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MEDIA STATEMENT – for release June 28

New mining fight in the Kimberley

A proposal for a new coal mine in the Kimberley will be met with fierce opposition says a regional environment group.

Environs Kimberley has called on the WA Premier to make the Fitzroy Valley a no coal mining zone in the same way he has declared the Margaret River area a mining no-go zone.

Rey Resources which has pegged 8,000km² of coal mining tenements in the Kimberley wants to develop the 'Duchess Paradise' proposal to begin mining 2.5 million tonnes per year of coal in 2013.¹ There is also uranium in the area.

"If this became a new coal province it would be like putting the Hunter Valley coal mining province in the Kimberley with the Ranger Uranium mine on top." Environs Kimberley Director Martin Pritchard said.

The call comes in the middle of a protracted protest against gas refineries on the Kimberley coast. A blockade by the Broome community is now in its 21st day of stopping Woodside from land clearing at the site for a proposed gas hub north of Broome.

"Yesterday we requested the WA EPA reject the proposal by mining company Rey Resources for a coal mine next to the Fitzroy River in the Kimberley" Mr Pritchard said.

"We are now calling on the WA Premier to intervene and protect the Fitzroy Valley in the same way as is being proposed for the Margaret River in the southwest of WA."

The Kimberley region has a \$600 million tourism industry with 300,000 tourists flocking to the area to enjoy one of the world's largest, most intact natural areas. The Kimberley Coast has the world's biggest humpback whale population and is famed for its pristine waters and pearling industry. Inland boasts the world's largest most intact tropical savannahs stretching from Broome to Cape York.

"The Premier has stated that the Kimberley and Margaret River are the future of the tourism industry of WA and that he will take great pains not to compromise these 'huge assets'.² Coal mining will forever change such areas and he's shown leadership by rejecting the coal proposal for the Margaret River. We presume he will also reject coal mining for one of the world's last great wilderness areas, the Kimberley."

"We are looking at a multi mine coal basin if this area is not protected now" said Mr Pritchard.

"The Fitzroy Valley is under extreme threat. What this community is saying is that the Kimberley's greatest assets are its natural and cultural values and these should be protected if we are going to have a long term sustainable economy into the future" Mr Pritchard said.

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¹ Link to proposal: http://epa.wa.gov.au/EIA/referralofProp-schemes/Lists/Proposal/Attachments/77/DP%20Referral%20Supporting%20Document_2011%2006%209.pdf

² Financial Review http://afr.com/p/national/margaret_river_won_be_mined_barnett_6NSNcYP3DYhUcBa1hY6OBP