

27 May 2022

Christopher Knaus  
The Guardian, Sydney office  
Level 3, 19 Foster St  
Surry Hills, NSW 2010 Australia

Delivered via email to: [christopher.knaus@theguardian.com](mailto:christopher.knaus@theguardian.com) CC: [jenore.taylor@theguardian.com](mailto:jenore.taylor@theguardian.com)

Dear Mr Knaus,

On behalf of my Company, I'd like to provide some direct feedback to you in relation to your recent article in the Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/may/25/pastoralist-company-to-join-forces-with-beetaloo-basin-traditional-owners-to-resist-gas-exploration>.

There are numerous points made in the article where our Company believes the story to be incomplete or lacking the necessary balance or proper representation. Moreover, we would have appreciated the opportunity to comment given our Company is the target of the story, which we understand is the traditional practice in journalism to ensure companies have the ability to correct the record.

We would like the Guardian to consider the key facts and suggestions below with regards to how Tamboran Resources and Rallen are reported on in the future to ensure fair and objective reporting.

- Tamboran attempted to engage in good faith negotiations with Rallen Australia to negotiate an equitable access agreement. This is a process resource companies have done successfully for decades across the NT and Australia more broadly, entering into thousands of agreements. Rallen Australia are fundamentally opposed to the NT benefiting from an onshore gas industry and are restricting access across vast swathes of the prospective Beetaloo Sub-basin.
- Tamboran has a legal right to access the EP 136 asset to explore for gas under the Approved Access Agreement issued by the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This Approved Access Agreement was issued according to the careful and fair processes laid out in the NT's new Petroleum Regulation. Rallen has stated that they did not provide consent. However, given they do not own the gas resources or the land, Tamboran has every lawful right to explore for gas, which will benefit both Territorians and the broader Australian economy.
- Contrary to what was stated in the article, Rallen Australia are not landholders, rather they hold pastoral leases over the land that remains under the ownership of the NT Government. I'd like to re-iterate this point – despite what is portrayed by your article and by Rallen, they do not own the land which we are accessing for gas exploration. The land belongs to the Crown and Rallen has a pastoral lease on which to graze its cattle. Tamboran and Rallen are separate leaseholders, each with valid interests in this area. Rallen has no lawful right to attempt to block or frustrate Tamboran's approved right of access. Tamboran has repeatedly engaged with Rallen in good faith to come to an agreement to balance its interests in the land with our own. Rallen's actions and behaviour demonstrate a complete disinterest in working together with gas explorers, unlike many other pastoralists in the Beetaloo region – and in contravention of the law.



- Tamboran has secured the consent of Traditional Owners through direct engagement activity facilitated and approved by the Northern Land Council. The Northern Land Council is the prescribed body responsible for representing the Traditional Owners of the region in which we work under Native Title legislation. Tamboran has closely followed the approved processes. To suggest that Tamboran has not gained the consent of local Traditional Owners to undertake our activities is both factually and legally incorrect, as confirmed by the NLC whose role is directly undermined by your reporting. We do not believe the local indigenous man cited in the article is a representative of the recognised Native Title Parties across the area in which we work. We would encourage you to speak with the Northern Land Council to gain proper insight in the actual views of Traditional Owners, who have the right to speak for Country towards development of the Beetaloo development.
- Nowhere in the Guardian article have you discussed the foreign sources (and foreign control) of funds invested through Rallen Australia into 1.1 million hectares of pastoral assets. They are now one of Australia's largest landholders, however every purchase the company has made of pastoral assets since 2018 has required FIRB approval. Why? Because the money invested comes directly from offshore actors domiciled in South Africa. Foreign control of major agricultural assets in Australia has been a major issue for decades, and we would invite the Guardian to consider this very pertinent fact in how the story is reported. Further, the \$70 million Rallen paid in 2020 to purchase leases, which included Tanumbirini Station, was made with full knowledge that gas exploration and appraisal activities were underway within the leases following the lifting of the fracking moratorium in 2018. Sweetpea acquired its petroleum exploration lease in 2012 and Tamboran Resources has held its EP 161 petroleum exploration lease since 2012. Since
- Despite being referred to as “fly by nighters”, we would like to remind you that Tamboran and our joint ventures have invested more than \$200 million into the Beetaloo Basin assets since 2012. We have shown long term commitment to our petroleum exploration leases, working closely with the Northern Territory through the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing and support the more than 100 recommendations, which will ensure that the NT doesn't need to choose between protecting the environment and providing economic development opportunities.
- The article insinuates that the presence of Rallen and other pastoralists is necessary to “protect water and sacred sites.” This is misleading. Tamboran has engaged with the Aboriginal Area Protection Authority to ensure that there is an appropriate Authority Certificate in place to ensure the protection of Sacred Sites recognised by the Native Title Parties. Also, we have secured all the required environmental approvals. As with the Northern Land Council, we would strongly encourage the Guardian to contact the relevant authorities to gain a complete picture of the story, rather than rely on the biased assertions of one actor who is motivated to paint Tamboran in a negative light.
- Lastly, the Guardian cites “experts” who have falsely warned that development of the Beetaloo will increase Australia's carbon emissions by 13% and have chosen to use emotive and incorrect language that the Beetaloo is a “carbon bomb”. This claim doesn't bare even basic scientific scrutiny as it is premised on an assumption of 11 trillion cubic feet of production per year from the Beetaloo, this would require approximately 23 INPEX LNG plants to be constructed to handle these volumes. Even a cursory review of the scientific studies illustrates that the Beetaloo shale gas resources have one of the nation's lowest levels of naturally occurring CO<sub>2</sub> within the formation, of approximately 2 – 3%, compared to more than 20% within the Cooper Basin and some fields offshore northern Australia. We have committed to exploring options to integrate renewable energy, carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) and carbon



offsets into any development, with the objective of being a net zero carbon emissions gas producer for our equity share of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions when we commence commercial sales of natural gas. This is aligned with the requirements of major gas purchasers such as Japan. By seeking to sensationalise the story with terms like “carbon bomb” the article has failed to convey the critical importance of Beetaloo gas in both replacing coal for power generation and providing gas-fired firming capacity to accelerate the roll-out of renewable technologies.

If you are interested in a more balanced and honest discussion about these facts, please feel free to contact me.

Kind Regards,

Joel Riddle  
Managing Director & Chief Executive Office of Tamboran Resources Limited

Email: [joel.riddle@tamboran.com](mailto:joel.riddle@tamboran.com)  
Telephone: +61 2 8830 6626