Ian Blatchford has dismissed us and chosen to support Adani, a company that is destroying our land and violating our rights.'

Every step of the way, Adani has used lies and deception to persecute my people, interfere in our decision making processes, and undermine our rights to self-determination. In 2014, the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, a representative body made up of hundreds of people,

said no to Adani digging a coal mine on our land. We have continued to oppose the Adani mine on our land in five Federal court cases.

Adani has ignored our representatives, divided our people, and used money and influence to manufacture sham agreements. Adani influenced the Prime Minister of Australia to extinguish our native title rights, they bankrupted me personally for standing up for our rights, and made me a trespasser on my own land.

Adani's coal mine has no Free, Prior and Informed consent from Wangan and Jagalingou people. We know the damage this mine will cause to our ancestral homelands and we continue to oppose it. Adani's corporate behaviour is in clear violation of human rights, not only of Indigenous people in Australia, but Indigenous people all around the world. Adani works to shut Indigenous people up, to criminalise us, and bankrupt us. Adani is not a good corporate citizen.'

Adani in India:

Adani has several coal projects across India, many of which are facing strong Adivasi (Indigenous) resistance. In Jharkhand state, coal mining, processing and power plants have been strongly resisted by Adivasi people.

In the words of Phillip Kujur, Adivasi Activist Forum for Indigenous Rights, Jharkhand, India:

'Adani is destroying our indigenous agricultural lands by setting up their power plant in Godda, Jharkhand, India, for which coal is being planned to be brought from Australia. Our rights are being violated for setting up this plant. Adani has also acquired through auction new coal blocks in Gondulpara, Jharkhand, where there is strong resistance from the people against mining. Adani is a threat to our indigenous identity, existence and ways of life.'

Adani in Indonesia:

Adani's subsidiaries have concessions on Bunyu island, off the north-eastern coast of Kalimantan, totaling about 2600 hectares (about 14% of the island) and Adani has become the biggest company extracting coal from Bunyu island. Bunyu is categorised as a small island, and Article 23 of Indonesian Law (UU) Number 1 of 2014 states that it 'is not justified' to have mines on islands smaller than 200 km². The community suffers from massive coal extraction that destroys the rice fields, the fruit gardens and contaminates the rivers. Together with other coal companies Adani has undermined the Bunyu island protected forest. Protected forests are important for small islands to hold water reserves for their present and the future ecologies.

Given these realities of Adani's operations, we call on you to respect Indigenous rights and listen to Indigenous peoples on this issue - we are the experts on what is happening on our lands. And, based on the experiences of Indigenous peoples around the world, we call on you to end your relationship with Adani, and with all companies actively extracting fossil fuels.

We request that you respond to us via Survival International who will pass on your message, by emailing advocacy@survivalinternational.org.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Burragubba, spokesperson for the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council and senior cultural custodian, Australia

Phillip Kujur, Adivasi Activist Forum for Indigenous Rights, Jharkhand, India

Siti Maimunah, Jatam, Indonesia

Joseph Zane Sikulu, Pacific Climate Warriors