



Fossil Fool Bulletin

Fossil fools in the spotlight this week: A resource for people working to end the fossil fuel era in Australia

Fossilfool.com.au

FFB 3:4 • 17 DECEMBER 2019

What Australians want for Christmas

Most Aussies want national net-zero emissions by 2050

New Research from The Australia Institute has revealed that a majority (62%) of Australians support a national target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 or earlier.

While every Australian State and Territory already has a target of reaching net zero emissions by 2050, the Federal Government has refused to commit to the policy.

The research was released ahead of Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction Angus Taylor's dismal performance at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP 25, in Madrid last week.

Key findings:

- A majority (62%) of Australians support a national target of net-zero emissions by 2050 or earlier; 21% support a target of net-zero emission by 2050, while 41% support an earlier target.
- A majority of Coalition voters (54%) support a national target of net-zero emissions by 2050, if not earlier.
- Two in three Australians (67%) support their State/Territory Governments setting a net-zero emissions target.

"Our research shows a majority of Australians, including a majority of Coalition voters, back a national long-term target to net-zero emissions. All that is missing is the national leadership," said Richie Merzian, Climate & Energy Director at the Australia Institute.

Festive season break



Fossil Fool Bulletin wishes readers a happy Christmas/New Year break.

FFB will publish again on January 7, and will be keeping an eye on the fossil fools in the meantime!

"At COP25 in Madrid, a growing number of countries, states, cities and businesses are committing to carbon neutrality by 2050 as a popular and responsible approach to climate change."

New Zealand shows the way

"It was a powerful example to see New Zealand lock in a target of net zero emissions by 2050 in its Zero Carbon Act last month, and the European Union is currently working through a plan to reach a similar goal.

"At COP25, representatives of California and New York are also outlining their state plans to reach net zero by 2050, to show that a lack of national leadership should not be confused with a lack of action on the ground. Maybe the same can be said about Australia."

The 2020 Climate Change Performance Index, prepared by a group of think-

tanks comprising the NewClimate Institute, the Climate Action Network and Germanwatch, looks at national climate action across the categories of emissions, renewable energy, energy use and policy.

Australia scores zero for climate action

Across all four categories, Australia was ranked as the sixth-worst performing of the 57 countries assessed.

On the assessment of national and international climate policy, Australia is singled out as the worst-performing, with the report saying the re-elected Morrison government "has continued to worsen performance at both national and international levels."

Australia scored the lowest possible rating of 0.0, compared with the highest-scoring country, Portugal, which was ranked best for its climate policy at 97.8%.

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• P2: Two charged under new anti-protest laws

• P3: NT govt ignores gas inquiry findings

P4: Fossil fools avoid taxes

Adani water trigger decision to be scrutinised

The Federal Government's decision not to apply the "water trigger" to Adani's North Galilee Water Scheme will be closely scrutinised to ensure it is lawful under the Commonwealth's environmental protection framework, the Environmental Defenders Office says.

The decision came during the Government's reassessment of the project under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and means the water impacts of the major pipeline system will not be rigorously assessed, at a time when much of the country is in drought.

The reassessment is being made after the Federal Government conceded a case over its initial assessment process brought by the Environmental Defenders Office, acting on behalf of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

In that case the Federal Government admitted it had failed to consider some

of the thousands of public submissions in its initial assessment, but did not concede that it should have applied the 'water trigger' during its assessment of the project.

Environmental Defenders Office managing solicitor Sean Ryan said:

"The community has expressed grave concerns about the potential water impacts of this project, which would see 12 billion litres of water a year taken from the Suttor River in central Queensland to Adani's mine site.

"This is particularly sensitive at a time of extreme drought.

"The decision not to apply the water trigger to this project is baffling to many people in the community.

"The water trigger is there to ensure any significant impacts on water resources from actions which involve a large coal mining development are properly assessed.

"The fact the Federal Government did not apply the water trigger to the North Galilee Water Scheme in its original assessment process precipitated our client's challenge in the Federal Court.

"We will be working with our clients to closely scrutinise the reasons behind this new decision to ensure it is lawful and in compliance with our federal protection framework."

12.5 billion litres, 110km pipeline

Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Carmel Flint said, "As a result of this decision to not apply the water trigger, Adani is now free to build a 110-kilometre pipeline, without a rigorous environmental impact assessment.

"This proposal by Adani to take so much water from the Suttor River, in such a drought prone region, should have undergone appropriate scrutiny."

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Two charged under new Qld lock-on laws

Two people have been charged under the Queensland government's controversial "lock-on laws", just days after the United Nations Human Rights Commission condemned the new legislation.

Last week, 35-year-old ecologist Tom Cotter and 59-year-old arborist Simon Ennew were charged with "using a dangerous attachment device" after locking themselves to heavy machinery on Adani's Carmichael rail corridor.

The UN special rapporteur on human rights found regarding the laws "We are seriously concerned that the Act allows for the criminalisation of peaceful protests that may entail blocking access to roads or buildings; acts of civil disobedience; and non-violent direct action... A certain level of disruption to ordinary life caused by assemblies, including disruption of traffic, annoyance and even harm to commercial activities, must be tolerated if the right (of political assembly) is not to be deprived of substance."

The report also expressed "concern about the short time period allocated for scrutiny and adoption of the above-mentioned Act, which curtailed prior consultation.



Tom Cotter, one of the first to be charged under new anti-protest laws.
Photo: Contributed

"Finally, we would like to mention that in his 2016 mission report to Australia, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders raised concerns about "the trend of introducing constraints by state and territory governments on the exercise of the right to freedom of assembly, in particular through "anti-protest legislation"."

Ecologist Tom Cotter said "the protest on Monday was peaceful and respectful, as these types of demonstrations usually are. And far from being a dangerous device, the lock-on helped

de-escalate the situation as it was clear I was locked to a machine and no threat to safety. These laws have again been found to be without substance at the most basic level.

"If we look around the country right now, it's clear the real danger to safety is our government's reckless inaction on climate change; and their attempts to criminalise one of the few effective techniques ordinary citizens have of trying to protect our future."

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NT fracking baseline studies watered down

Baseline studies for the fracking industry are being watered down under new draft terms of reference, according to Protect Country Alliance.

Fracking is already rupturing land and groundwater in the Territory, however the NT Government has only just released its Strategic Regional Environmental Baseline Assessment (SREBA) terms of reference for community consultation.

“We know that Santos is now fracking – yet these studies are still in the community consultation phase. We need the SREBA done properly,” Protect Country Alliance spokesperson Graeme Sawyer said.

“What’s more, the SREBA terms of reference have been significantly weakened when compared to what the Pepper Inquiry originally envisioned they would be.”

The Pepper Inquiry clearly stated:

In a number of cases, the Panel has recommended that a strategic regional environmental and baseline assessment (SREBA) (see Chapter 15) must be undertaken to provide the additional scientific knowledge and baseline information required before a final risk assessment can be made.

“But there are examples where this is not happening,” Sawyer said.

“For example, Minister Lawler recently admitted the Water Resources Division had not conducted investigations into the Moroak Sandstone and does ‘not hold data regarding water levels and pressure in the formation at depth’.

“This is just one of many glaring holes in knowledge which need to inform the final risk assessment, as the Moroak is four times saltier than the sea and over 1000 PSI in pressure, as drilling log files on the governments’ own website indicate.

Real risk of contamination

“The risk of it contaminating the freshwater aquifers near the surface and turning the area into a salty wasteland unsuitable for agriculture, wildlife or humans is very real.

Moroak Sandstone is four times saltier than the sea and over 1000 PSI in pressure ... the risk of it contaminating the freshwater aquifers near the surface and turning the area into a salty wasteland unsuitable for agriculture, wildlife or humans is very real.

“We have lots of saltwater lakes in our inland and not a lot of freshwater ones. It would be a terrible tragedy to turn nearby Lake Woods into a saltwater lake because of ignorance.”

“Water from this region not only flows into Lake Woods but into the Roper, Hodgson, McArthur and Daly river catchments.”

Sawyer said, “The NT Government is ignoring the Pepper Inquiry’s call for in depth scientific baseline studies, and is instead proceeding with a ham-fisted approach to data collection.

“The Gunner Government must stop cutting corners and ignoring key elements of the Pepper Inquiry recommendations.

Govt ignoring inquiry recommendations, in favour of gas companies

“Despite regular claims in the media about it following the recommendations, the government is flagrantly ignoring the recommendations of the Pepper Inquiry at the behest of gas companies.

“Other examples include allowing fracking companies to operate during the wet season and store their waste in open-air containers.

“These baseline studies are needed to determine the risk fracking poses to the complex ecosystems present in the Territory, but most importantly we need to see this final risk assessment as a genuine informed process.

“Currently the Gunner government is ignoring perhaps the most important piece of the Pepper Inquiry.”

Polluters must pay

Civil society groups and communities across the Philippines have hailed the pronouncement of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) of the Philippines that the world’s biggest polluting companies are responsible for human rights violations and threats arising from climate impacts.

Petitioners to the CHR’s National Inquiry on Climate Change, civil society, youth and law groups working on rights and climate gathered in Quezon City to celebrate the CHR declaration. The groups were reacting to the announcement of the CHR, represented by Commissioner Roberto Cadiz, on December 9, at the sidelines of COP 25, the UN climate talks ongoing in Madrid, Spain.

Fossil companies legally, morally liable for harm from climate change

This is the first time ever that a human rights body has stated that fossil fuel companies can be found legally and morally liable for harms linked to climate change.

In its ground-breaking investigation, the CHR announced that the 47 investor-owned corporations, including Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP, Repsol, Sasol, and Total, could be found legally and morally liable for human rights harms to Filipinos resulting from climate change. The CHR also found the relevant criminal intent may exist to hold companies accountable under civil and criminal laws, in light of certain circumstances involving obstruction, wilful obfuscation and climate denial.

The CHR has concluded that people affected by climate change and whose human rights have been dramatically harmed must have access to remedies and access to justice. Simply put, big polluters and other corporations have the responsibility to protect human rights as we face the climate emergency.

CHR’s timely announcement came days after the release of the 15th edition of the Global Climate Risk Index, which showed there have been 495,000 fatalities directly linked to 12,000 extreme weather events worldwide in the past 20 years.

Fossil fools avoid taxes



Coal mining and gas companies exploiting Australian resources have once again dodged corporate responsibility, with some paying little or no tax in the 2017-18 financial year.

The release of the Federal Corporate Tax Dataset for the period revealed repeat offenders like Arrow Energy paid zero tax, despite earning \$617 million and ramping up polluting coal seam gas operations in Queensland.

Santos, which has recently begun fracking in the Northern Territory, earned a staggering \$3.5 billion in the 2017-18 financial year, but also paid zero tax.

Another repeat offender, Whitehaven Coal, also escaped paying any tax, despite earning \$2.3 billion.

Adani pays a skerrick: 1% of earnings

Meanwhile, coal behemoth Adani finally paid a skerrick of tax after years of avoiding it, this year contributing a miniscule 1% of its earnings to the tax office.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Naomi Hogan said it was outrageous that big mining and gas companies could make

billions exploiting resources owned by all Australians, cause hardship for communities directly impacted, and avoid paying a fair amount of tax.

“This is a kick in the teeth to the people whose land and water has been destroyed by coal and gas mining giants across the nation” she said.

“Not only do many of these companies not have a social licence to operate, but they seemingly cannot even do the bare minimum and pay tax like half-decent corporate citizens.

“Farmers in north-west NSW who have always paid their taxes are appalled that Santos and Whitehaven are paying no tax while putting groundwater at risk during a terrible drought.

“Remote communities in the Northern Territory say the information shows that fracking for gas is no solution to economic issues and Santos shouldn’t be allowed to operate there when they don’t pay tax.”

Other zero taxpayers include: Exxon Mobile, Peabody, Chevron, BG International, Puma Energy, Yancoal, Australia Pacific LNG, Victorian Power Networks and ConocoPhillips.

Fire approaches mine, power station

The Gospers Mountain mega-fire in NSW fire has come dangerously close to Springvale coal mine and Mt Piper coal power station.

If either of these catch fire they will likely burn for weeks, emitting extremely toxic fumes which will aggravate the already dangerous levels of air pollution across NSW.

The ABC reported that NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers managed to protect the Mount Piper Power Station, Springvale Coal Mine and the abandoned Wallerawang coal mines near Lithgow as embers rained down on them overnight.

If the mine or power station ignites, workers and emergency services responders will be at extreme risk, as well as the local community.

Mount Piper Power Station generates around 10% of NSW’s electricity and there is concern the fire could threaten power supplies in the region.

The Springvale coal mine has been closed since Thursday last week due to the risk of fire but Centennial Coal, which owns the mine, said the facility’s stockpiles of coal were well protected behind containment lines.

The mine has been affected by smoke sucked into its ventilation shafts.

Jamie Hanson, Head of Campaigns at Greenpeace Australia Pacific, said: “Last time Australia experienced a coal mine fire was the Hazelwood fire in 2014, which was lit by embers from nearby bushfires and burned for 45 days.

“As Hazelwood burned, the mine emitted toxic chemicals such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, polycyclic aromatic compounds, volatile organic compounds, dioxins and furans, and metals.

“These chemicals are extremely toxic and dangerous to communities and families, especially children and the elderly.”

An inquiry into the Hazelwood fire found that 11 premature deaths were attributable to the fire.

Whitehaven gets cease and desist letter

Whitehaven's Maules Creek Mine. Photo: Whitehaven Coal



Whitehaven Coal has been issued a cease and desist letter over alleged illegal construction and use of a pipeline to transport groundwater from nearby farming properties it owns to its Maules Creek mine in drought-ravaged north west NSW.

The state's water watchdog, the Natural Resource Access Regulator, announced it was investigating the pipeline last month, however so far no action has been taken.

Late last week, the Environmental Defenders Office issued Whitehaven Coal with a cease and desist letter on behalf of Lock the Gate Alliance.

Lock the Gate NSW spokesperson Georgina Woods said it was the Alliance's view that the construction of the pipeline was illegal as it was well outside the approved mine project.

"The properties the mine is taking alluvial groundwater from are outside the approved mining area and therefore should not be used to supplement the company's water," she said.

"When the impact of the Maules Creek coal mine was being assessed, the company never said it would be buying up local farms and piping productive groundwater to the mine.

"The mine's water use was modelled for a range of climatic conditions and Whitehaven never planned to use alluvial water for washing coal and suppressing dust.

"Whitehaven is a rogue operator, running a mine in a parched landscape at a time when farmers in the region are struggling against this severe drought.

"Whitehaven Coal has already outbid multiple farmers for groundwater allocations, paying exorbitant prices that farmers simply can't compete against. It has been found to be illegally taking

surface water, and now we have this unauthorised groundwater pipeline.

"Locals in the area are at their wits' end. The bores Whitehaven is extracting from were for farming and irrigation – never for mining.

"We demand Whitehaven immediately stop using these bores to extract water and call on the government agencies to prosecute this company for its blatant breaches of environmental law."

This latest development also comes after community group Leard Forest Research Node called on the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to enforce its own laws on the company to make it stop taking water from the drought stricken region, however the Department reportedly wiped its hands of the situation.

Compliance framework "impotent"

Lock the Gate Alliance has slammed NSW mining compliance framework as "impotent" after mining Whitehaven Coal lodged a modification application for its Maules Creek coal mine apparently to get approval for two already-built and highly contentious water pipelines.

"This decision by Whitehaven Coal to lodge two applications to modify its development consent for the controversial Maules Creek coal mine seems to be an admission by the company that it did not have approval for construction in the first place," said Alliance spokesperson Georgina Woods.

Notice was posted last week by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment of two applications by Whitehaven to modify its approval at Maules Creek. One concerns a "Roma and Brighton Water Pipeline" and the other an "Olivedene Water Pipeline."

Lock the Gate Alliance wrote to the Department of Planning a month ago to alert it that the two pipelines were under construction in breach of the company's development approval. No substantial response has been received from the Department, but Lock the Gate understands that a compliance investigation is underway.

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Leigh Creek Energy gets tax rebate

Tax-payer subsidies to the fossil fuel industry include the recently announced Research and Development Tax Incentive cash rebate to Leigh Creek Energy of \$6,389,839.50.

Leigh Creek Energy operates an underground coal gasification project in South Australia which is deeply unpopular with the local community and the Adnyamathanya traditional owners.

Underground coal gasification is banned in Queensland after Linc Energy's project on the Darling Downs caused the state's worst ever pollution event.

Some former Linc executives are now involved with the same technology at Leigh Creek Energy's project.

Leigh Creek Energy has been seeking Chinese investment partners and plans to develop similar projects in that country.

The South Australian venture will use gas for fertilizer production.

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David Rowe reproduced with permission: <https://www.facebook.com/david.rowe.5070>



Inside the news

As fires raged and people despaired at the lack of climate action from government, former fossil fuel executive **Ian Dunlop** has published two articles outlining **solutions** for Australia (p12). It's well worth clicking the links to read the full story. Meanwhile, frustrated emergency services leaders, including former fire chief **Greg Mullins**, are planning their own climate emergency summit next year, rather than wait for the Prime Minister to do anything.

Smoko Morrison has copped heaps of disapproval this week, such as Giles Parkinson's 'shut up and watch the cricket' spray on p15. FFB hears that Morrison was seen on Monday, departing with his family for a **fresh air** break in **Hawaii**.

Angus Taylor's false figures presented at the recent COP25 climate summit in Madrid are nailed by *The New Daily* on p15. *TND* also did a good piece on the climate deniers sabotaging Australia's progress (p14).

NSW environment minister **Matt Kean** has broken ranks with the deniers and declared the climate crisis needs action (p13). Predictably, he became a **Murdoch** target, with the *Daily Telegraph* printing three derogatory articles about him last Friday. The *DT* also ran an opinion piece by newly converted **coal-lover**, Labor's **Joel Fitzgibbon**.

The dominance of Murdoch media is surely **preventing climate action**, or the **election** of any kind of **progressive** government in Australia, the UK and the US. One reason **New Zealand** has been able to introduce climate action policies is the absence of the Murdochs in Aotearoa (the land of the long white cloud).

Siemens has signed up to provide signalling systems on **Adani's** Carmichael railway line (p7) despite a strong campaign to dissuade it. Siemens staff have been reported to have leaked documents to the anti-Adani movement, warning of the proposed contract. Meanwhile **Murdoch's** *Courier-Mail* has given space to Queensland opposition leader, **Deb Frecklington**, to blast 'bullying' of businesses by activists (p7).

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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 34,600 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links to view original articles.](#) (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-11/greens-di-natale-warns-siemens-over-adani-deal/11789684>

Greens leader Richard Di Natale warns German firm it risks 'reputational damage' over Adani deal

Josh Robertson, ABC, 11/12/2019

German multinational Siemens has signed on to work for Adani's Queensland coal mine in spite of a warning from Australian Greens leader Richard Di Natale that it risked damaging its global reputation over a "dangerous project".

Adani announced on Wednesday that Siemens had signed a deal to provide signalling for Adani's rail network to haul coal from the Carmichael mine.

Senator Di Natale wrote to Siemens boss Joe Kaeser in Munich on Tuesday, urging him to walk away from a "carbon bomb that the world cannot afford".

Instead, Siemens has proceeded with the deal two days earlier than expected.

Federal Resources Minister Matt Canavan dismissed the Greens leader's intervention as "this sort of provincial view, from a minor party leader from Victoria".

Canavan said he was "not too worried" about Di Natale's letter.

He said if there was a greater bush-fire risk as a result of climate change, there should be "more tree clearing" to alleviate that risk, as well as "significant commitments to reduce carbon emissions by 2030".

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/siemens-boss-says-he-didnt-know-about-contract-with-adani-coal-99115/>

Siemens boss says he didn't know about contract with Adani coal

Giles Parkinson, Renew Economy, 16/12/2019

The head of German industrial giant Siemens says he was unaware "until recently" about the contract signed by his company to build rail infrastructure for Adani's controversial coal mine in Queensland's Galilee Basin.

In a form letter emailed in response to thousands of protesting emails, Siemens global CEO Joe Kaiser says



A lots of pressure has been applied to stop Siemens working on Adani's railway signalling system, but the companies have signed a contract. Photo: Sydney Knitting Nannas

he was not aware of the contract with Adani, "likely given the relatively very small number of the rail singling business associated with it. But maybe I should have."

Kaiser says in his email that he will "look into the matter diligently", but does not indicate whether this will or will not change Siemen's view and decision.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/greens-using-crowdfunding-to-bankroll-protests/news-story/60d1d-8ba8f906b1109e9782ddc8c863f>

Greenies using crowdfunding to bankroll protests

Renee Viellaris, Courier-Mail, 15/12/2019

Green activists are bankrolling their protests by turning to crowdfunding to pay for their fines – which is raising more money than their court-imposed penalties.

Anti-Adani protesters are setting up GoFundMe and Chuffed pages to solicit donations for their fines to escape personally paying for their offending.

Some are raising thousands of dollars more than their fines, but the Palaszczuk Government says activists are not triggering Queensland proceeds of crime laws because their offences are not considered "serious".

The protesters tell their supporters on crowdfunding websites that any extra

cash will be used to help with further protest activity, such as buying equipment to film themselves.

An outraged Opposition Leader Deb Frecklington has slammed the fundraising, arguing that money raised should be directed to police to help pay for the resources wasted by dealing with activists.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/business/businesses-bullied-into-adani-backdowns/news-story/c809063e7ee-10421bcc640822b11b036>

Businesses bullied into Adani backdowns

Steven Wardill, Courier-Mail, 17/12/2019

Deb Frecklington has flagged a crack-down against the subversive tactics being increasingly used by hardline climate extremists to bully legitimate businesses.

The State Opposition Leader yesterday said that Queensland jobs were being imperilled by the methods of activists, and government needed to intervene.

"Bullying and harassment of law-abiding businesses is simply unacceptable," Ms Frecklington said.

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COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/12/almost-two-thirds-of-australias-coal-fired-generation-will-be-out-by-2040-aemo-says>

Almost two-thirds of Australia's coal-fired generation will be out by 2040, Aemo says

Katharine Murphy, Guardian, 12/12/2019

Australia's ageing coal-fired power plants could be shuttered earlier than expected if competition from renewable generators and carbon budgets render them uneconomic, according to a new assessment by the Australian Energy Market Operator.

It says 63% of Australia's coal-fired generation will be out of the system by 2040, and more than 30 gigawatts (GW) of large-scale renewable energy will be needed to replace existing thermal generation.

While some in the Morrison government continue to campaign for new coal-fired power, Aemo is clear about the future. It says "due to the already low cost of renewables and their firming options, and their projected future reductions" the lowest cost replacements for emissions-intensive generation is a "portfolio" of renewable, storage, gas powered generation, demand management and network resources.

The Aemo chief executive, Audrey Zibelman, said: "To maximise economic benefits, as traditional generators retire, Australia must invest in a modern energy system with significant consumer-led distributed energy resources – such as rooftop solar – and utility-scale variable renewable energy, supported by sufficient dispatchable resources and well targeted augmentations to the electricity network."

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/11/new-coalmines-in-queensland-dont-help-existing-communities-they-hurt-them>

Instead of subsidising new mines, imagine if we tried to protect existing coal communities and the environment at the same time

Richard Denniss, Guardian, 11/12/2019

This week in Queensland, Anthony Albanese has been devastating in exposing the lies, hypocrisy and absurdity of the National party's election "promise" to build a new coal-fired power station.

That even the idea of building such a power station hasn't demolished the economic environmental and political credibility of the Morrison government

tells you a lot about what is wrong in Australian politics today.

There is nothing in an economics textbook that says we need to choose between focusing on the supply of fossil fuels or the demand for them.

The opposition leader is right to say it would be economically reckless to close down all existing coalmines overnight. But that doesn't mean that it is economically or environmentally responsible to open up new coalmines in regions that have never mined a tonne of coal.

Once we separate calls to stop opening new coalmines from calls to shut all coalmines down tomorrow, a range of economic and political possibilities present themselves – the most important of which is that by preventing any increase in the supply of coal from new coalmines, we can actually keep the price of coal higher, keep the existing mines operating for a bit longer, and in turn, keep the existing coal workers in existing coal regions working longer.

Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal. Our supply decisions matter. A lot.

But rather than plan a gradual transition out of coal by allowing existing mines to wind down on schedule over the coming decades, the New South Wales, Queensland and federal governments are offering a wide range of subsidies to build new ones.

Imagine if instead of subsidising new mines to come and compete with existing coalmines, we tried to protect existing coal communities and the environment at the same time.

If such a plan was based on economics, not spin, it could be simple and cheap:

Step 1 – Stop building new coalmines – you can't transition out of coal while you are still building new coalmines.

Step 2 – Admit the obvious: new coalmines push down prices and threaten jobs in existing coalmines.

Step 3 – Keep existing mines open for longer by preventing new ones from opening. That's the fairest way to help existing coalminers in existing mines and an easy way to help the climate.

Step 4 – Increase the very low coal royalties and raise a lot more revenue from existing mines (for context, Saudi Arabia has a tax rate on oil companies of 85% – and no lack of foreign oil companies).

Step 5 – Fund regional development from the increase in revenue that will

accompany higher royalty and company tax revenues. We just need NSW, Queensland and the commonwealth cooperating to help existing communities instead of competing to help foreign coal companies establish new ones.

Step 6 – Ban robot trucks and robot trains. What's the point of causing climate change from mines that don't even employ anyone in regional areas?

• *Richard Denniss is chief economist at the Australia Institute*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/11/farmers-in-nsws-bylong-valley-fear-for-water-and-prime-land-if-coalfields-developed>

Farmers in NSW's Bylong Valley fear for water and prime land if coalfields developed

Ben Butler, Guardian, 11/12/2019

Farmers and activists in NSW's Bylong Valley say they are concerned about the damage to water quality and prime agricultural land in the area if development of two coalfields is given the green light by the state government.

The NSW deputy premier, John Barilaro, has confirmed to locals that the state's powerful advisory body for strategic release has recommended opening up for development two coalfields in the area: Wollar and Hawkins-Rumker.

Local farmer, Phil Kennedy, who has just been elected president of the Bylong Valley Progress Association, runs sheep and beef cattle on a 1,200ha property that at its southern end falls within the Hawkins-Rumker area set out on a map published by the state government in 2015.

He said he was mostly concerned about the impact coalmining could have on the aquifer in the valley that waters his farm, and the loss of high-quality agricultural land in the area.

He said there had also been "no demonstration of how they're going to remediate" prime agricultural land once mining has finished.

Bev Smiles, a community activist who lives near Wollar, said the existing mine near the town "virtually wiped out the Wollar community as we speak over a 10-year period".

"I'm one of the impacted people if it moves to the east," she said.

"It's just this never-ending growth of an industry that a lot of people believe should be going in the opposite direction, not physically but philosophically.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/queensland/queensland-s-debt-blows-out-by-1b-in-six-months-as-coal-price-slumps-20191211-p53j2o.html>

Queensland's debt blows out by \$1b in six months as coal price slumps

Lydia Lynch, SMH, 12/12/2019

The Queensland government's "surprise" decision to increase liquefied natural gas royalties in this year's budget has failed to slow the state's climbing debt level, which was set to be \$1 billion higher in three years than what was expected six months ago.

A sharp slump in coal prices has meant royalties were expected to tip in \$600 million less than the \$4.34 billion predicted in the budget.

<https://www.theland.com.au/story/6541515/miners-desist-letter-over-farm-water-pipeline/>

Pipeline desist claim over Maules Creek coal mine water bid

John Ellicott, The Land, 13/12/2019

A cease and desist letter over alleged illegal construction and use of a pipeline to transport groundwater from farming properties has been issued to Whitehaven Coal over its Maules Creek operation.

But its not known what legal effect a desist letter will have from the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) on Whitehaven. The legal letter comes as the NSW water regulator continues an inquiry into the pipeline from two farms, bought by Whitehaven, that

run to the Maules Creek mine near Gunnedah. The pipeline has just been completed but is not in operation.

Lock the Gate says in a time when farmers were struggling in the drought any further water impact in the Namoi will hurt groundwater supplies in the area.

Late last week, the Environmental Defenders Office issued Whitehaven Coal with a cease and desist letter on behalf of Lock the Gate Alliance. It alleges that the mine will be taking valuable farm groundwater from an area outside the mine's approved area for water extraction.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/project-atlas-maps-a-solution-for-east-coast-gas-crisis-20191210-p53inz>

Project Atlas maps a solution for east coast gas crisis

Matthew Stevens, AFR, 10/12/2019

The rapid-fire success of Project Atlas has transformed Senex Energy CEO Ian Davies into something of a pin-up boy for the tight community of gas adventurers who have been brought into orbit around Queensland's coal fields by the east coast gas crisis.

Senex Energy has delivered first gas from a conditional petroleum lease that was granted to the company by Queensland's often rational government just 18 months ago.

To be clear, that is an unusually tight timeframe to move through the cycle from appraisal to production, and it reflects incredibly well on the whole Senex team and, just as importantly, on government, regulators, infrastructure providers and Project Atlas customers.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/chevron-in-us10bn-writedown-as-it-faces-fossil-fuels-glut/news-story/70f3d2c6e5f18f5641abd4f678ca79ae>

Chevron in \$US10bn writedown as it faces fossil fuels glut

Christopher Matthews, Aus, 11/12/2019

Chevron is writing down the value of its assets by more than \$US10 billion, a concession that in an age of oil and gas overabundance, some will not be profitable anytime soon.

In the largest energy industry writedown in years, Chevron said it was cutting the value of a number of properties, notably its US shale holdings in Appalachia, by a combined \$US10 billion to \$US11 billion. Chevron is also restructuring its operations to focus on fewer prospects in the face of persistently low natural gas prices, and will explore sales of some assets.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/lng-glut-to-force-us-shutdowns-fesharaki-20191212-p53j8u>

LNG glut to force US shutdowns: Fesharaki

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 12/12/2019

The glut in LNG supply that caused spot prices to slump to a three-year low in Asia this year will worsen in 2020, triggering the shutdown of 10 million tonnes a year of capacity in the US and putting Australian exporters under pressure, according to a respected energy forecaster.

Fereidun Fesharaki, chairman of FACTS Global Energy, estimates that about 45 million tonnes of supply capacity came online in 2019, with another 35 million tonnes to hit the market next year, outstripping demand.

Meanwhile, Qatar, which was the world's largest LNG exporter before Australia, loomed as a threat to the stability of the whole market after a surprise announcement last month to add two more LNG trains to the four it is already planning to add. At 8 million tonnes a year each, that would add some 48 million tonnes a year.

"The volume that they propose to bring in the market is a big question mark for the future of LNG," Dr Fesharaki said. "I think this capacity just doesn't fit."



Whitehaven Coal's pump in the Namoi River has run dry, so the company has bought up nearby farms and is using their water to keep the Maules Creek Mine operating. Photo: Contributed



Kawasaki Heavy Industries christened the hydrogen tanker Suiso Frontier during a ceremony at the Kobe Works yard. Photo: Kawasaki

HYDROGEN HYPE NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.afr.com/companies/transport/world-s-first-liquid-hydrogen-ship-debuts-to-export-australian-fuel-20191213-p53jla>

World's first liquid hydrogen ship debuts to export Australian fuel

Daniel Murtaugh, AFR, 13/12/2019

The world's first liquefied hydrogen carrier has made its official debut at a shipyard in Japan, a small step towards tapping the carbon-free energy potential of the lightest element.

Kawasaki Heavy Industries christened the tanker Suiso Frontier during a ceremony at the Kobe Works yard on Wednesday. The ship will be used for technology demonstration to establish an international hydrogen energy supply chain, Kawasaki said in a press release, by shipping the fuel from Australia to Japan. Construction is expected to be complete by late 2020.

The ship will have storage capacity of about 1250 cubic metres, less than 1% of the size of liquefied natural gas carriers. The vacuum-insulated, double-shell tank will be able to hold hydrogen chilled to -253 degrees Celsius which shrinks the volume of the gas to 1/800th of its normal size. The ship will run on diesel.

fossilfool.com.au

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/dec/12/residents-vote-against-nuclear-waste-dump-near-hawker-in-south-australia>

Residents vote against nuclear waste dump near Hawker in South Australia

AAP/Guardian, 12/12/2019

Residents in South Australia's Flinders Ranges have voted narrowly against having a nuclear waste dump in their region.

About 52% of the people who took part in the ballot voted against the federal government's facility being established on land near Hawker.

The result came after a similar poll of residents on SA's Eyre Peninsula voted almost 62% in favour of the dump being built on one of two sites near Kimba.

The federal government is yet to respond to the poll, but environmental groups said it should rule out the Flinders Ranges as a potential dump site.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-13/flinders-ranges-nuclear-waste-facility-scrapped/11797206>

Nuclear waste plans for Wallerberdina Station in Flinders Ranges scrapped after community ballot

Gary-Jon Lysaght, Angela Smallacombe & Shannon Corvo, ABC, 13/12/2019

The Flinders Ranges will no longer be considered a potential site for a

nuclear waste facility. The Federal Government was considering Wallerberdina Station, near Hawker, for a facility that would permanently store low-level nuclear waste and temporarily store intermediate-level waste.

Hawker, along with other Flinders Ranges communities were given the opportunity to vote on whether they supported the facility.

That ballot showed a 52-48 split.

Resources Minister Matt Canavan said, "This ballot does not demonstrate a sufficient level of support and I will no longer consider this site an option for the facility."

Kimba, on the Eyre Peninsula, had a similar ballot, which found more than 60% of voters were in favour of the facility going ahead.

Canavan said a final decision on where the facility would go would be made in 2020.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/taylor-rejects-call-for-partial-lift-of-nuclear-power-ban-20191213-p53jfsf.html>

Taylor rejects call for partial lift of nuclear power ban

Mike Foley, SMH, 13/12/2019

Energy and Emissions Reduction Minister Angus Taylor has poured cold water on calls to partially lift Australia's moratorium on nuclear power to allow investigation of emerging technologies.

A Coalition-dominated parliamentary inquiry found next-generation technologies such as small modular reactors should be explored by experts for use in Australia.

"If we're serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, we can't simply ignore this zero-emissions baseload technology," committee chairman and LNP MP Ted O'Brien said.

But Taylor said the government had "no plans" to lift the moratorium, which has been maintained by Labor and Coalition governments since 1998. "Any changes to the moratorium would need bipartisan support and broad community acceptance," he said.

STOP WATER MINING
THE NEXT RESOURCES BATTLE



<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/dec/14/albanese-attacks-coalitions-nuclear-fantasy-as-greens-say-report-should-alarm-all-australians>

Albanese attacks Coalition's nuclear 'fantasy' as Greens say report should 'alarm all Australians'

AAP/Guardian, 14/12/2019

The Labor leader, Anthony Albanese, has described the call from Coalition MPs to lift a longstanding ban on nuclear energy as "fantasy".

A 230-page report released on Friday by the chairman of the parliament's energy committee and Liberal MP Ted O'Brien said nuclear energy should be considered as part of Australia's future energy mix.

The government-dominated committee called for further work on nuclear technology and the partial lifting of the current moratorium on nuclear energy to allow for "new and emerging nuclear technologies".

O'Brien said nuclear energy would also complement the government's climate policy.

"If we're serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, we can't simply ignore this zero-emissions base-load technology," he said.

A dissenting report by Labor MPs said there was no economic case for pursuing nuclear energy and safety issues had not been addressed.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/climate-risk-legal-advice-coincided-with-military-capability-warning-20191209-p53i23>

Climate risk legal advice coincided with military capability warning

Phillip Coorey, AFR, 10/12/2019

Top-shelf legal advice warning company directors have a duty to act on climate change risk was studied by the federal government as recently as June and coincided with warnings from the military about its capabilities being stretched due to global warming.

Sources say that the advice, first prepared in 2016 by barristers Noel Hutley, SC and Sebastian Hartford Davis, was studied carefully by the government amid concerns there may be implications for government decision makers.

It is believed these concerns were minimal given the advice applies specifically to directors and their obligations under the Corporations Act.

Nonetheless, according to sources

who attended a secret, invitation-only retreat in regional NSW in June for managers from government departments and agencies, the legal advice was on the agenda.

At that retreat, Defence Force Chief Angus Campbell used a speech to warn climate change would stretch the capabilities and resources of the military on several fronts.

These ranged from disaster response to being drawn into escalating global conflicts, to managing relations in the Pacific made increasingly tense over Australia's relative inaction over climate change.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/sydney-is-angry-protesters-march-to-demand-urgent-action-on-climate-change-20191211-p53iyc.html>

'Sydney is angry': Protesters march to demand urgent action on climate change

Laura Chung & Matt Bungard, SMH, 11/12/2019

An estimated 20,000 protesters marched from Town Hall to Hyde Park on Wednesday evening, taking over George Street to demand stronger climate action as bushfires continue to rage across the state.

The event, titled "NSW is Burning, Sydney is Choking – Climate Emergency Rally!", was swiftly set up on Facebook last week by Extinction Rebellion, Uni Students for Climate Justice, and Greens MP David Shoebridge, in response to horrendous air conditions and ongoing bushfires across the state.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/12/australias-use-of-accounting-loophole-to-meet-paris-deal-found-to-have-no-legal-basis>

Australia's use of accounting loophole to meet Paris deal found to have no legal basis

Adam Morton, Guardian, 12/12/2019

Australia's plan to use an accounting loophole to meet its commitment under the Paris climate agreement has no legal basis and suggests it has reneged on a pledge to make deeper emissions cuts once a global deal was reached, a new report says.

An analysis by Climate Analytics, a Berlin-based science and policy institute, found there were no grounds for Australia to claim credit towards its Paris emissions target for having beaten targets under its predecessor, the Kyoto protocol.

It found the two agreements were separate treaties and should not be

treated as a continuation of one agreement.



<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2019/dec/11/greta-thunberg-time-magazine-person-of-the-year-2019>

Greta Thunberg named Time magazine's person of the year

Reuters, Guardian, 11/12/2019

Greta Thunberg, the teen activist from Sweden who has urged immediate action to address a global climate crisis, was named *Time* magazine's person of the year for 2019 on Wednesday. She is the youngest person to have ever received the accolade.

Thunberg, 16, was lauded by *Time* for starting an environmental campaign in August 2018 which became a global movement, initially skipping school and camping out in front of the Swedish parliament to demand action.

"In the 16 months since, she has addressed heads of state at the UN, met with the pope, sparred with the president of the United States and inspired 4 million people to join the global climate strike on September 20, 2019, in what was the largest climate demonstration in human history," the magazine said.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/sydney-s-water-supply-faces-contamination-if-heavy-rainfall-arrives-20191213-p53jkkv.html>

Sydney's water supply faces contamination if heavy rainfall arrives

Peter Hannam, SMH, 13/12/2019

Ongoing bushfires have incinerated most of the forests in Sydney's main catchment, leaving water reserves exposed to significant contamination in the event of a major downpour.

The Green Wattle Creek fire has burnt about 120,000 hectares around Lake Burragarang, which supplies about 80% of the city's water behind Waragamba Dam.

The resulting bushfire ash contains organic material and concentrated nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrogen. While the ash acts like a sponge, if sufficient rain falls in a short time that material could be pushed into the dam, triggering a range of water treatment challenges.

Contamination risks range from mild discolouration and turbidity if organic material gets washed in, to the sudden growth of algae and cyanobacteria – or blue-green algae – triggered by phosphorus or other nutrients.

<https://johnmenadue.com/ian-dunlop-a-call-to-the-australia-people-demand-serious-action-on-climate-change-before-it-is-too-late-part-1-context/>

A call to the Australia people – demand serious action on climate change before it is too late. Part 1. Context

Ian Dunlop, Pearls and Irritations, 12/12/2019

After three decades of inaction, human-induced climate change is the greatest threat, and opportunity, facing this country, far outweighing the issues dominating our domestic political discourse, such as the US/China impasse, a faltering economy and religious freedom. The world faces the same threat.

Climate change now represents an existential challenge which, if not addressed as a genuine emergency immediately, will destroy human civilisation as we know it within decades. Immediate, in that the actions we take today, particularly expanding fossil fuel use thereby increasing global carbon emissions, are locking-in that outcome.

The prevalent idea that the world can still make an ordered, gradual transition to a low-carbon world, for example to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, is now totally unrealistic. We have to take emergency action to reduce carbon emissions as fast as possible. This means the big emitters, whether private fossil fuel companies or state entities, must take the brunt of the cuts. Other contributions, from communities, agriculture etc are important, but will not achieve the required reductions in the limited time available.

• *Article continues with a series of solutions*

<https://johnmenadue.com/ian-dunlop-a-call-to-the-australia-people-demand-serious-action-on-climate-change-before-it-is-too-late-part-2-governance/>

A call to the Australia people – demand serious action on climate change before it is too late. Part 2. Governance

Ian Dunlop, Pearls and Irritations, 13/12/2019

How good is Australia's climate leadership?

In short, appalling, as the recent disputes on the linkage between climate change, drought, water availability and bushfires confirm only too well.

It is patently obvious that the Australian political system, as represented by the two main parties, has left the country totally unprepared to face the impact of climate change. It does not have leaders who can be trusted to, or are capable of, managing the climate emergency domestically, let alone having the statesmanship required to contribute to global collective action.

On the other hand, the bureaucracy has many capable people who are currently constrained from addressing the climate emergency. They need to be freed up to do so

To address it, the best possible expertise must be brought together in:

- A governance structure, possibly a government of national unity, comprising the best leadership from politics, business, finance, academia and community.
- A technical support framework, to identify and act upon the optimal solutions to the climate challenge

Obviously such changes are far from anything being contemplated officially.

Accordingly, the Australian people must now demand that the responsibility for handling all matters relating to climate change be vested in a wartime governance structure as above. Constitutional advice on the mechanism for establishing such a structure would be required from the Governor General and other experts. Given the all-encompassing nature of climate action, this may mean both Government and Opposition stand aside in the interests of national security.

During their Christmas break, parliamentarians might contemplate why the best interests of constituents are now served by them stepping aside.

• *Ian Dunlop was formerly an international oil, gas and coal industry executive, chair of the Australian Coal Association and CEO of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/16/governments-must-act-on-public-health-emergency-from-bushfire-smoke-say-medical-groups>

Governments must act on public health emergency from bushfire smoke, medical groups say

Graham Readfern, Guardian, 16/12/2019

Some 22 groups representing health and medical professionals in Australia have issued a joint call to act on a "public health emergency" caused by smoke from the catastrophic bushfire season in New South Wales.

In Sydney and others areas of NSW communities have been exposed to air pollution up to 11 times worse than "hazardous" levels.

Among the 22 groups that signed the statement are the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Australasian College of Emergency Medicine, Public Health Association of Australia, Australian College of Nursing, Australian Association of Social Workers and Lung Foundation Australia.

The statement says the federal and NSW governments must "prioritise action to help reduce the risks to people's health arising from hazardous air pollution".

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/dec/16/australia-faces-massive-rethink-to-prepare-for-long-term-bushfires-and-air-pollution>

Australia faces 'massive' rethink to prepare for long-term bushfires and air pollution

Melissa Davey, Guardian, 16/12/2019

Australia has a "massive adaptive program" ahead to prepare for future protracted bushfires and subsequent air pollution, a professor of pyrogeography and fire science has warned, urging politicians to "tone down the ideology and start solving the problem using the skills Australians have".

David Bowman, the director of the Fire Centre at the University of Tasmania's school of natural sciences, said it was too late to call for action to prevent climate change and that people affected by smoke inhalation from fires should demand action to adapt to it, such as retrofitting houses to make them heat and smoke-proof.

"It's a transformative time socially, and politicians have completely misunderstood this," Bowman said. "Politicians talk about holding the line, but this is escalating.

"But the air quality issue can be a powerful driver for bushfire innovation because it captures such a large con-

stituency. Many people couldn't give a stuff about bushfires when they were breathing clean air. But then the bush comes to them through the smoke, and everyone in Sydney understands they're surrounded by flammable vegetation.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/nsw-to-commit-to-new-emission-reduction-targets-for-2030-20191211-p531zc.html>

NSW to commit to new emission reduction targets for 2030

Alexandra Smith & Mike Foley, SMH, 11/12/2019

NSW is preparing a new ambitious emissions reduction target to address climate change and will commit to lowering greenhouse gases by 35 per cent by 2030.

Environment Minister Matt Kean will commit to the new target, signed off by state cabinet, which will bolster NSW's previous target of zero emissions by 2050.

Kean foreshadowed his plans after he broke ranks with his Liberal Party colleagues on Tuesday and said "no one can deny" climate change is to blame for the smoke haze from the bushfires.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/11/australia-ranked-worst-of-57-countries-on-climate-change-policy>

Australia ranked worst of 57 countries on climate change policy

Sarah Martin, Guardian, 11/12/2019

Australia is the worst-performing country on climate change policy, according to a new international ranking of 57 countries. The report also criticises the Morrison government for being a "regressive force" internationally.

The 2020 Climate Change Performance Index, prepared by a group of think-tanks comprising the NewClimate Institute, the Climate Action Network and Germanwatch, looks at national climate action across the categories of emissions, renewable energy, energy use and policy.

Across all four categories, Australia was ranked as the sixth-worst performing of the 57 countries assessed.

On the assessment of national and international climate policy, Australia is singled out as the worst-performing, with the report saying the re-elected Morrison government "has contin-

ued to worsen performance at both national and international levels."

Australia scored the lowest possible rating of 0.0, compared with the highest-scoring country, Portugal, which was ranked best for its climate policy at 97.8%. The report praised Portugal for its ambitious target of net-zero emissions by 2050 and a 55% emissions reduction by 2030.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/11/angus-taylor-sidesteps-australias-carryover-credit-plan-at-un-climate-talks>

Angus Taylor sidesteps Australia's carryover credit plan at UN climate talks

Graham Readfern, Guardian, 11/12/2019

Angus Taylor has touted investments in technology as central to fighting climate change in Australia's official address to UN climate talks, but sidestepped the country's controversial plans to use a carbon accounting loophole to slash its Paris climate target.

During the speech, Taylor did not raise Australia's controversial plans to use 411m tonnes of CO₂-equivalent credits from the previous Kyoto targets against the government's newer Paris commitment.

Taylor's speech came on the same day the Climate Change Policy Index, released annually since 2005, ranked Australia as the sixth worst country on climate change.

In a statement, the groups said: "Australia, Saudi Arabia and especially the USA, give cause for great concern with their low to very low performance in emissions and renewable energy development, as well as climate policy.

"With these three governments massively influenced by the coal and oil lobby, there are hardly any signs of serious climate policy in sight."

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/14/un-climate-talks-drag-on-as-rifts-scupper-hopes-of-breakthrough>

UN climate talks end with limited progress on emissions targets

Fiona Harvey, Guardian, 16/12/2019

Climate talks in Madrid have ended with a partial agreement to ask countries to come up with more ambitious targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet the terms of the 2015 Paris accord.

Few countries came to this year's talks with updated plans to reach the Paris goals, though the EU finally agreed its long-term target of reaching net zero

emissions by 2050. Experts say more ambitious emissions cuts are needed globally if the Paris pledge to hold global heating to no more than 2C is to be met.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/nsw-to-tap-billions-in-federal-aid-to-support-2030-emissions-goal-20191212-p53jg9.html>

NSW to tap billions in federal aid to support 2030 emissions goal

Peter Hannam & Pallavi Singhal, SMH, 13/12/2019

The Berejiklian government will use federal cash worth billions to build new power transmission networks and electric vehicle recharging sites and undertake other carbon abatement as part of its plan to slash the state's emissions by over a third by 2030.

The state's energy and environment minister, Matt Kean, won cabinet backing for a broad package of measures last month. The strategy is set to cut the state's emissions by at least 35% from their 2005 level by 2030.

The agreement between the federal and NSW governments is only awaiting a ceremony between Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Premier Gladys Berejiklian, according to two senior officials.

The signing will proceed despite pressure from Canberra to have AGL's ailing Liddell coal-fired power plant extended beyond the planned April 2023 closure. "That's a separate discussion," one of the sources said.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/the-big-smoke-morrison-under-increasing-pressure-to-change-with-the-climate-20191212-p53jg8.html>

The big smoke: Morrison under increasing pressure to change with the climate

Mike Foley, SMH, 13/12/2019

When Energy and Emissions Reduction Minister Angus Taylor took the stage in Madrid for an official address to the United Nations climate conference this week, he made no mention of the bushfires ravaging Australia.

It was an omission that drew international interest, says Australian National University professor of environmental economics Frank Jotzo, who was representing the university as an observer at the conference.

"When any Australian at this conference is talking to anyone not from Australia, the conversation turns to the fires and that so much of Australia is burning," he says. "People are per-

plexed about how an Australian energy minister, in an official statement, could not talk about the bushfires.”

Taylor announced to the UN climate negotiations that Australia was on track to “meet and beat” its Paris emissions-reduction targets.

Morrison has argued Australia is only a small contributor to global emissions and therefore global action is needed to address the climate change factors exacerbating the fire risk. “To suggest that with just 1.3 per cent of global emissions that Australia doing something differently, more or less, would have changed the fire outcome this season, I don’t think that stands up to any credible scientific evidence at all,” Morrison said in November.

Former NSW Fire and Rescue commissioner Greg Mullins is calling on governments to show “moral leadership” to reduce the impacts of global warming. “Morally, as an Australian, I am proud of how the country took a leadership position on apartheid, global nuclear disarmament and in the world wars,” he says.

“Did we say back then ‘we are only a small part of the global effort?’ No. Our government and our people said ‘this is a threat to our existence and we need to speak up’, even though it made some other countries angry. But on climate change we are gutless.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/finance-news/2019/12/11/renewable-energy-coal/>

Energy experts push for carbon price as Liberals soften climate stance

Euan Black, New Daily, 11/12/2019

As Sydneysiders coughed and spluttered through “hazardous” levels of smoke on Wednesday, politics showed signs of catching up with reality.

After initially refusing to link unprecedented bush fires to climate change, the Liberal Party started listening to the science.

New South Wales Environment Minister Matt Kean was the first to break ranks.

Australia must treat climate change as a matter of science, rather than one of religion, Kean told the ABC’s Hamish Macdonald the morning after.

And federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley offered a similar take.

“The dryness of the vegetation, particularly in the north of NSW, and the reduced streamflow is creating

unprecedented [conditions],” she told ABC Radio Sydney.

“That’s what climate science has told me and I completely agree with it.”

That the Liberal Party is softening its stance on climate change is not only great news for the environment, it makes good business sense, too.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2019/12/13/climate-denial/>

Malcolm Turnbull’s ‘do-nothings’ who argue fact or fiction on climate science

Samantha Maiden, New Daily, 13/12/2019

“It’s nuts”, was the verdict of former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull on the deep scepticism in Liberal ranks and in some sections of the media over climate change science.

During the last Q&A program for the year he let rip on the MPs who blew up his leadership – twice on climate change.

“The Coalition has a fundamental problem in dealing with climate change because there is a group within the Liberal Party and the National Party who deny the reality of climate change,” Turnbull said.

“The problem is people ... on the right, they are treating what should be a question of physics and science and economics and engineering as though it were an issue of religion and belief. And it’s nuts.”

“The government’s policy on climate is being held to ransom by a group of deniers within the party and in the media and other sections outside the Parliament,” Turnbull said.

So who is he talking about?



The New Daily’s graphic accompanying an article on climate deniers preventing meaningful action on the climate crisis. Graphic: TND

Tony Abbott – former PM; Gina Rinehart – billionaire; Craig Kelly – Liberal MP; Ian Plimer – geologist; Barnaby Joyce – Nationals MP and ex-leader; Rupert Murdoch – News Corp executive chairman; Matt Canavan – Resources Minister; George Christensen – LNP MP; Alan Jones – broadcaster; Eric Abetz – Tasmanian senator.

• *Read the original article for quotes from the deniers.*

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/coalition-s-climate-warriors-party-insiders-work-to-sway-mps-to-take-action-20191212-p53jkg.html>

Coalition’s climate warriors: party insiders work to sway MPs to take action

Cristina Talacko, SMH, 16/12/2019

Australian politics has been standing at a smoky crossroad on climate change for far too long.

Domestically, the lack of political will to deal with the effects of climate change pose a clear and present danger as we see Sydney shrouded in smoke.

Internationally, Australia ranked worst out of 57 countries on climate change policy, according to the 2020 Climate Change Performance Index, and Australia is the 14th largest emitter of 196 parties in the Paris Agreement, a record of which no Australian can be proud.

Recent research by the ABC found more than 80% of Australians wanted the government to take more action on climate change, including 60% of Coalition voters. I have seen this first-hand as the chair of Coalition for Conservation – C4C – a fast-growing movement of mainstream Coalition members who support greater action to address cli-

mate change and other environmental challenges.

We work closely with the Liberal and National parties, engaging, persuading and shifting the conservative side of politics to move forward with positive action. Some of our ambassadors are former NSW premier and current Liberal Party president Nick Greiner, former federal Liberal environment minister Robert Hill, and former Liberal immigration minister Philip Ruddock. We have gained momentum since the federal election in May, with hundreds of new supporters joining to be part of a more constructive conversation within our Liberal and National parties.

There is no doubt: our climate and global energy systems are changing. This is the moment in history where the Coalition, in government, can make the most impact. To all our leaders within the Coalition who have not yet taken a stand, now is the time.

• *Cristina Talacko is the chair of the Coalition for Conservation.*

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/politics/australian-politics/2019/12/16/angus-taylor-emissions-numbers/>

Angus Taylor spotted fiddling more figures

Michael Pascoe, New Daily, 16/12/2019

The Minister for the Environment and Energy, Angus Taylor, seems to have a problem with numbers, whether it's the Sydney City Council's travel budget or what year Naomi Wolf was at Oxford.

His latest figure fiddling though is much bigger and more serious than either of those embarrassments.

And it's possibly more absurd.

At the COP25 climate summit in Madrid last week, Taylor was pushing the government line that Australia would meet and exceed its Paris agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26% from 2005 levels

by 2030 – “in a canter”, according to Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

But all the while, Taylor had a graph from his department showing the claim was, shall we politely say, “false”.

Blind Freddy can see the government's forecast reduction from nearly 600Mt in 2005 to 511Mt in 2030 does not represent 26%.

It's actually less than 15%.

But with Taylor's talent for figure fiddling, the sun rises in the west, bears no longer defecate in the woods, and somehow less than 15% is turned into more than 26%.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/wayne-swan-joins-revolving-door-from-canberra-to-fossil-fuel-industry-47595/>

Wayne Swan joins revolving door from Canberra to fossil fuel industry

Sophie Vorrath, Renew Economy, 16/12/2019

The revolving door between federal parliament and the fossil fuel industry continues to spin, this time from the Labor side of the house, with former deputy prime minister and treasurer Wayne Swan appointed as a director of Stanwell Corporation.

The appointment to the board of the state-government owned coal and gas power generator was announced late Friday afternoon last week, in a joint statement from Queensland's Labor deputy premier Jackie Trad, and the minister for energy.

Stanwell owns nearly half the state's centralised coal and gas generation capacity, and 40% of Queensland's coal-fired generating capacity.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/shut-up-and-watch-the-cricket-morrison-stokes-embers-of-climate-denial-63960/>

Shut up and watch the cricket: Morrison stokes embers of climate denial

Giles Parkinson, Renew Economy, 16/12/2019

Morrison's Orwellian trope was born on the night of the federal election

victory where he invoked the image of the “quiet Australian”.

It was not immediately clear whether this was just a thank you, or an instruction. It is increasingly obviously the latter. Unless you're the Murdoch media shouting in his ear, or donors or business backers, Morrison's Coalition doesn't want to hear from you. The rest of you can shut up and watch the cricket.

Morrison's sneering arrogance, his lies, and his casual dismissal of scientists and other experts, his appallingly tone-deaf claim that volunteers like nothing better than to get out and fight the fires, has more than a touch of the Marie Antoinettes about it.

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