



Fossil Fool Bulletin

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

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100 seconds to midnight

Nukes, global heating and disinformation threaten humanity

On January 23, scientists set the Doomsday Clock at 100 seconds to midnight – closer than at any time since the end of the Cold War. FFB presents highlights of a statement from The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, presented as the clock was unveiled.

Humanity continues to face two simultaneous existential dangers – nuclear war and climate change – that are compounded by a threat multiplier, cyber-enabled information warfare, that undercuts society's ability to respond.

The international security situation is dire, not just because these threats exist, but because world leaders have allowed the international political infrastructure for managing them to erode.

In the nuclear realm, national leaders have ended or undermined several major arms control treaties and negotiations during the last year, creating an environment conducive to a renewed nuclear arms race, to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to lowered barriers to nuclear war. Political conflicts regarding nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea remain unresolved and are, if anything, worsening. US-Russia cooperation on arms control and disarmament is all but non-existent.

Public awareness of the climate crisis grew over the course of 2019, largely because of mass protests by young people around the world. Just the same, governmental action on climate

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Exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels continues to grow.

A recent UN report finds that global governmental support and private sector investment have put fossil fuels on course to be over-produced at more than twice the level needed to meet the emissions-reduction goals set out in Paris.

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Nukes, global heating and disinformation threaten humanity

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change still falls far short of meeting the challenge at hand.

At UN climate meetings last year, national delegates made fine speeches but put forward few concrete plans to further limit the carbon dioxide emissions that are disrupting Earth's climate.

This limited political response came during a year when the effects of manmade climate change were manifested by one of the warmest years on record, extensive wildfires, and quicker-than-expected melting of glacial ice.

Information corrupted

Continued corruption of the information ecosphere on which democracy and public decision making depend has heightened the nuclear and climate threats. In the last year, many governments used cyber-enabled disinformation campaigns to sow distrust in institutions and among nations, undermining domestic and international efforts to foster peace and protect the planet.

This situation – two major threats to human civilization, amplified by sophisticated, technology-propelled propaganda – would be serious enough if leaders around the world were focused on managing the danger and reducing the risk of catastrophe. Instead, over the last two years, we have seen influential leaders denigrate and discard the most effective methods for addressing complex threats – international agreements with strong verification regimes – in favour of their own narrow interests and domestic political gain.

By undermining cooperative, science- and law-based approaches to managing the most urgent threats to humanity, these leaders have helped to create a situation that will, if unaddressed, lead to catastrophe, sooner rather than later.

Faced with this daunting threat landscape and a new willingness of political leaders to reject the negotiations and institutions that can protect civilization over the long term, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Science and Security Board today moves the Doomsday Clock 20 seconds closer to midnight – closer to apocalypse than ever. In so doing, board members are explicitly warning leaders and citizens around the world that the interna-



Several speakers at the Atomic Clock announcement in Washington DC held up the Australian bushfire crisis as an example of the extreme and deadly weather events that will become more common, unless the world dramatically reduces its carbon emissions.

Executive chair of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, former California governor Jerry Brown, said: "The Australian government is in utter and complete denial. Under its current leadership, Australia is fostering denial in an incredibly mendacious way. Until Australians throw out their current leaders they will continue this way ... It's time to wake up." Photo: Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

tional security situation is now more dangerous than it has ever been, even at the height of the Cold War.

Apocalypse closer than ever

Civilization-ending nuclear war – whether started by design, blunder, or simple miscommunication – is a genuine possibility. Climate change that could devastate the planet is undeniably happening. And for a variety of reasons that include a corrupted and manipulated media environment, democratic governments and other institutions that should be working to address these threats have failed to rise to the challenge.

Exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels continues to grow. A recent UN report finds that global governmental support and private sector investment have put fossil fuels on course to be over-produced at more than twice the level needed to meet the emissions-reduction goals set out in Paris.

Unsurprisingly, these continuing trends are reflected in our atmosphere and environment: Greenhouse gas emissions rose again over the past year, taking both annual emissions and atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases to record highs.

The world is heading in the opposite direction from the clear demands of climate science and plain arithmetic: Net carbon dioxide emissions need to go down to zero if the world is to stop the continuing build-up of greenhouse gases.

World emissions are going in the wrong direction.

Youth leading action

Climate change has catalysed a wave of youth engagement, activism, and protest that seems akin to the mobilization triggered by nuclear disaster and nuclear weapons fears in the 1970s and 1980s. Politicians are taking notice, and, in some cases, starting to propose policies scaled to the urgency and magnitude of the climate problem. We hope that public support for strong climate policies will continue to spread, corporations will accelerate their investments in low-carbon technologies, the price of renewable energy will continue to decline, and politicians will take action.

Nuclear war and climate change are major threats to the physical world. But information is an essential aspect of human interaction, and threats to

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Nukes, global heating and disinformation threaten humanity

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the information ecosphere – especially when coupled with the emergence of new destabilising technologies in artificial intelligence, space, hypersonics, and biology – portend a dangerous and multifaceted global instability.

In recent years, national leaders have increasingly dismissed information with which they do not agree as fake news, promulgating their own untruths, exaggerations, and misrepresentations in response. Unfortunately, this trend accelerated in 2019. Leaders claimed their lies to be truth, calling into question the integrity of, and creating public distrust in, national institutions that have historically provided societal stability and cohesion.

Antagonism toward science

In the United States, there is active political antagonism toward science and a growing sense of government-sanctioned disdain for expert opinion, creating fear and doubt regarding well-established science about climate change and other urgent challenges.

Countries have long attempted to employ propaganda in service of their political agendas. Now, however, the internet provides widespread, inexpensive access to worldwide audiences, facilitating the broadcast of false and manipulative messages to large populations and enabling millions of individuals to indulge in their prejudices, biases, and ideological differences.

The recent emergence of so-called “deepfakes” – audio and video recordings that are essentially undetectable as false – threatens to further undermine the ability of citizens and decision makers to separate truth from fiction. The resulting falsehoods hold the potential to create economic, social, and military chaos, increasing the possibility of misunderstandings or provocations that could lead to war, and fomenting public confusion that leads to inaction on serious issues facing the planet.

Agreement on facts is essential to democracy and effective collective action.

To say the world is nearer to doomsday today than during the Cold War – when the United States and Soviet Union had tens of thousands more

nuclear weapons than they now possess – is to make a profound assertion that demands serious explanation.

After much deliberation, the members of the Science and Security Board have concluded that the complex technological threats the world faces are at least as dangerous today as they were last year and the year before, when we set the Clock at two minutes to midnight (as close as it had ever been, and the same setting that was announced in 1953, after the United States and the Soviet Union tested their first thermonuclear weapons).

The internet provides widespread, inexpensive access to worldwide audiences, facilitating the broadcast of false and manipulative messages to large populations and enabling millions of individuals to indulge in their prejudices, biases, and ideological differences.

But this year, we move the Clock 20 seconds closer to midnight not just because trends in our major areas of concern – nuclear weapons and climate change – have failed to improve significantly over the last two years. We move the Clock toward midnight because the means by which political leaders had previously managed these potentially civilization-ending dangers are themselves being dismantled or undermined, without a realistic effort to replace them with new or better management regimes. In effect, the international political infrastructure for controlling existential risk is degrading, leaving the world in a situation of high and rising threat.

Compounding the nuclear, climate, and information warfare threats, the world’s institutional and political capacity for dealing with these threats and reducing the possibility of civilization-scale catastrophe has been diminished.

The international community should begin multilateral discussions aimed at establishing norms of behaviour, both domestic and international, that discourage and penalise the misuse of

Editor’s note:

Founded in 1945 by University of Chicago scientists who had helped develop the first atomic weapons in the Manhattan Project, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists created the Doomsday Clock two years later, using the imagery of apocalypse (midnight) and the contemporary idiom of nuclear explosion (count-down to zero) to convey threats to humanity and the planet.

The decision to move (or to leave in place) the minute hand of the Doomsday Clock is made every year by the Bulletin’s Science and Security Board in consultation with its Board of Sponsors, which includes 13 Nobel laureates.

The Clock has become a universally recognized indicator of the world’s vulnerability to catastrophe from nuclear weapons, climate change, and disruptive technologies in other domains.

science. Science provides the world’s searchlight in times of fog and confusion.

Information warfare a threat

Furthermore, focused attention is needed to prevent information technology from undermining public trust in political institutions, in the media, and in the existence of objective reality itself. Cyber-enabled information warfare is a threat to the common good. Deception campaigns – and leaders intent on blurring the line between fact and politically motivated fantasy – are a profound threat to effective democracies, reducing their ability to address nuclear weapons, climate change, and other existential dangers.

Rachel Bronson, PhD
President & CEO,
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

• For more information, visit:

thebulletin.org.



Wilderness Society challenges Equinor approval

The Wilderness Society SA is launching a legal challenge in the Federal Court to NOPSEMA's Environmental Approval of Equinor's plans to drill for oil in the Great Australian Bight

Objections include Equinor's refusal to consult important and relevant parties, as required by the regulations

The Australian people have clearly demonstrated they oppose Bight oil drilling

The Wilderness Society South Australia is challenging the environmental approval recently granted by NOPSEMA (National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority) to Norwegian fossil fuel company Equinor to commence oil drilling in the Great Australian Bight Marine Park. The Wilderness Society is being represented by the Environmental Defenders Office and is a member of the Great Australian Bight Alliance.

NOPSEMA conditionally approved Equinor's controversial ultra-deepwater Stromlo-1 exploration well proposed for the Bight on 18 December, in the lead up to Christmas.

Equinor refused to consult critics

Despite constant criticism, and unlike other companies such as BP and PGS, Equinor refused to formally consult the Wilderness Society South Australia or other environment groups, including those in the Great Australian Bight Alliance, on its plans. Equinor also refused to formally consult key Indigenous groups and local governments. These omissions are key to the organisation's legal challenge.

"To be clear, this is not a step we wanted to have to take. We have engaged diligently and constructively via consultation with other fossil fuel companies seeking approvals in the Bight, including BP. We have engaged diligently and constructively with NOPSEMA. We have consistently requested that Equinor consults with us as an affected and relevant party," said Wilderness Society South Australian Director, Peter Owen.

"It is patently clear that Equinor has refused to undertake best practice consultation, and it is our view that it didn't even meet the basic regulatory requirements. Our view is that NOPSEMA made an important legal error in accepting Equinor's substandard consultation," said Mr Owen.



The Great Australian Bight. Photo: TWS

"My ancestors and I have looked after the whale, the land and the sea for 50,000 years. Equinor must consult with us," said Bunna Lawrie, an elder of the Mirning people, traditional owners of the Bight.

Whales at risk, say traditional owners

"We don't want Equinor to put our sea and our place of the whales at risk. We don't want pollution causing destruction and poisoning our sea and land. I do not want my home, my tradition destroyed and lost forever," said Mr Lawrie.

City of Holdfast Bay Mayor Amanda Wilson said: "We are extremely disappointed that our concerns of how an oil spill would affect our economy and environment were not taken into consideration by NOPSEMA.

"Glenelg is South Australia's premier beachside tourism destination, with visitors contributing \$274m to the

State's economy annually and employing 1766 people. Our 11km of pristine white sandy beaches in Holdfast Bay are a major drawcard for visitors and our local community and it's our duty to protect them.

"The City of Holdfast Bay made a strong submission to NOPSEMA detailing our concerns and opposition to drilling in the Bight, and we are extremely disappointed that consideration wasn't afforded during the consultation process to these concerns."

Peter Owen said, "Opening up a new high-risk frontier oil field when we are hurtling towards catastrophic climate change is madness. Already this summer we have seen massive, heartbreaking and seemingly endless bushfires and toxic smoke fills our cities. Equinor should give up trying to steamroll the huge community opposition."

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• See more here: https://www.facebook.com/onthesteps2020/?hc_location=ufi



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Inside the news

During a depressing week for people who love their country, the **COA-Lition** has firmed up its response to climate crisis-induced bushfires.

OK, the climate might be changing but it always has. The fires are the fault of **arsonists** – and **greenies** who prevent hazard reduction burns. More burning and more land clearing is the answer. Lets dig up more coal, oil and gas.

Billionaire **Twiggy Forrest** is so convinced of that he has donated \$50 million to his own Minderoo Foundation to pay for research to support his views (p11).

The **Nationals** have gone all out for burning and clearing (p13), despite warnings from experts that controlled burns can be ineffective in extreme fire conditions.

Malcolm Turnbull has discovered his spine, with an attack on the Morrison government's **war on science** (p12-13).

Rolling Stone published an 8,360 word article on the disposal of **radioactive fracking waste** across America (p8-9), a process which is happening right now on Australia's Darling Downs. It will be repeated across Australia as fracking gets underway in the NT and WA, while **Santos** pushes for approval of the Narrabri gasfield. Santos was caught out leaving **hazardous waste** outside its Leewood water treatment plant in the Pilliga in 2016 (p9-10), an incident that went uninvestigated by authorities.

The impact of protesters is being widely felt by the coal industry, with a **Coal 2020** conference being cancelled in Wollongong due to fears of protest action (p7).

Earth Island Journal has published an article by Georgina Woods exploring how the Hunter Valley can plan for a **post-coal future** – something the locals are taking into their own hands, due to a lack of government action (p7).

Adani is getting the message – aiming to become a major solar power producer – even as the company pursues its carbon-bomb Carmichael mine (p6). Protesters continue to target Adani collaborators such as **Greyhound** and **Siemens**.

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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 24,700 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/22/great-barrier-reef-group-severs-ties-with-greyhound-over-adani-contract>

Great Barrier Reef group severs ties with Greyhound over Adani contract

Guardian, 22/01/2020

A Great Barrier Reef conservation organisation has ended its partnership with bus company Greyhound just hours after the company's contract at the controversial Adani coal project in Queensland was revealed.

Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef Foundation held an emergency board meeting, where its chairman Alex de Waal, who is the chief executive of Greyhound Australia, resigned.

The company, which has more than 600 staff, had won a three-month contract "with an opportunity for extension" to move workers for construction firm BMD, which is building the mine's railway from the Galilee Basin to Abbot Point.

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/townsville/adani-on-mission-to-become-largest-solar-power-company/news-story/9b21fa86da8c3b42b4401cdc3aabb712>

Adani on mission to become largest solar power company

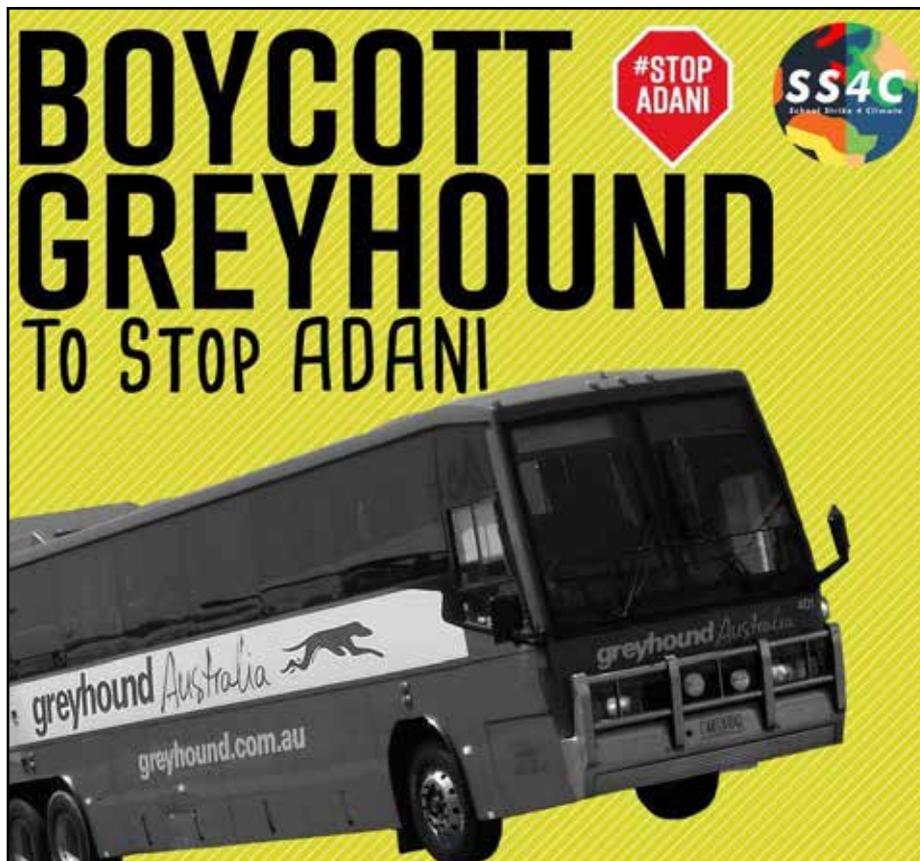
Madura McCormack, Townsville Bulletin, 24/01/2020

Coal miner Adani wants to be the world's largest solar power company within five years, as the "age of renewable energy" dawns on the world faster than anticipated, its global head has said.

Gautam Adani said India had showed the "greatest intent" in managing climate change and was a beacon for the world by taking "some of the most concrete actions", citing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement at the United Nation's last year to raise the country's share of non-fossil fuel mix to 450 gigawatts

Adani is currently progressing construction of its controversial Carmichael thermal coal mine in the Galilee Basin and last year switched on the 65 megawatt Rugby Run solar farm, its first renewable project in Australia.

"The age of Renewable Energy has



dawned upon the world faster than most could have anticipated," Adani said.

<https://www.afr.com/technology/adani-question-highlights-gap-in-tech-companies-green-credentials-20200121-p53t8s>

Adani question highlights gap in tech companies' green credentials

Paul Smith, AFR, 27/01/2020

Tech giants' highly publicised plans for carbon emissions reductions are being undermined by their commercial interests in selling to heavy polluters, climate change campaigners have warned, with global companies including Oracle and SAP refusing to discuss the nature of their work with Adani's controversial coal mining venture in Queensland.

The impact of companies providing services to the Adani Carmichael Mine came under renewed focus in January after German conglomerate Siemens was targeted by environmental activists, including Greta Thunberg, when it decided to fulfil a \$31 million contract to provide light, power, level crossing and traffic control systems as well as IT infrastructure for Adani's rail line.

Activists assert that by supplying products and services like technology systems to environmentally unsound operations, tech companies risk undoing all their good work in reducing their own carbon emissions.

The *Australian Financial Review* contacted numerous global technology and telecommunications companies including Microsoft, SAP, IBM, Oracle, Atlassian, Amazon Web Services, Telstra and Optus with written questions about whether they provide services to the Carmichael Mine project and whether they have policies related to required environmental standards of their customers.

Aside from IBM, Optus and Telstra, all of the companies sought to dodge the questions, either refusing to comment or instead seeking to highlight their own green credentials. IBM and Optus said they have no dealings with Adani, whereas Telstra provides basic telecommunications to its offices, but not the mine.

Oracle provides project management software to the Carmichael Mine through the Australian company

Aconex. When asked about its work for Adani, an Oracle spokeswoman declined to comment.

SAP meanwhile has trumpeted its credentials as the most sustainable software company, but similarly to Oracle has a big money enterprise-wide business transformation deal with the Adani Group.

The executive director of Friends of the Earth's business and investment focused lobby group Market Forces, Julien Vincent, said tech companies needed to address the fact that their software was enabling environmentally damaging projects to become economically viable.

"We've found with many of the engineering companies that have walked away from Adani and their Carmichael coal project, it has as much to do with the staff base as anything else.

"In our experience, engineers want to work in spaces that push technology and innovation forward, and there is also a high level of awareness about climate change and its risks, so we weren't surprised to see so many companies walk away from Adani after the staff base became upset," Vincent said.

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/articles/entry/transforming-australia-coal-country>

Transforming Australia's Coal Country

Georgina Woods, *Earth Island Journal*, 22/01/2020

The Hunter Valley's history and its contested future are written in piles of coal buried since the swampy Permian period, when giant conifers fell and were pressed for hundreds of millions of years in layers of hard dark pages. Coal drew the English to Newcastle, but even before the English came, coal was part of the lives and stories of the Awabakal people of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. Now that history is being scraped away, loaded onto ships, and sent across the world for burning.

The Hunter region, just north of Sydney, is Australia's largest regional economy, and it is dominated by coal mining. It produces most of the 160 million tonnes of coal which is exported from Newcastle to Japan, South Korea, China and Taiwan annually. At the heart of Hunter Valley, roughly two out of every five jobs are in the mining industry.

It may be true that thermal coal is in structural decline globally, but that has not affected the approval of new mines

and mine-expansion projects in the region so far. In the first two decades of this century the Hunter Valley's coal export industry doubled in size.

Late in 2019, the New South Wales state government approved an application to expand and extend open-cut mining at a mine called Rix's Creek, which will produce an additional 25 million tonnes of thermal coal until 2040. The mine already contributes to the air pollution that causes asthma and other sickness in nearby Singleton and it will worsen as the mine grows larger.

A project called Hunter Renewal has been building community-based momentum for a plan for the region beyond coal. For the past three years, a small group of citizens and activists have been grappling with how to make real the concept of a "just transition" to prepare for declining thermal coal markets, even as governments and businesses tell mining communities there is no livelihood for them but the one they have.

Experiences of coal decline around the world have almost invariably left mining communities struggling with high unemployment and other social scars that last for generations.

People in the region have begun to discuss alternatives, but the community needs to organize swiftly if it's going to take control of its own fate.

Hunter Renewal has bypassed politicians to talk directly with people in the region at open-invitation dinners, workshops, stalls, and a summit, out of which a roadmap has been drafted for a locally-led transformation. A

parliamentary inquiry has sprouted and local councils and businesses are speaking vocally about the need for diversification plans.

In 2020, the Hunter Renewal project will need to overcome the resistance of politicians and mining companies to map out a practical path towards diversification and a future beyond coal in the richest thermal coal region in the country.

There is plenty of reason to be optimistic. The Hunter has fertile soils, a reliable river and productive groundwater, a versatile port and railway system, a thriving wine industry and expertise in engineering and energy. Most importantly, it is home to people who want the region to have a future, even if thermal coal doesn't.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-22/university-of-wollongong-cancels-coal-conference-climate-protest/11890576>

University of Wollongong forced to dump coal conference over planned climate blockade

Timothy Fernandez, *ABC*, 22/01/2020

The University of Wollongong (UOW) has withdrawn from hosting a long-running coal conference amid concerns over planned climate protests.

The Coal Operators Conference had been hosted by UOW's mining engineering faculty since 1998 and was scheduled to take place February 12-14.

Climate activists had planned to blockade the event, and say the announcement is a strong indicator that the community supports tougher action on climate change.



The Coal 2020 conference planned for Wollongong, February 12-14, has been cancelled due to a protest planned by climate activists.

Graphic: Climate Change Protests Australia

"It's a win for the climate movement," said Martin Cubby, organiser for the Illawarra Climate Justice Alliance (ICJA).

The Illawarra has a rich history of coal mining stretching back to the discovery of "black gold" by William Clarke in 1797.

<https://www.qt.com.au/news/call-for-feds-to-approve-cq-mega-mine/3927010/?cspt=1579732229|9be55f09bc7ca76c1847e2891821113c>

Call for Feds to approve CQ mega mine

Leighton Smith, Queensland Times, 23/01/2020

Set to be constructed southeast of Moranbah, Olive Downs coal mine promises to deliver a \$1 billion investment to Central Queensland, along with 500 full-time equivalent jobs during construction and an average of 1000 full-time equivalent operational jobs during its anticipated operational life of 79 years.

Once operational, the mine would have a yield of up to 15 million tonnes of product coal per annum for steel production - more than Adani's initial 10 million tonne production before its planned ramp up to 27.5 million tonnes.

Keppel MP Brittany Lauga accused the Federal Government of inaction by delaying its approval for the mine after the Queensland Government signed off through the Coordinator General on all state environmental approvals, including the Environmental Authority in May 2019.

"I'm calling on the Federal Resources Minister Senator Matt Canavan to get these approvals sorted and more jobs flowing for Central Queenslanders."

The sticking point for the mine's approval process was its need to clear thousands of hectares of wildlife habitat, home to a number of vulnerable species including the koala, greater glider, squatter pigeon (southern), ornamental snake habitat and the Australian painted snipe.

Senator Canavan's office referred the issue to the Department of the Environment and Energy to explain the hold up.

A DEE spokesperson said it received four projects relating to the proposed Olive Downs Coal Mine Project, with a total project disturbance footprint of about 16,300 hectares.

These included the Olive Downs Project Mine Site and Access Road, Water Pipeline, Electricity Transmission Line and the Rail Spur.

It is anticipated that the proposed decisions of approval will be made in early 2020.

<https://www.examiner.com.au/story/6595265/new-tasmanian-coal-mines-opposition-greens-poll/>

Poll commissioned by Greens shows opposition to new coal mines in Tasmania

Sue Bailey, Examiner, 23/01/2020

A majority of Tasmanians are opposed to new coal mines in the state, a Greens poll shows.

The poll was commissioned by Australian Greens Tasmanian Senator Nick McKim.

McKim has used the poll results to call on Premier Peter Gutwein to rule out any new coal mines for Tasmania.

The poll was done last month and involved nearly 1200 respondents with 61 per cent of those surveyed opposed to new coal mines, 26 per cent in favour of new coal mines and 13 per cent unsure.

"New coal mines would be a disaster at every level for Tasmania," Senator McKim said.

"Overwhelmingly Tasmanians do not want new coal mines here."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-28/why-finance-is-fleeing-fossil-fuels/11903928>

The future of coal has already been decided in boardrooms around the globe

Ian Verrender, ABC, 28/01/2020

It was a story that raised a few hackles, particularly in Canberra, but one largely overlooked as the unfolding disaster gripped the nation.

Early last month, as fire swept across large parts of the east coast and South Australia but before the Christmas conflagration, secret internal documents detailing ANZ's rapid retreat from coal hit the news.

Goldman Sachs and BlackRock have also reduced their exposure to coal.

These weren't knee jerk reactions to the horror, the wholesale destruction and tragic loss of life across rural Australia, unfolding on television screens around the world. Nor were they the actions of the "green left".

These were considered, long-term, strategic decisions made individually by disparate groups united by a single cause - the unbridled pursuit of profit.

The message each is broadcasting is clear. When it comes to investment, coal, particularly thermal coal for electricity generation, has little, if any, future.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/oil-gas-fracking-radioactive-investigation-937389/>

America's Radioactive Secret

Justin Nobel, Rolling Stone, 21/01/2020

In 2014, a muscular, middle-aged Ohio man named Peter took a job trucking waste for the oil-and-gas industry.

In a squat rig fitted with a 5,000-gallon tank, Peter crisscrosses the expanse of farms and woods near the Ohio/West Virginia/Pennsylvania border, the heart of a region that produces close to one-third of America's natural gas. He hauls a salty substance called "brine," a naturally occurring waste product that gushes out of America's oil-and-gas wells to the tune of nearly 1 trillion gallons a year, enough to flood Manhattan, almost shin-high, every single day. At most wells, far more brine is produced than oil or gas, as much as 10 times more. It collects in tanks, and like an oil-and-gas garbage man, Peter picks it up and hauls it off to treatment plants or injection wells, where it's disposed of by being shot back into the earth.

The Earth's crust is in fact peppered with radioactive elements that concentrate deep underground in oil-and-gas-bearing layers. This radioactivity is often pulled to the surface when oil and gas is extracted - carried largely in the brine.

"It's ridiculous that these drivers are not being told what's in their trucks," says John Stolz, Duquesne's environmental-center director. "And this stuff is on every corner - it is in neighborhoods. Truckers don't know they're being exposed to radioactive waste, nor are they being provided with protective clothing.

"Breathing in this stuff and ingesting it are the worst types of exposure," Stolz continues. "You are irradiating your tissues from the inside out."

Tanks, filters, pumps, pipes, hoses, and trucks that brine touches can all become contaminated, with the radium building up into hardened "scale," concentrating to as high as 400,000 picocuries per gram.

In an investigation involving hundreds of interviews with scientists, environmentalists, regulators, and workers, *Rolling Stone* found a sweeping arc

of contamination – oil-and-gas waste spilled, spread, and dumped across America, posing under-studied risks to the environment, the public, and especially the industry’s own employees.

• *This 8,360 word story examines the hot issue of fracking waste, which also applies to oil, gas and fracking operations in Australia.*

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/118926147/protest-flotilla-planned-against-omvs-offshore-drilling-in-otago>

Protest flotilla planned against OMV’s offshore drilling in Otago

Hamish McNeilly, *Stuff*, 21/01/2020

A flotilla is on a mission to highlight the impact of deep sea oil drilling off Otago’s coast.

The large drilling rig, COSL Prospector, is currently at the Tawhaki-1 drill site, 146 kilometres southeast of Balclutha, south Otago.

A planned flotilla is being organised by Extinction Rebellion and Oil Free Otago.

Spokeswoman Rosemary Penwarden said the rig was several days’ journey from Dunedin, with the voyage restricted to only experienced sailors and suitable vessels.

“We will very carefully vet anyone who wants to go.”

However supporters were welcomed to give the flotilla a send-off when it leaves from Dunedin’s Carey’s Bay on February 8.

Those involved in the flotilla would not be seeking to break the law, which including staying at least 500 metres from the rig.

Penwarden, 60, was issued with a trespass notice from the company warning her to stay away from several sites around New Zealand. “It does look like OMV is feeling the pressure from little grandmas like me,” she said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-22/federal-court-challenge-launched-against-equinor-bight-drilling/11888650>

Great Australian Bight oil drilling approval to be challenged in Federal Court

ABC, 22/01/2020

A legal challenge against plans to drill for oil in the Great Australian Bight has been launched in the Federal Court.

The Wilderness Society is taking the national regulator – the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) – to court after it granted

conditional approval to Nowegian oil company Equinor to conduct drilling.

The society alleges Equinor did not consult “important and relevant parties”, which it said was required by regulations.

The Wilderness Society is a member of the Great Australian Bight Alliance, a group of environmental organisations along with the Mirning Indigenous people, whose traditional lands cover far south-eastern Western Australia.

At the announcement of its court action in front of the Federal Court building in Adelaide’s CBD, the society said Equinor refused to formally consult with it or other environment groups on its plans.

Mirning elder Bunna Lawrie said there had been no discussions with his people over the drilling, saying he and his ancestors had “looked after the whale and the sea for over 50,000 years and more.

“There was no consultation to the Mirning elders, it’s very disrespectful.”

“We did not give permission and we did not give consent to anyone or anybody to do what they want to do there now.”

When rejecting Equinor’s draft plans in June, NOPSEMA asked the company to provide more information about why it did not consider the Wilderness Society, Sea Shepherd Australia, the Mirning and Ngarrindjeri people or Adventure Bay Charters as parties which had to be consulted.

<https://independentaustralia.net/environment/environment-display/santos-abandons-chemical-waste-on-public-road.13514>

Santos abandons chemical waste on public road

Johanna Evans, *Independent Australia*, 22/01/2020

Fire & Rescue NSW incident reports have been procured through the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA) process that reveals a disturbing cover-up of a serious hazardous chemical event that occurred on a public road.

The chemical drum containing methanol was reported opposite the Santos facility, Leewood, on the corner of Old Mill Rd and the Newell Highway. Leewood is a coal seam gas facility. It’s located on a Major Highway, an extremely busy and dangerous road. This location had been the scene in recent weeks of sustained and widespread protest as Santos constructed their reverse osmosis CSG waste facility.

On a hot Autumn day on 14th April 2016, visiting photographer Andrew Stevenson left the protest camp early and parked his car on Bohena Creek Road, across the road from Leewood, and went searching on foot for [some] lost [photographic] equipment.

When he returned it was to find his car had danger tape draped over it, a chemical drum was overturned in the turnaround near the communications tower on the left-hand side of the road and a full-scale Hazchem decontamination incident was underway.



A drum of hazardous waste left on a public road in the Pilliga. Photo: Andrew Stevenson

Stevenson says:

“Santos security were in attendance, they had two vehicles, as well as Ambos, Police, Fire & Rescue and a Hazmat van. Security denied they had anything to do with the incident. No other vehicle was evident and my car was trapped in the hot zone. Did the drum fall off the back of a ute doing a quick u-turn, that’s what I reckon happened.”

The orange hazardous waste bin ... contained a 44-gallon drum of Methanol.

Multiple agencies knew about this incident and there was no public investigation.

• *Johanna Evans is a graphic designer and member of North West Protection Advocacy, which campaigns for a CSG free NSW.*

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/6593996/testing-times-ahead-for-gas-project/>

Advent Energy says it’s ready to start drilling off Newcastle

Newcastle Herald, 23/01/2020

Advent is looking to start operations and drill.

NOPSEMA is the only thing that stands between Advent and the drilling works.

The regulator must assess Advent’s risk management plans, well operations management plans and environment plans to determine how the company will protect the health and safety of offshore workers and the integrity of the wells.

Advent is confident of its ability to meet the regulator’s requirements. Protest group Save Our Coast remains concerned about the start of a new gas project as Australia continues a political struggle over how it is going to respond to growing global calls for stronger climate change action.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/darwin-beats-east-coast-in-betaloo-gas-reservation-plan/news-story/f582bb88d0a47f98c758d6130d2876aa>

Darwin beats east coast in Betaloo gas reservation plan

Perry Williams, Aus, 27/01/2020

The Coalition is eyeing the Northern Territory’s giant Beetaloo Basin gas deposits as a prime target for a planned national reservation scheme, declaring Darwin the favoured destination for supplies over the energy-short east coast or lucrative Asian export markets.

“That’s the big prize and we need to make sure that gas is reserved in Darwin,” Resources Minister Matt Canavan said. “It has enormous potential as a manufacturing hub with a deep sea port close to Asian supply chains so Beetaloo can play a part there.

Canavan and the NT government are both pushing for a manufacturing hub near Darwin as part of a long-term strategy by Chief Minister Michael Gunner to develop a major industrial hub in the capital by 2030.

Western Australia’s Coogee Chemicals is considering a potential \$500m methanol project near Darwin if it can secure a long-term supply of competitively priced gas.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/resources-chiefs-pan-gas-plan-as-perverse/news-story/13dd9b66a346dc549917895670fa5455d>

Resources chiefs pan gas reserve plan as ‘perverse’

Richard Ferguson, Aus, 27/01/2020

Resources leaders are agitating against the government’s moves towards a domestic gas reservation scheme, with energy titan Richard Cottey condemning the push as “perverse” and warning it will reward states that lock up their reserves.

The powerful Queensland Resources Council – led by former Howard government resources minister Ian Macfarlane – and the Australian Industry Group are also sceptical that domestic gas reserves are necessary or have any benefits.

After a review into the Australian Domestic Gas Security Mechanism was handed down on Friday, Resources Minister Matt Canavan outlined how he would push forward with potential gas reserves as early as next year.

NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-22/honeymoon-uranium-mine-production-within-a-year-company-says/11889466>

Uranium miner flags restart at Honeymoon within a year if prices jump, others aren’t so sure

Declan Gooch & Sara Tomevska, ABC, 22/01/2020

The company behind a proposal to restart uranium mining in north-east South Australia says it would be ready to begin production within a year if prices improve.

But the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has cast doubt on

the likelihood of that occurring, arguing the market is moving away from uranium.

The Honeymoon uranium mine was mothballed in 2013 because it had become too expensive to run.

But in 2015, the mine, which is about 80 kilometres north-west of Broken Hill, was purchased by WA exploration company Boss Resources.

Boss chief executive Duncan Craib said the company had developed new technology to lower operational costs and had finalised a feasibility study.

He said the mine would reopen once uranium prices improved, which he was expecting to happen soon.

Anti-nuclear campaigner Dave Sweeney from the ACF said he believed the announcement was without substance.

“There is nothing new in their statement,” he said.

“It’s pretty much a holding-pattern statement from a mining company with not a lot of resources, not a lot of projects, that are trying to continue to hold a place in the market, where the market is increasingly in freefall.

Broken Hill councillor Marion Browne welcomed Boss’s assurance it would hire locally.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-25/ken-wyatt-ap-proves-new-nt-uranium-mine-exploration/11896844>

NT uranium and gold mine exploration a step closer at Devil’s Elbow near Ranger Mine

Felicity James, ABC, 25/01/2020

Traditional owners and the Indigenous Australians Minister Ken Wyatt have signed off on a new exploration proposal for a uranium, gold and palladium mine in the Northern Territory.

The area around the Devil’s Elbow prospect has been explored by companies in the past

The Eclipse Metals project still needs approval from the NT Resources Minister but the company said in an ASX announcement it was confident approval would be granted.

The site earmarked for exploration, known as Devil’s Elbow, is within Arnhem Land’s Alligator Rivers Uranium Field and lies 65 kilometres east of the Ranger Uranium Mine.

The area has previously been explored and abandoned by other companies, including Cameco in 2008.

Gavin Mudd, an associate professor of environmental engineering at RMIT University was sceptical about the proposal, considering market conditions and the fact the region has already been heavily explored for more than 60 years.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/jan/24/greta-thunberg-davos-leaders-ignored-climate-activists-demands>

Greta Thunberg: Davos leaders ignored climate activists' demands

Graeme Wearden, *Guardian*, 24/01/2020

Greta Thunberg has criticised world and business leaders for ignoring calls to break away from fossil fuels, as young people protested in Davos over the climate emergency.

Speaking on the final day of the World Economic Forum, the 17-year old climate campaigner said leaders were not reacting to the crisis, and were not being held accountable for their inaction.

"Before we came here we had a few demands for this WEF and of course those demands have been completely ignored, but we expected nothing less," said Thunberg, speaking before marching through Davos with fellow climate activists.

"As long as the science is ignored, and the facts aren't taken into account, and the situation is not treated as a crisis, then world and business leaders can of course continue to ignore the situation," she said.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/andrew-forrest-says-fuel-loads-not-climate-change-are-primary-cause-of-bush-fires-20200123-p53twe.html>

Andrew Forrest says fuel loads, not climate change, are primary cause of bushfires

Latika Bourke, *SMH*, 23/01/2020

Australian mining magnate Andrew Forrest has repeated his claim that the bushfires are primarily caused by fuel loads and arson during an international television appearance in which he called for donors to fund new climate research.

Twiggy, as he is commonly known in Australia, wants donors around the world to contribute to his private Fire Fund to which he and his wife Nicola have contributed to build resilience to natural disasters.

Forrest is aiming to raise half a billion dollars for his foundation and told CNN

HERALDSUN.COM.AU MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2020

ANDREW BOLT
AUSTRALIA'S MOST READ COLUMNIST

We don't deny the planet has warmed. We instead question whether the warming we're seeing – less than predicted – is all bad.

DANGERS OF CALLING PASCOE OUT

WHAT a scandal. Indigenous Australians Minister Ken Wyatt now threatens to sack a whistleblower who called out 'Aboriginal historian' Bruce Pascoe as a white. The whistleblower is Wyatt's sister-in-law, Josephine Cashman, an Aboriginal businesswoman on his advisory council.

That's because Cashman claims Pascoe, author of the bestseller *Dark Emu* and star of an upcoming ABC series, is a fake Aboriginal, and she says she has plenty of evidence.

Genealogical records on dark-emu-expo.org suggest all of Pascoe's ancestors are of English descent, and Pascoe refuses to say which is actually Aboriginal.

Indeed, his story keeps changing.

Once he identified as white, until a reviewer of his first novel said it would have been better had Pascoe been black.

Once he claimed that one of his mother's grandmothers was Aboriginal, before admitting she was English.

Now he claims he's descended from several tribes, including the Boonwurrung of Victoria, the Tasmanian Aborigines and the Yuin of NSW.

But his claims have been rejected by the Boonwurrung Land & Sea Council, the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania and members of the Yuin, and now even the Yuin of Arnhem Land.

Elder Terry Yumbulul says his fellow Yolngu want Wyatt to investigate Pascoe's "claim to Aboriginal ancestry" and what he's gained from an identity. "We has been unable to verify."

Yumbulul, like the Boonwurrung and the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania, also rejects Pascoe's claims – based on false citations and exaggerations – that Aborigines were's hunter-gatherers but farmers in "100,000" people.

"There is no evidence of our art, languages or song says Yumbulul, who accuses Pascoe of causing "violence our ancient cultures, our traditions, our precious life."

So what's Wyatt's role to defend white Pascoe as seemingly threaten Aborigines with the sack?

Wyatt told *The Guardian* Australia that Pascoe's Aboriginality was "being played out publicly" when "we should deal with (it) within communities."

He said he could ask one of his advisors to "quit" if he "didn't think of the greater good of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

Really? Is truth to be sacrificed for the "greater good"?

And where's this "greater good" when Aborigines are being stripped of their past and even their right to say who is of their tribe?

No Liberal MP should tolerate what Wyatt seems to have in mind. If Cashman goes, so should he.

WARMING IS GOOD FOR US

ACTIVISTS are exploiting these terrible headlines to whip up an astonishing fear of man-made global warming and hatred of sceptics like me.

But know what makes me sure, even after this fiery devastation, that the global warming menace is exaggerated? It's my warmist scientist Andy Pitman, who has once again confirmed exactly what I've been saying. How horrified he'll be to hear it.

You may remember Professor Pitman, the director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Climate Extremes. He last year was recorded admitting to fellow warmists that droughts – like this severe one that's fed the fires – are not caused by global warming.

"As far as the climate scientists know there is no link between climate change and drought," he said. "There is no reason a priori why climate change should make the landscape more arid."

Indeed, despite the drought, Australia's rainfall over the century has increased, not fallen.

Pitman and the ABC "were naturally mortified when I and others started to quote him. Pitman is now furious that former prime minister Tony Abbott last week quoted his admission, too, in *The Australian*.

But in his anger, Pitman let slip a fact that sceptics like me have tried for years to point out.

Pitman complained that "Although quotes me on drought – when in fact for 15 years I have been warning that the risk of fires is increasing as a consequence of climate change."

That's because, he said, the extra carbon dioxide we emit is actually plant food that causes "greening," meaning we get more leaves and even trees to

BLOG WITH BOLT
HERALDSUN.COM.AU

But wait! A greener planet. Bigger crops. Fewer cyclones, too. Is this really something we want to slug?

This goes to the key question that sceptics like me keep asking: "We don't deny the planet has warmed. We instead question whether the warming we're seeing – less than predicted – is all bad."

We particularly question whether it's smart to spend billions or even trillions to cut emissions in a largely symbolic attempt to "stop" all this.

Of course, some warmists will say: look at these deadly fires! Don't they prove global warming is deadly?

In fact, tragic as they've been, they are far from our worst, measured either by deaths or area burnt.

What's more, our heat this summer was dried out by a drought that was caused primarily not by global warming, but by a natural and regular change in ocean patterns called the Indian Ocean Dipole.

When that dipole pushes warmer water in the Indian Ocean east to Australia, we get rain; when it replaces that with cooler water, we get drought.

Last December the Bureau of Meteorology warned the dipole had pushed so much cool water our way that we'd get no real rain until April. We'd get no rain to stop the fires.

Well, the bureau was wrong. The dipole suddenly decayed a couple of weeks ago, and we've since had lots of rain over eastern Australia, with more to come this week.

So, thanks to Pitman, the sceptics' case is even clearer.

...who want to spend a fortune

NO CLIMATE DENIERS HERE, SAYS RUPERT

THE BOLT REPORT 7PM WEEKNIGHTS sky news

that it would fund new "peer-reviewed science into climate change," saying the "science has so far to go."

"Arsonists have had a horrible impact, the fuel load has probably had the greatest impact," he said.

Forrest said carbon was "partially responsible for the slowly warming planet which has an impact on fires", but said unless the cash was raised to fund scientific research "we're going to be having the debates the whole time.

"We need to raise \$500 million as a minimum."

When the interviewer pointed out that the majority of climate scientists are unanimous in the link between fossil fuels and climate change, Forrest said the science was incomplete.

"The science has so far to go, we cannot say there's a single reason, if

someone says 'Oh it's climate change,' they're copping out of their responsibilities," he said.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/22/world/australia/fires-craig-kelly-climate-denial.html>

As Australia burns, a climate-change denier rallies the troops

Damien Cave, *New York Times*, 22/01/2020

Throughout Australia's devastating fire season, one Facebook page has rallied an angry public like no other, with more shares and comments than anything coming from the prime minister or the country's largest environmental groups.

That page belongs to Craig Kelly – a former furniture salesman who has spent a decade in Parliament setting



Craig Kelly, climate-change denier in chief, described by a leading climate scientist as “an excellent example of a scientifically illiterate person with a public platform”.

Photo: AAP

himself up as the climate-change denier in chief.

Now, in Australia’s dark hour, Kelly has found his moment.

With posts and comments on his Facebook page that cherry-pick data and encourage violence against environmentalists, he has emerged as the public face of a parallel universe – the potent force that helps keep the government, despite the wishes of a broad majority of Australians, from taking stronger action on climate change.

He argues that the fires are no worse than in the past, that arsonists and socialists are to blame for the blazes, that coal is winning, that Arctic ice is not melting – and that those who disagree are no better than the censors in Orwell’s “1984.”

Before Scott Morrison started emphasizing that the best way to fight future fires would be through more preventive burning rather than serious action on global warming, Kelly was hammering the point. He blamed “green madness” and “climate alarmists” – a term used by President Trump this week in Davos, Switzerland – for exaggerating the role of climate change and preventing the defensive burns, even though fire officials have said the problem is resources and time, not politics.

Echoing Kelly’s argument that cutting Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions will not prevent fires, the prime minister has also moved straight on to rebuilding and recovery rather than addressing the public’s concerns about the warming climate.

Kelly has at times gone too far even for his own party. Early this month, he

brought his views on the fires to an interview on British television with Piers Morgan, the conservative commentator, who was so appalled that he called Mr. Kelly “disgraceful.”

“Craig Kelly is an excellent example of a scientifically illiterate person with a public platform,” said Joëlle Gergis, a leading climate scientist and writer at the Australian National University.

“His opinions are ignorant and harmful,” she added, “because they confuse people rather than educate.”

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/barilaro-accuses-government-agencies-of-ideological-opposition-to-hazard-reduction-20200122-p53tns.html>

Barilaro accuses government agencies of ideological opposition to hazard reduction

Lisa Visentin, SMH, 22/01/2020

NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro has accused state government agencies of being “ideologically opposed” to hazard reduction, as he backed the Prime Minister’s proposal for national targets.

Barilaro, the minister responsible for leading the state’s bushfire recovery, also doubled down on his criticism of his cabinet colleague NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean, saying he said was “playing the politics of the moment” in his advocacy for tougher action on climate change.

It comes as Prime Minister Scott Morrison characterised the issue of hazard reduction as a central factor in the bushfire crisis on Tuesday, and floated the idea of national targets for hazard reduction burning.

Kean endured a round of criticism from Coalition MPs this week, including from the Prime Minister, after he claimed conservative federal front-benchers were among a “widespread” group of Liberals wanting stronger policies on climate change.

Morrison rejected the claims as a “beat-up”, claimed most federal ministers “wouldn’t even know who Matt Kean was”, and called on the NSW Environment Minister to “focus on hazard reduction and I will focus on emissions reduction”.

Barilaro also weighed in to the skirmish on Monday, slamming Kean’s comments as “unhelpful”.

NSW Nationals MP Michael Johnsen publicly called for Kean to be stripped of his portfolio, calling him a “political hack”.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/world/2020/01/23/malcolm-turnbull-scott-morrison-climate-denial/>

‘War on science’: Malcolm Turnbull says Scott Morrison has misled the nation on bushfire crisis

Samantha Maiden, New Daily, 23/01/2020

Malcolm Turnbull has unleashed on Scott Morrison in a brutal new interview in which the former Liberal leader also likened his climate change denying colleagues to “terrorists”.

Speaking to the BBC, the former Liberal prime minister said he was at a loss to explain his successor’s conduct – including his controversial Hawaii holiday – and accused the PM of downplaying the bushfire crisis.

Turnbull said Morrison downplayed, and at times discounted, the influence of climate change.

“Which is just nonsense from a scientific point of view. So that’s misleading people,” he said.

Despite being held hostage by a rump of climate change denials when he led the Liberal Party, Turnbull urged his successor to show some spine.

The former prime minister, who has a new book out this year, also slammed the US President Donald Trump for playing a “very destructive” role in the climate debate.

“Trump makes no bones about it. He says global warming is rubbish,” Turnbull said.

“Trump is trying to put a brake on global action to reduce emissions. The lack of American leadership is extremely damaging.

Turnbull also accused his own predecessor, Tony Abbott, of being the nation's most prominent climate denier in Australian politics, who was joined by others in a shameful "war against science".

"It is an extraordinarily irrational and self-destructive approach," Turnbull said.

"The right [wing] in the Liberal Party essentially operate like terrorists," he said.

"Now I'm not suggesting that they use guns and bombs or anything like that, but their approach is one of intimidation.

"And they basically say to the rest of the party... if you don't do what we want, we will blow the show up."

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/nsw-nationals-tell-members-hazard-reduction-vital-to-quell-bushfires-20200123-p53u3l.html>

NSW Nationals tell members hazard reduction 'vital' to quell bushfires

Lisa Visentin, SMH, 24/01/2020

Federal and state NSW National Party MPs have jointly declared hazard reduction to be one of the "vital factors" to help address the bushfire crisis, calling for "innovative solutions" such as grazing to reduce fuel loads.

The NSW Nationals outlined this position in a letter circulated to its membership, after MPs met with the party's Nationals Central Executive in Sydney on Tuesday to discuss the impact of the fires on their communities.

In the letter, signed off by Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack and NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro, the NSW Nationals acknowledged the "contribution our changing climate had in the bushfires".

"[H]owever the meeting agreed it was not the only contributing factor," the letter, which was distributed to party members on Thursday, said.

"In particular, reducing fuel loads on the ground, clearing fire trails, streamlining hazard reduction efforts and addressing conflicting areas of responsibility between various bodies are vital factors."

Senior Coalition MPs across both levels of government have sought to make hazard reduction burns a central focus of discussions around the bushfire crisis, rather than the impact of climate change.

This is despite the fact experts have repeatedly cautioned that controlled burns can be ineffective against extreme fires.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/government-urged-to-set-more-aggressive-and-ambitious-climate-goals-20200127-p53v3l.html>

Government urged to set 'more aggressive and ambitious' climate goals

Mike Foley, SMH, 27/01/2020

The Morrison government has been urged to up its climate goals to protect the country's international reputation and for global humanitarian reasons.

Kylie Porter, the executive director of United Nations affiliate Global Compact Network Australia, said the federal government must set "more aggressive and ambitious" climate targets before the 2020 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November.

"If we don't come up with some pretty strong policy before the next international climate change conference ... it's highly likely that Australia's reputation will get worse," Ms Porter said.

Save the Children chief executive Paul Ronalds, who returned from Bangladesh this week, said the "thousands and thousands" of climate refugees pouring into the capital, Dhaka, was an example of the upcoming disruption likely across the Asia-Pacific region.

"The humanitarian impact of climate change will be huge but they'll be par-

ticularly significant in our region," Mr Ronalds said.

Australia was in the middle of "the most disaster-prone region in the world", surrounded by many Pacific and Asian countries that were susceptible to rising sea levels and extreme weather, he said. This meant we could expect to see "many, many millions more climate refugees and Australia is going to be increasingly attractive for them".

Australia is also facing climate headaches on the diplomatic front.

Last week, European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, speaking to the World Economic Forum, proposed a "carbon border adjustment mechanism", which would protect European businesses from goods produced in countries without a carbon price.

Europe is Australia's second-biggest trading partner and the scheme would impose import tariffs on Australian steel, cement, aluminium and potentially coal. In December, France proposed tying a free-trade deal to Australia adopting climate change targets.

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