

Browse to be biggest carbon polluter

• Continued from p1

with each assessed individually and at different times by State and Commonwealth agencies.

“Globally, we need to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 to maintain a habitable climate and that is the target that has been set for WA by the McGowan Government – yet this project would produce up to 100 million tonnes of carbon pollution every year, until 2070.”

The Burrup Hub and Browse Basin expansion project would put Australia’s Paris Climate Agreement targets out of reach.

Pollution from LNG out of control

“Pollution from WA’s LNG sector had grown out of control in the past decade, with no effective constraints on pollution from the industry”, said Verstegen.

“In recent years, WA’s gas industry has been the main driver of national pollution growth, in breach of our international obligations. Pollution released here in WA by the gas industry every year is already cancelling out the combined annual savings of every single wind farm and solar panel installed across the entire continent.

“The long lifespan of the Burrup Hub and Browse project also means that the facility will continue to pump pollution into the atmosphere until 2070 – well beyond the deadline for global net-zero emissions under the Paris Climate Agreement.

“Seeking environmental approvals for this operation has been a stealth operation by the companies involved and it is time to come clean about the shocking damage it would do to the climate and to our international obligations to tackle climate change.”

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CSG regulations stalled as Santos pushes for Narrabri gas approval

A NSW Parliamentary inquiry into the stalled implementation of the Chief Scientist’s recommendations on regulating coal seam gas (CSG) will expose the government’s failures and strengthen calls to stop the proposed gasfield at Narrabri, according to Lock the Gate Alliance.

The inquiry is being held ahead of the expected referral of the Narrabri gas project to the Independent Planning Commission for determination, but the Alliance says the gasfield would never have been allowed to proceed this far if the Government had followed the recommendations laid down five years ago.

Mullaley farmer, Margaret Fleck said, “We’re relieved the parliament will examine the Government’s failure to meet the recommendations of the Chief Scientist on CSG.

“This inquiry is coming in the nick of time given a PR campaign push from Santos to get approval for its proposed Narrabri gasfield that is widely opposed by farmers and people across our region.

“This damaging high-risk project would never have been allowed to proceed this far if the Government had followed the recommendations laid down by the Chief Scientist five years ago.

“Crucial Chief Scientist recommendations about baseline data, modelling,

risk assessments, insurance, transparency and governance have been left to languish while Santos presses ahead with its plans for a huge production gasfield in our region that will remove huge volumes of groundwater beneath a recharge aquifer of the Great Artesian Basin.

“Santos has refused requests by government agencies to calibrate its groundwater model, to conduct worst-case scenario modelling, and to undertake the additional groundwater monitoring requested.

“The Santos gasfield poses long-term risks to our precious groundwater, including the Great Artesian Basin. Permanent protection for the GAB recharge zone should be an absolute no-brainer when so much of our region depends on it for survival.”

Lock the Gate Alliance NSW spokesperson Georgina Woods said, “Monday this week marked five years since the Chief Scientist made a sweeping set of recommendations for CSG in New South Wales.

“The Government has completely dropped the ball on implementing those recommendations and the groundwater drought-affected farmers rely on is under real threat if a huge CSG production gasfield at Narrabri is allowed to go ahead.”

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Metgasco makes comeback in Queensland

A company whose unwelcome drilling in the Northern Rivers region of NSW was ultimately defeated by staunch community opposition is now exploring in Queensland’s iconic and fragile Channel Country.

Metgasco’s attempts to impose a gasfield on the people of the Northern Rivers triggered widespread opposition and led to the company’s licence to operate being suspended in 2014 after the historic Bentley protest.

Lock the Gate Alliance Queensland spokesperson Ellie Smith said it was a shame Metgasco hadn’t learnt from its experiences in NSW.

“Lock the Gate Alliance is deeply concerned Metgasco, which so bla-

tantly defied community opposition to unconventional gas exploration and extraction in Northern NSW, is now planning to drill in Queensland’s iconic Channel Country,” she said.

“Metgasco clearly had no qualms about operating without a social licence when it invaded the Northern Rivers, and was only prevented from drilling due to people power and eventual government intervention.

“The company’s recent failed attempt to establish a well during a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico is further indication that Metgasco is not an operator communities can risk gambling with.”

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Top Twenty carbon polluters identified

The Climate Accountability Institute has released a new dataset quantifying how much each of the largest oil, natural gas, and coal companies has contributed to the climate crisis since 1965.

The Institute found that the Top Twenty companies have collectively contributed 480 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide and methane, chiefly from the combustion of their products, equivalent to 35% of all fossil fuel and cement emissions worldwide since 1965 (global total of 1.35 trillion tCO₂e).

Climate Accountability Institute director, Richard Heede, said: “On the theory that fossil fuel producers bear substantial responsibility for the adverse impacts of their products, we set out to determine how much each company’s carbon fuels contributed to rising carbon dioxide emissions. We also estimate their direct operational emissions (~12% of their total), which include CO₂ from flaring and venting and own fuel use, and fugitive methane.

“We chose 1965 as the starting point for this new data because recent research has revealed that by mid-1960s the climate impact of fossil fuels was known by industry leaders and politicians. Although global consumers from individuals to corporations are the ultimate emitters of carbon dioxide, we focus on the fossil fuel companies that, in our view, have produced and marketed the carbon fuels to billions of consumers with the knowledge that their use as intended will worsen the climate crisis.”

Key findings:

- Global fossil fuel and cement emissions from 1965 to 2018 totalled 1,354 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide and energy-related methane (GtCO₂e);
- The 20 largest investor-owned and state-owned fossil fuel companies produced carbon fuels that emitted 35% of the global total (480 GtCO₂e);
- If we look over the entire historical data we find the current database of 103 fossil fuel and cement entities emitted 1,221 GtCO₂e, or 69.8% of global since 1751 (1.75 TtCO₂e); of which the Top Twenty companies are responsible for 526 GtCO₂e, or 30% of all fossil fuel and cement emission since 1751;



Top carbon polluter: A Saudi Aramco processing plant. Photo: Aramco

- These companies have significant moral, financial, and legal responsibility for the climate crisis, and a commensurate burden to help address the problem;

- Half of all global fossil fuel and cement CO₂ emissions since 1751 have been emitted since 1990;

- The climate crisis is worsening, global emissions are still rising, and they must peak immediately in order to reduce emissions by 45% by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

“It is incumbent on companies that value their social license to operate to respect climate science, manage corporate risks accordingly, commit to reducing future production of carbon fuels and their emissions in alignment with the Paris Agreement pathway under 1.5 °C (net zero by 2050), support the decarbonization of the global economy, and shift their capital investments toward renewables, carbon sequestration, and low-carbon fuels in line with science-based targets,” Heede said.

“Companies leading this transition will prosper, and laggards will perish. We will be watching.”

Top Twenty carbon polluters 1965-2017

In order of filth:

Saudi Aramco
Chevron
Gazprom
ExxonMobil
National Iranian Oil Co
BP
Royal Dutch Shell
Coal India
Pemex
Petróleos de Venezuela
PetroChina
Peabody Energy
ConocoPhillips
Abu Dhabi National Oil Co
Kuwait Petroleum Corp
Iraq National Oil Co
Total SA
Sonatrach
BHP Billiton
Petrobras

Flawed policy lets miners increase emissions

Massive flaws in the Morrison Government's climate change policy allowed Centennial Coal to dramatically increase pollution from its Myuna Colliery and Mandalong mines without any penalty, analysis by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has found.

These flaws meant Centennial avoided having to buy approximately \$8.3 million in carbon offset credits, pay an alternative financial penalty or more aggressively implement strategies to cut its mining pollution.

The Safeguard Mechanism sets pollution limits for large facilities like power plants, mines and refineries. If this pollution baseline is exceeded companies are required to buy carbon credits or pay a penalty. But the policy also allows companies to be granted temporary or permanent increases in their baselines under a range of loose conditions.

The analysis found in 2017-18 Centennial blew its initial baseline for Myuna by 65 per cent but avoided penalty after having its baseline immediately increased by the Clean Energy Regulator. Mandalong has also had two baseline changes in 2016-17 and 2017-18 that helped the company avoid paying for

excess emissions totalling more than 300,000 tonnes.

Centennial is not the only example of a large coal miner exploiting climate policy flaws to freely increase climate pollution. Anglo American Coal used baseline changes to increase emissions at its Moranbah North mine by more than one million tonnes without penalty, saving the company \$13.7 million in potential offset requirements.

Fugitive emissions rising

The climate pollution reported at Myuna comes from mining, not burning, coal. These are known as fugitive emissions. The latest Australian greenhouse gas data recorded a 5.9% rise in fugitive emissions from fossil fuel extraction and distribution in the year to March 2019.

"At the UN Prime Minister Scott Morrison said our country was taking action to stop climate pollution, but Australia's emissions are rising and a large reason is the lack of a comprehensive national climate plan setting hard and tightening caps on pollution from large companies," said ACF Climate Change Program Manager, Gavan McFadzean.

"Shockingly, Centennial Coal massively increased the pollution from its Myuna

and Mandalong mines without penalty under the glaring flaws in the Morrison Government's climate policy. This allowed Centennial to avoid buying approximately \$8.3 million in pollution offsets and cruelled any incentive for the company to clean up its act.

"The rise in pollution from big companies like Centennial is swamping the emissions cuts the Morrison Government is buying with public money through its Climate Solutions Fund or the reductions coming from the Renewable Energy Target.

"Our national climate policies are clearly not strong enough to halt pollution or even to meet Australia's unambitious international commitments.

"As a first step, the Government must close the loopholes Centennial has exploited and tighten safeguard pollution caps over time, as recommended by the Climate Change Authority.

"This is a bare minimum first step towards a comprehensive Australian climate change strategy that must bring down our pollution to zero by 2050 from all sectors of our economy including heavy industry, transport, energy and the land."

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Wrong project, wrong place, wrong time

Several market and physical challenges exist for a new proposed coal development in Tasmania's southern midlands, according to a new briefing paper released by the Australia Institute Tasmania.

The company seeking to develop the project, Midland Energy, is looking to raise capital in the USA where it is claiming coal demand is "rampant" in Asia and increasing globally.

Key findings:

- Growth in Asian coal demand was high from around 2000 to 2011, but declined between 2013 and 2015

- Globally, coal demand peaked in 2013

Tasmania is further from Asian markets than all other major coal suppliers, such as China, Indonesia, Queensland, New South Wales, Mongolia, Russia and South Africa.

Every shipment of coal from Tasmania to northern Asian ports would incur an extra \$100,000 in shipping costs compared to Queensland ports.

"This appears to be the wrong project in the wrong place at the wrong time", said Leanne Minshull, Director Australia Institute - Tasmania.

"On a per tonne basis, it will be difficult for this mine to compete without further and larger state government subsidies.

"Any new mines would also compete for water use, an already stretched resources in the Southern Midlands," Minshull said.

Midland Energy has been awarded a \$50,000 Tasmanian government grant to continue exploration, in a move that has shocked farmers in the region.

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Inside the news

The **Tasmanian government** has been **handing out money** to coal explorers (p7), where prospective coal fields underlie productive farmland. Agricultural interests say the government is setting up miners against farmers who have invested millions in irrigation infrastructure.

In **NSW**, the **government** is considering opening new coal fields in an attempt to make the state a “**number one mining destination**”. No worries about the climate crisis, as other parts of NSW burn with the loss of dozens of homes and at least two lives.

How long will it take governments to connect the dots?

The *Guardian* has published an excellent series of articles on fossil fuels and global heating – and highlights that, despite the climate crisis, the world’s biggest fossil fuel companies are planning to expand production faster than ever (p11). Described as a ‘**final fossil fuel harvest**’ they will add seven million barrels of oil per day to current extraction.

Fossil fools are excited that the **first of thousands** of fracked wells are being drilled in the Northern Territory’s Beetaloo Basin, despite most territorians believing the unconventional gas industry will cause harm (p8-9).

Extinction Rebellion’s global week of action has attracted plenty of attention and numerous arrests (p10-11). Most states are now considering tough anti-protest laws, initially targeted at Vegan farm invaders but likely to affect climate protesters.

An **anti-Adani protester** has had her \$10,000 fine reduced to \$1,000 after an appeal (p6). Meanwhile, more companies are deciding not to work with Adani, leaving few options for insuring the Carmichael Mine project.

Former Prime Minister, **Kevin Rudd**, has detailed how **Rio Tinto**, **Glencore** and **BHP** defeated his government’s work on climate change and mining taxes (p12). With lobbying, political donations and the ‘umbilical’ relationship with the **Murdoch media**, miners are having enormous influence on government policy.

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In the news this week

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THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/04/adani-mine-another-insurer-distances-itself-from-carmichael-project>

Adani mine: another insurer distances itself from Carmichael project

Ben Smees, *Guardian*, 04/10/2019

A Lloyd's of London insurer [Canopus] – considered one of the few remaining possible underwriters for elements of the Carmichael coal project – has distanced itself from Adani and says it is not involved in negotiations.

This leaves relatively few insurers with the capability to support Carmichael and will mean increased attention on those who have yet to make definitive statements, such as US-based financial giant AIG.

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/crime-court/how-this-student-adani-protester-escaped-10000-fine/news-story/>

How this student Adani protester escaped \$10,000 fine

Jacob Miley, *Townsville Bulletin*, 10/10/2019

A student on youth allowance who chained herself to a North Queensland railway line has had her \$10,000 fine quashed after she appealed the “excessive” penalty.

Freya Rowe Nolin, 21, will now have to fork out a fraction of that and the Queensland Police Service will have to pay her costs up to \$1,800 after she successfully appealed her sentence.

The West Australian woman pleaded guilty to trespassing on a railway, obstructing a railway and obstructing police and was stung with the biggest fine in Australian environmental history when the matter was heard in Bowen Magistrates Court in April.

Nolin appealed the sentence on the grounds that she was 21 and on youth allowance with no criminal record.

District Court Judge Ian Dearden Mr Dearden quashed the \$10,000 fine and the \$1,565.37 restitution. He fined Nolin \$1,000.



On Friday morning two groups of ten people blocked vehicles from accessing the Carmichael mine site. Photo: FLAC

<https://www.afr.com/companies/mining/cardno-to-cut-ties-with-adani-20191010-p52zh2>

Cardno is latest firm to cut ties with Adani

Liam Walsh, Luke Housego & Mark Ludlow, *AFR*, 10/10/2019

Engineering outfit Cardno has decided to cut ties with the Adani Carmichael coal mine in Queensland even as it continues to work with other fossil fuel projects.

The Brisbane-based company with more than 6,000 staff globally cited Adani’s “polarising” impact on employees, its own customer base and the political environment for the move.

Queensland Senator and resources minister Matt Canavan was scathing of the decision.

“Apparently Cardno does basically zero work for Adani so this decision is just another example of the gutless wonders in our corporate sector who want to parade their apparent virtue without making any sacrifice themselves,” he said.

“It is the moral equivalent of a vegan giving up meat for Lent.”

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2019/10/04/mining-jobs-regional-australia/>

Mining isn't the only option for jobs in regional Australia

Shirley Jackson, *Crikey*, 04/10/2019

The latest news from the coalface of the climate wars has come through a report from the mining lobby, claiming that the government must learn from the lessons of the past. Basically, mining companies want more workers but they don't want to be “forced” to offer them “high salaries and generous benefits” like they did in the heady days of the resources boom.

Article discusses economics of mining compared to other industries, and concludes: “Ultimately, Australia stands on the verge of a new economy. Our government needs to decide if they want to support regional Australians and invest in new industries or leave them dependent upon a mining lobby that describes paying them a living wage as an act of coercion.”

• Shirley Jackson is an economist at *Per Capita*.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-05/rix-creek-mine-approved-before-decision-made/11576662>

Rix's Creek mine lease approval announced in 'embarrassing' error by planning commission

Glen Moret, ABC, 06/10/2019

An "embarrassing" administrative blunder by the NSW Independent Planning Commission (IPC) saw a 21-year mining lease approved before public submissions had closed.

The decision gave the Bloomfield Group the go-ahead to operate the Rix's Creek South Mine near Singleton until 2040.

Just a few hours later, the Commission reversed the approval, saying a decision on the mining lease had not yet been made.

It is understood hundreds of workers at the site were told on Friday their jobs were secure after a six-year wait, only to be told the IPC had withdrawn approval a few hours later.

The commission's chair, Mary O'Kane, said the secretariat allowed nine days for public comment when it should have been seven days.

NSW Planning Minister Rob Stokes said he had asked for an immediate review into the commission to ensure a mistake like this was not repeated.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/06/centennial-coal-massively-increased-emissions-from-two-mines-with-no-penalty>

Centennial Coal massively increased emissions from two mines with no penalty

Lisa Cox, Guardian, 06/10/2019

An Australian mining company was able to massively increase greenhouse gas emissions from two of its coal mines without penalty under a government policy that is meant to limit carbon pollution from large facilities.

Centennial Coal was given permission on three occasions since 2016/17 to increase the greenhouse gas emissions from its Myuna colliery and Mandalong mines in NSW.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), which analysed emissions data for Centennial Coal published by the clean energy regulator, says flaws in the safeguard policy meant Centennial avoided having to buy about \$8.3m in carbon offset credits, or pay an alternative penalty or implement stronger measures to cut their pollution.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-07/farmer-wrongly-thought-coal-mine-plan-was-dead-in-the-water/11577648>

Tasmanian farmer 'shocked' proposed Woodbury coal mine has 'reared its ugly head'

Annah Fromberg, ABC, 07/10/2019

Third generation farmer Richard Headlam is well aware of the coal seam that runs beneath his Woodbury property in Tasmania's east.

He said he was approached by Midland Energy two years ago, and in no uncertain terms rejected their plan to extract coal from his farm.

"I feel a bit shocked it's reared its ugly head again. We definitely don't want a coal mine here," he said.

"We were notified two years ago but we've heard nothing about it since then, we were assured it was basically dead in the water," Mr Headlam said.

Mr Headlam said that assurance came from a government MP.

Despite this, the State Government gave the company a \$50,000 grant in March to continue exploration.

Mr Headlam said it would be ludicrous to mine productive farmland around Woodbury, after about \$15 million had been spent on irrigation infrastructure.

About 100 people rallied on Hobart's Parliament lawns on Saturday, chanting "no more coal" and arguing the plan went against Tasmania's clean, green image.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-10/tasmania-mining-future-raises-farmers-concerns/11590340>

Coal mining's potential resurgence in Tasmania prompts concerns from farmers

Ellen Coulter, ABC, 10/10/2019

Key points:

- The State Government's "exploration drilling grant initiative" matches dollar-for-dollar funding for mineral exploration
- About 20 companies have been successful, including coal miners Junction Coal and Midland Energy
- Farmers say they are not given appropriate notice of exploration applications on their land

Tasmanian Greens leader Cassy O'Connor said any new coal mine was bad news.

"Responsible governments are helping workers to transition — they're

not continuing to invest in dead-end resource extraction."

A third round of applications for exploration drilling grants closed in September and successful applicants will be announced in November.

Agricultural consultant Jan Davis said the government grants were not an acceptable use of public funds.

"So on the one hand we've got the Government looking at handouts to the coal mining industry against farmers, and others in rural communities that have invested heavily of their own money to make a go of industries that are really important," she said.

Junction Coal, Midland Energy, Cornwall Coal and a company called HardRock Coal Mining currently hold coal exploration licences in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government has said while it encouraged mineral exploration, it did not support mining on productive agriculture land where it was not in the state's best interest and in conflict with a target to grow the value of agriculture.

In a statement, Resources Minister Guy Barnett said any proposal for mining would be subject to rigorous assessment and must be in the state's best interests.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/oct/10/nsw-government-may-open-two-new-coal-fields-for-exploration-to-boost-economic-growth>

NSW government may open two new coal fields for exploration to boost economic growth

Ben Butler, Guardian, 10/10/2019

The NSW government is considering opening two large coal fields to exploration as it seeks to make the state the "number one mining investment destination."

The Advisory Body for Strategic Release, which controls the state's minerals reserves, has written to the deputy premier, John Barilaro, who is also the minister for regional affairs, recommending the Berejiklian government approve the development of the Hawkins-Rumker area in the central tablelands and the Wollar field near Bylong.

"No decision has been made by the NSW government to open up areas to strategic release," a spokeswoman for Barilaro said.

"The NSW deputy premier is determined to make the state the number one mining investment destination



WaterNSW says Avon Dam (above) could crack if South32's Dendrobium coalmine is allowed to expand. Photo: WaterNSW

and coal has a critical part to play in that.”

Approval could open the door for more areas to be developed, including the Doyles Creek mine linked to the former NSW resources minister Ian Macdonald, who is to face trial on corruption charges in February, with the former Labor powerbroker Eddie Obeid.

The next step in the process is consideration by cabinet, after which the exploration licences would be put out for auction. It is believed the NSW government could make a decision by Christmas, opening the way for an auction early next year.

The usual environmental approvals would still be required before any mining could take place.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/oct/11/coalmine-would-take-33bn-litres-of-water-a-year-from-sydney-catchment-agency-warns>

Coalmine would take 3.3bn litres of water a year from Sydney catchment, agency warns

Lisa Cox, Guardian, 11/10/2019

WaterNSW has objected to the expansion of a coalmine under Sydney's drinking water catchment because the project would cause unacceptable impacts, including the loss of 3.3bn litres of water a year.

The government-owned water corporation has also warned that mining company South32's proposal to extend the mining operations at its Dendrobium coking coalmine could cause cracking in the walls of two dams that supply water to the Illawarra and Macarthur regions, and may harm 26 endangered coastal swamps.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/fractured-future-water-fears-as-drilling-for-gas-begins-in-the-nt-20191003-p52x6j.html>

Fractured future: Water fears as drilling for gas begins in the NT

Miki Perkins, Bris Times, 06/10/2019

While the fight against giant coal projects like the proposed Adani mine in Queensland has dominated the bandwidth of the climate change debate, the Northern Territory's nascent fracking industry has largely travelled under the national radar.

The government inquiry estimated greenhouse emissions from any new large shale gas field in the territory would contribute around 6% of all Australian emissions. Fracking opponents believe it could be much higher and say that in the context of anthropogenic climate change, investment in emissions-intensive fracking makes no sense.

Fracking's supporters argue new technologies can reduce emissions by capturing gas during construction and through stricter leakage controls on equipment. Keld Knudsen, the territory director for the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, says developing the onshore gas resources could also secure the Northern Territory's future for “decades” through new jobs and royalty payments to the government.

About 70% of the shale gas in the territory is believed to occur in the Beetaloo Basin, around 500 kilometres south-east of Darwin. Three petroleum companies - Origin, Santos and Pangaea - told the government inquiry up to 1200 wells could be sunk over the next 25 years.

The article details the concerns of Traditional Owners and landholders over the impact of fracking the NT.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/call-to-action-as-gas-market-hits-industry/news-story/17ef8a827c1bbde1c0174e162bd854e0>

Call for quick fix as gas crisis hits industry

Andrew White, Aus, 10/10/2019

High gas prices are transferring \$1bn in wealth from manufacturers to the big three LNG exporters every year because of Australia's “dysfunctional” market, big energy users warned yesterday as they demanded short-term action from the government to prevent harm to the economy.

Manufacturers including Qenos, Weston Aluminium and Incitec Pivot called for a price trigger to be included in the domestic gas security mechanism applied to LNG exporters, reserving a portion of production for domestic supply and more competition in pipelines to lower high transport costs.

Moves to liberate onshore gas exploration and production should also be pursued, but would not provide the short-term effect needed to lower prices because of the long lead time in developing resources.

Gas prices and production in Australia had both trebled since 2014 when the three liquefied natural gas terminals in Queensland began production, with no relief for domestic customers who were paying \$12 a gigajoule.

Gas-fired manufacturing generated \$38bn for the domestic economy and employed 1,600 people per petajoule of gas, which was 18 times that created by the export LNG industry.

<https://www.echo.net.au/2019/10/new-csg-enquiry-nsw-government-dropped-ball/>

New CSG enquiry – NSW government dropped the ball

David Lowe, Echonet Daily, 10/10/2019

Back in 2013, at the height of the coal seam gas (CSG) fight in NSW, the state government led by Barry O'Farrell commissioned the Chief Scientist, professor Mary O'Kane, to conduct a comprehensive review of CSG-related activities, focusing on the human health and environmental impacts of unconventional gas.

Late in 2014 she delivered her report, which included 16 recommendations to government.

Five years on, with Santos applying pressure on government to refer their Narrabri Gas Project to the Independent Planning Commission for approval, a NSW Upper House Committee Enquiry has begun, to look into the implementation of Mary O’Kane’s recommendations and to explore whether new evidence has emerged.

Mullaley farmer and vocal CSG opponent Margaret Fleck says, ‘we’re relieved the parliament will examine the government’s failure to meet the recommendations of the Chief Scientist on CSG.

‘This inquiry is coming in the nick of time given a PR campaign push from Santos to get approval for its proposed Narrabri gasfield that is widely opposed by farmers and people across our region.

‘Crucial Chief Scientist recommendations about baseline data, modelling, risk assessments, insurance, transparency and governance have been left to languish, while Santos presses ahead with its plans for a huge production gasfield in our region that will remove huge volumes of groundwater beneath a recharge aquifer of the Great Artesian Basin.’

<https://www.ntnews.com.au/business/historic-start-to-on-shore-gas-drilling-in-beetaloo-basin/news-story/>

Historic start to onshore gas drilling in Beetaloo Basin

Gary Shipway, NT News, 10/10/2019

The drilling of the first gas well in the Beetaloo Basin began on Wednesday marking a historic day for the Territory and what the NT business community is hoping will be the start of a multi-billion dollar onshore gas industry.

Kyalla 117, 600km southeast of Darwin, between Daly Waters and Elliott, is the first of two new Origin Energy appraisal wells to be drilled and fracture stimulated to help determine the potential of the resource in the Beetaloo Basin.

The Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, NT Resources Minister Paul Kirby and Origin Energy have all hailed the resumption of on-ground work in the Beetaloo Basin as a major milestone.

NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/business/state-businesses-to-benefit-if-uranium-deposits-are-unearted/news-story/906ea6073ba7eb05a8c52665b34bd39b>

State businesses to benefit if uranium deposits are unearthed

Hayden Johnson, Courier-Mail, 05/10/2019

Beneath the dusty red dirt of Queensland’s outback is a nuclear opportunity worth billions of dollars with the potential to create thousands of jobs.

Australia has the world’s largest endowment of uranium resources in the world, with about one-third of global resources.

Some Queensland federal MPs are leading a growing push for Australia to now re-examine the use of nuclear power, but it remains a divisive topic.

From cleaners to nuclear engineers, the construction of small nuclear reactors would create a range of jobs, University of New South Wales Field Professor John Fletcher said.

Professor Fletcher said, should nuclear be progressed, the manufacture and operation of small nuclear reactors would be required.

“The size of power systems that we would want to put in the network favours small modular reactors,” he said.

The Queensland Resources Council agrees incorporating nuclear in Australia’s energy mix could provide opportunities for Queensland businesses.

“Nuclear power is a proven supply option for reliable, low emissions power and the International Energy Agency has recognised the role nuclear can play in reducing emissions,” the council’s chief executive Ian Macfarlane said.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/06/incredibly-worrying-legal-fight-looms-around-australia-over-clampdown-on-protest>

‘Incredibly worrying’: legal fight looms around Australia over clampdown on protest

Calla Wahlquist, Guardian, 06/10/2019

On Monday, the activist group Extinction Rebellion will begin a week of global protests.

Since the group conducted its first action in Australia in April, there have been more than 170 arrests, with penalties ranging from a warning to a \$1,500 fine.

When new laws designed to target the tactics used by Extinction Rebellion pass parliament, those penalties will escalate.

“We are using civil disobedience to cause economic disruption and a disruption to business as usual,” Extinction Rebellion south-east Queensland member Emma Dorge says. “Without disruption, our voices are not being heard.”

Article describes anti-protest laws being developed in Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.

Many are aimed at Vegan farm invaders, but have wider implications.

A high court ruling – that environmental protests are political and protected under the constitutional implied freedom of political communication – could potentially apply to Queensland and NSW laws as proposed.



Origin Energy’s first gas well in the NT’s Beetaloo Basin. Photo: Supplied

STOP WATER MINING
THE NEXT RESOURCES BATTLE



<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-07/sydney-protests-extinction-rebellion-marred-by-arrests/11580058>

Extinction Rebellion rally in Sydney marred by arrests as protesters block road, chain themselves to water tank

Selby Stewart, ABC, 08/10/2019

Police have arrested dozens of protesters during a climate change demonstration in Sydney on Monday, including elderly activists who were dragged away by force.

The rally, organised by the Extinction Rebellion movement, is one of several protests across the country, calling for more government action on climate change.

Hundreds took part in the Sydney demonstration which began at Belmore Park near Central on Monday afternoon.

New South Wales Police said 30 people were arrested following the rally, for offences ranging from obstructing traffic to disobeying reasonable direction.

Several hundred protesters marched through central Brisbane amid heavy police presence.

A Queensland Police spokesman said seven people were charged, including for allegedly contravening police directions, walking onto a roadway when not authorised, obstructing police and public nuisance.

In Melbourne, protesters blocked the entire intersection at Flinders Street causing peak hour traffic disruptions.

Victoria Police said 10 protesters were arrested. Eight were issued with a penalty notice for obstructing a highway and two were charged with intentionally obstructing an emergency worker.

Extinction Rebellion Southeast Queensland spokeswoman Emma Dorge said the group expected thousands of people to join in civil disobedience during the week.

“We are sorry for individual inconveniences to people [but] our goal is the economic disruption of big business and government who are exploiting all of us and sacrificing our futures for short-term profit,” she said.

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/police-arrest-more-than-20-climate-change-activists-in-brisbane-20191008-p52y5w.html>

Police arrest more than 20 climate change activists in Brisbane

Jocelyn Garcia, Bris Times, 08/10/2019

More than 20 climate change activists were arrested during protests in the



Extinction Rebellion activists outside Santos's Brisbane HQ. Photo: Contributed

Brisbane CBD, including seven outside the energy company Santos and one who climbed on top of King George Square's bus station.

Police surrounded more than 100 Extinction Rebellion protesters on Turbot Street about midday on Tuesday with some officers blocking the building's entrance.

Extinction Rebellion claimed in a statement that they tried to deliver a list of demands to the Santos office but were told no one in Brisbane would speak to them.

Protester Naomi Shine said Santos was contributing emissions that “exacerbated the climate emergency”.

Brisbane water engineer Dr Anne Gardiner said the practice of coal seam gas mining that had boomed in the last 15 years had to stop.

“Santos claim they can capture most of the fugitive methane emissions from their CSG operations – but experts tell us that this is not the case,” she said.

“Methane is a super polluter, up to 86 times more potent than CO2.”

Dr Gardiner said Santos was not mitigating the effects of methane.

A Santos spokeswoman said Santos had been working to develop Australia's natural gas, which was “a fuel for the future providing cleaner energy to improve the lives of people in Australia and Asia”.

“For every tonne of carbon dioxide emitted during production in Australia, our LNG saves between 3 and 10 tonnes of emissions when it is used for

power generation, instead of coal, in Asia.” She said Santos would continue to develop natural gas as a “vital climate solution”.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/extinction-rebellion-protesters-subject-to-bail-conditions-designed-for-bikie-gangs-20191009-p52z4s.html>

Extinction Rebellion protesters subject to bail conditions 'designed for bikie gangs'

Pallavi Singhal, SMH, 09/10/2019

Protesters arrested as part of the Extinction Rebellion have been told not to attend any further demonstrations organised by the group and have been ordered not to go within 2.5 kilometres radius of the Sydney CBD.

Some of the 44 protesters arrested this week, including former Greens senator Scott Ludlam, claim to have suffered injuries and say they were asked to sign bail conditions “designed for bikie gangs”.

A Western Sydney University academic says he was taken to hospital in the back of a police van on Monday after suffering wrist and arm injuries when officers dragged him off Parramatta Road during a climate change protest.

President of the NSW Civil Liberties Council Pauline Write said the bail conditions that the protesters were asked to sign were more commonly imposed on bikie gangs and those on terrorism charges.

“These people are also required to go into Downing Centre Court, which is in the Sydney CBD, so they'll have to breach the bail conditions to come to court or obey them by not going to

court and face having a warrant issued for their arrest,” Ms Wright said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/10/extinction-rebellion-scott-ludlam-has-absurd-bail-conditions-dismissed-by-judge>

Extinction Rebellion: Scott Ludlam has ‘absurd’ bail conditions dismissed by judge

Naaman Zhou, Guardian, 10/10/2019

Former Greens senator Scott Ludlam has had bail conditions – that banned him from associating with Extinction Rebellion climate change protests – dismissed by a judge following his arrest at a protest earlier this week.

On Thursday morning in Sydney’s Downing Centre local court, deputy chief magistrate Jane Mottley said the conditions imposed by NSW police were not necessary given the low seriousness of his offences.

“I note these are fine-only offences,” she said. “And when one considers the ambit of matters before the court – these are not serious examples of offences which would ordinarily attract bail conditions”.

Ludlam welcomed the decision, saying, “I’m glad common sense prevailed.”

“This decision sends a clear message to the NSW police that the bail conditions were wildly inappropriate,” he said. “And I hope that the restrictions placed on other arrestees on Monday night will be immediately withdrawn.”

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/australia-will-miss-paris-goals-even-with-a-us75-a-tonne-carbon-tax-imf-20191010-p52zct.html>

Australia will miss Paris goals even with a \$US75 a tonne carbon tax: IMF

Shane Wright, SMH, 11/10/2019

Australia would fail to meet its Paris Agreement commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions even with a \$US75 carbon tax that would drive up Australia’s electricity prices by 75 per cent over the next decade.

Research by the International Monetary Fund, released on Friday, shows Australia is still so dependent on coal and other greenhouse gas-intensive energy sources that even direct intervention to address climate change won’t be enough for the country to reach its international commitments.

In Australia’s case, a \$US75 a tonne carbon tax would drive up electricity prices by 75 per cent over a decade. Only two other countries, India and South Africa, would suffer larger

increases in power prices. Australian petrol prices would rise by 15% over the same period.

There would be major health benefits apart from the reduction in greenhouse gases, with the IMF saying a \$US75 carbon tax would save the lives of 720,000 people – mostly in China – from coal-related diseases.

The IMF said such a large tax would deliver the federal government billions of dollars in extra revenue that it would need to funnel back to taxpayers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/09/revealed-20-firms-third-carbon-emissions>

Revealed: the 20 firms behind a third of all carbon emissions

The Guardian today reveals the 20 fossil fuel companies whose relentless exploitation of the world’s oil, gas and coal reserves can be directly linked to more than one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions in the modern era.

New data from world-renowned researchers reveals how this cohort of state-owned and multinational firms are driving the climate emergency that threatens the future of humanity, and details how they have continued to expand their operations despite being aware of the industry’s devastating impact on the planet.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/10/oil-firms-barrels-markets>

Oil firms to pour extra 7m barrels per day into markets, data shows

Guardian, 10/10/2019

The world’s 50 biggest oil companies are poised to flood markets with an additional 7m barrels per day over the next decade, despite warnings from scientists that this will push global heating towards catastrophic levels.

New research commissioned by the *Guardian* forecasts Shell and Exxon-Mobil will be among the leaders with a projected production increase of more than 35% between 2018 and 2030 – a sharper rise than over the previous 12 years.

The acceleration is almost the opposite of the 45% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 that scientists say is necessary to have any chance of holding global heating at a relatively safe level of 1.5C.

Dieter Helm, an Oxford University academic and government adviser, said oil giants were planning a final fossil fuel “harvest”.

“If we were serious about addressing climate change we would leave some oil in the ground, so there is a scramble among big oil companies to make sure their assets are not the ones left stranded,” he said.

“Their answer is to pump as much as they can, while they still can, to keep delivering shareholder dividends. But the problem for the rest of us is that they are going to produce far more oil and gas than is consistent with the Paris agreement.”

In absolute terms, the international oil companies will still be dwarfed by the output of state-run national firms in the future [such as] Saudi Aramco, Gazprom, the Iranian National Oil Co, ExxonMobil, Russia’s Rosneft, Shell, PetroChina and BP.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/10/vested-interests-public-against-climate-science-fossil-fuel-lobby>

How vested interests tried to turn the world against climate science

Felicity Lawrence, David Pegg & Rob Evans, Guardian, 11/10/2019

Article describes how, in 1998, a public relations consultant called Joe Walker developed the Global Climate Science Communications Plan after a workshop with senior executives from fossil fuel companies, including the oil multinationals Exxon – later part of ExxonMobil – and Chevron, and the gas and coal utility Southern Company, and a handful of rightwing thinktanks.

Walker outlined a vision of a comprehensive, international campaign to change public opinion on the climate crisis by casting doubt on the scientific research, presenting it as unreliable when the overwhelming majority of scientists had reached consensus.

The communications plan involved finding sympathetic scientists, identifying thinktanks to fund that would produce helpful reports, and working through supposed grassroots groups to hold debates questioning the consensus on global heating, along with a constant flow of media briefings manufacturing uncertainty.

The plan sounded much like a 1960s PR campaign devised by the tobacco industry to delay controls by questioning the science showing that smoking killed. Some of the people involved were in fact tobacco campaign veterans.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/10/minerals-council-says-it-will-release-a-climate-action-plan-next-year>

Minerals Council says it will release a 'climate action plan' next year

Ben Butler, *Guardian*, 10/10/2019

The Minerals Council has announced it will develop a "climate action plan" amid increasing pressure on its biggest members, BHP and Rio Tinto, to quit the industry body over its position on global heating.

In a statement posted on the Minerals Council website this week, the chief executive, Tania Constable, said the plan would be released next year and would "support strong and innovative action by Australia's world-leading minerals sector to address human-induced climate change.

The plan is to include preparing members for life in an economy consistent with the Paris agreement, which is designed to limit global heating to less than 2C, and reducing the emissions of member companies by using renewable power on mine sites and developing carbon sequestration technology.

The plan was immediately dismissed by activist investor group Market Forces, which said it appeared to be an effort to play for more time.

"The Minerals Council wants to make it look like a change of direction but the pressure has been rightly building and a leopard doesn't change its spots," the Market Forces executive director, Julien Vincent, said.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/oct/10/moderate-liberal-mps-sign-on-to-crossbench-led-climate-action-group>

Moderate Liberal MPs sign on to crossbench-led climate action group

Amy Remeikis, *Guardian*, 10/10/2019

Several Liberal MPs have signed on to a crossbench-led climate action committee, the Parliamentary Friends of Climate Action.

Tim Wilson, Dave Sharma, Jason Falinski, Katie Allen, Angie Bell and Trent Zimmerman are among the Liberal MPs to sign up to the Parliamentary Friends of Climate Action group, along with Labor's Ged Kearney and Josh Burns as well as Adam Bandt from the Greens and Andrew Wilkie.

Established by Rebekah Sharkie and Kerry Phelps late last year, the independent Helen Haines has stepped into Phelps' role as co-chair, with Zali Steggall to serve as deputy chair.

On Monday, when parliament resumes, the group will hear from the executive director of the Global Health Alliance, Misha Coleman, the chair of the environmental health working group from the World Federation of Public Health Associations, Liz Hanna, and the honorary associate professor of the Fenner School of Environment and Society, Kathryn Bowen, on the climate impacts on health.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/10/mining-firms-worked-kill-off-climate-action-australia-ex-pm-kevin-rudd>

Mining firms worked to kill off climate action in Australia, says ex-PM

Christopher Knaus, *Guardian*, 10/10/2019

The former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd says three of the world's biggest mining multinationals have run sophisticated operations to kill off climate action in Australia and continue to wield day-to-day influence over government through a vast lobbying network and an "umbilical" relationship with the Murdoch media.

"Glencore, Rio [Tinto] and BHP ran sophisticated political operations against my government, both on climate change and the mining tax," he said. "They worked hard ... to get rid of the resource super profit tax, against the interests of other mining companies and the national economy as a whole. They worked hard ... in 2013 against the carbon price. They succeeded in both enterprises."

Rudd attributes the day-to-day influence of the sector to two mechanisms. The first is what he describes as the vast lobbying network it uses to pressure political parties. The second is its close relationship with the Murdoch media, which owns most of the country's print media. Rudd describes the relationship as "umbilical".

Grattan Institute data shows the mining sector is responsible for the highest proportion of major donations to political parties. Mining interests accounted for one in five donations above \$60,000 in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

The revolving door between politics and the mining industry is a feature in both of Australia's major parties.

The industry also exerts influence in less obvious ways. An investigation by *Guardian Australia* revealed a covert, multimillion-dollar influence campaign being run by C|T Group, the lobbyist firm headed by Lynton Crosby, on behalf of Glencore.

The campaign, known as Project Caesar, included the creation of fake online grassroots groups that spread anti-renewable, pro-coal content to unsuspecting users. It aimed to shift the emotion and tone of the energy debate in Australia to favour coal by using personally relevant messaging, centred on themes of cost, reliability and family security.

Campaign teams also collected material that could be used to embarrass activist groups such as Greenpeace and 350.org.

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