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KNITTING NANNAS AGAINST GAS

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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FFB 3:9 • 4 FEBRUARY 2020

Summer of discontent brings out protesters



Following the National's leadership spill, survivor Michael McCormack said he would always support jobs in coal mining and the value of coal exports as reasons to back the industry against pressure from the Greens to scale it back, while calling on climate activists to volunteer for the Rural Fire Service instead.

"There are plenty of climate activists on the approaches to Parliament House today but how many of those were actually wearing RFS uniforms this season? How many of those were actually on food queues and doing the things they ought to be doing?" he said. McCormack was referring to an event titled 'On the Steps 2020' where people calling for climate change action converged from all over the country. Mainstream media totally ignored the event.

Photos show there were plenty of people protesting outside Parliament House and in other locations. Pictured: The scene outside Parliament House; a contingent of Knitting Nannas in Canberra; people staging a lie-in to protest News Corp lies; Nannas Jally Hawthorn and Peta Tynan check their protest outfits.

All photos contributed.

• P2: Under our feet – Narrabri gasfield

• P3: Santos project is a health hazard

P4: Fossil donors outspend everyone else

Under our feet: A future for the Narrabri Gas Project?

By Dave Paull

Scott Morrison claims he knows his constituency better than the bureaucracy could, because politicians get out into electorates and have intimate knowledge of people's hopes and fears.

However, when it comes to the Narrabri Gas Project, it seems he is way off the mark. The seat of Barwon fell to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in 2019, the Nationals losing it after 50 years of political control. The new member, Roy Butler, crushed the opposition in no small way due to discontent over neglect of regional services, management of water, problems associated with mining, opposition to the Narrabri Gas Project, in short issues that have created considerable unrest in the once conservative electorate. Barwon is now filled with discontent over resource mis-management and National Party corruption.

Our Prime Minister said we should dig up the resources under our feet, but there is a more precious resource down there – water. The devastating drought has wreaked havoc over surface water and shallow aquifers and has placed a greater reliance on groundwater throughout western NSW. Several towns, including even the major centre of Dubbo are facing a water crisis this year with questions raised as to how the town will survive even following a major diversion of water from the central west Windamere Dam to Burrendong Dam which is at record low levels and normally provides flow down the Macquarie River.

Community lifeblood – water threatened

Yet Santos' Narrabri Gas Project will remove 37.5 GL of water over the lifetime of the Project, according to Santos' own estimates, if allowed to proceed, although there is considerable uncertainty here. This is water from the coal-bearing Gunnedah Basin which underlies the inflow zone of the Great Artesian Basin (GAB), the lifeblood for communities into the future.

Gas industry advocates, such as Kevin Gallagher, CEO of Santos as well as being the Chair of the APPEA Board, the industry's main lobby group, contend that these overlying water sources are not connected and this level of water take will not affect the GAB. This however is a contention

The QGC/Shell Argyle flare lights up the CSG compression station in south-west Queensland.
Photo: NWPA.



heavily disputed by groundwater experts, given the porous nature of the sandstone bedrock, its high level of fracturing, which Santos have somehow failed to adequately map.

Dodgy export deals cut domestic supply

Santos themselves predict a drawdown of surface water tables up to several metres from the Narrabri Gas Project, one wonders how this could happen if the water sources are not connected.

But there are many things about this rush for gas which do not make sense. As Butler pointed out, how can we need new gas fields when so much is exported? Of course, this all goes back to the dodgy gas supply deal which was signed with China back in 2006 by then Labor Governments of Australia and Queensland. And consumer gas prices have never been the same ever since.

Enough gas under the Pilliga forests to supply half of NSW needs? A claim repeated ad nauseum for many years, particularly by of course John Anderson while he was head of Eastern Star Gas who sold the licences to Santos. This has never been substantiated, as these estimates are not based on any kind of in situ quantification, such as obtained by coal miners, as quantities can only be measured AFTER appraisal by drilling is conducted. After almost 20 years of 'exploratory' drilling in the Pilliga and surrounding farmlands, Santos still cannot substantiate these claims with any publicly available data.

But it is not just the local electorate which remains opposed to this Project

(96% of landowners in the north west do not support the project according to Lock the Gate surveys), submissions to the environmental impact statement a few years ago recorded over 22,000 objections from across Australia, a record number for any development in New South Wales. However now, the NSW Dept of planning counts only 6,000 of these as the ones coming from the Barwon area.

The community opposition to this Project has been long-standing. Back in 2001, when the exploration drilling was still confined to 13 sites, the first anti-gas protest occurred in the Pilliga against the American exploration company FirstSource Energy. This was moved on by police.

Since then, the Project has seen considerable protest action from 2011 onwards with local landowners, indigenous and town people united with a considerable number of groups from around Australia in a series of 'lock-ons' and protest actions, which saw many arrests and some police violence. It is a sign of things to come if this Project is pushed through the approval process with a thumbs up, given the current state of local opposition and disquiet on this matter.

How has this invasive gas project survived for so long given this lack of social licence? The answer is obvious, through industry lobbying, political donations and political interference. The recent claims by the Prime Minister following his signing an MOU with the NSW Government that this project should proceed is not the first time

The gas under our feet

• Continued from p2

such heavy-handed pressure has been applied. One only has to go back a few years to similar statements made by the then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull that seem to suggest the development process be somehow circumvented. This in the end came to nothing. A previous MOU signed between the NSW Government and Santos has also come to nothing.

The truth is, Santos have not ticked all the boxes and the decision on this process now rests with the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) who are due to make a decision in the near future, though no announcement of the hearing has been made. The IPC is now a separate agency and the sole consent authority, following a review by the Productivity Commission.

Santos fails to tick the boxes

Besides having not yet obtained statutory approval, some of the other unticked boxes include:

- Not meeting the NSW Chief Scientist's recommendations for the industry (still subject to an ongoing Upper House Inquiry);
- Not providing information to satisfy the 'Water Trigger' (IESC) scientific committee;
- A litany of unaddressed health concerns; and
- And so far, no agreement has been reached with the Gomeroi Native Title Applicant Group, despite months of pressure, the group are now demanding the matter go to the Nation in an open community meeting. Something Santos are not going to relish.

Despite Santo's arrogance and new-found public confidence that the project will proceed, (in no small part due to its desire to assure its shareholders, such as Chinese owned ENN), the Narrabri Gas Project still looks doubtful.

But given it somehow manages to stumble through and get approval, there is no doubt it will be met with a wave of protest not seen in western NSW.

Its time for Scott Morrison to have another chat with his bureaucracy.

• *Dave Paull is an ecologist who has previously worked for NSW Planning.*

Santos gasfield is a public health hazard

*Santos security patrol at Bibblewindi Water Treatment Facility.
Photo: Jake Holroyd*



Santos' Narrabri Gas Project (NGP) is a highly-opposed plan to introduce coal seam gas (CSG) mining to North Western New South Wales, starting in the Pilliga State Forest and fanning out to 7% of the State.

PM Scott Morrison announced last Friday a \$3 billion deal tied to procuring 70 Petajoules of gas from the NGP. Detail is scant but the intention is clear, to obligate Berejiklian government to approve NGP thereby creating a trojan horse for expansive gasfields in the Liverpool Plains, the most productive farmland in Australia, says North West Protection Advocacy.

Industry poses health risks

Among the list of concerns expressed by communities, stakeholders and experts are the public health risks posed by the unconventional gas industry, as witnessed in Queensland where the industry has operated for 11 years. The lack of a Health Impact Assessment of the industry is just one of several key deficiencies in the Environmental Impact Assessment.

The NSW Ministry of Health has abdicated its responsibility for public health and medical research to the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and an industry body called the Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance (GISERA).

A GISERA study with a short title of "Potential health impacts from CSG", has a proposed end date of June 2020, which will be after the NSW government makes a decision on the Narrabri Gas Project. Adding to community concerns is the fact that the project leader of the study

is not a medical researcher, epidemiologist, or a medical doctor. Dr Cameron Huddlestone-Holmes is a geologist from CSIRO Energy, an expert in environmental, geological and geotechnical problems primarily in unconventional gas and coal. Getting a Geologist to conduct a Health Impact Assessment is like employing a General Practitioner to assess Petroleum Deposits.

Real impacts won't be assessed

Adopting Prime Minister Morrison's approach that young Australians should be protected from needless "anxiety" created by the climate emergency, Dr Huddlestone-Holmes' GISERA's health study will focus on how to "reassure" the public of the safety of the coal seam gas industry rather than assessing its impacts.

NSW Health objects to conducting a Health Impact Assessment of the Narrabri Gas Project because it says there are too many "confounding factors" that also affect public health in the affected communities. However, confounding factors exist in every field of epidemiological research, and this should not be used as an excuse to avoid a Health Impact Assessment.

Narrabri Gas Project is years behind schedule and still not approved. The assessment of the project has been held up by Santos not providing information requested by government agencies, including gas composition data called for by the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

However, the process is expected to move on soon to the next stage, an Independent Planning Commission public hearing could now be announced any day.

Fossil fuel political sponsors outspend everyone else

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) says serious donations reform is needed now to make sure our political system works for the benefit of all Australians, not just those with the biggest wallets.

The fossil fuel industry directly donated more than \$85.7 million to Australian political parties in the 2018-19 financial year, highlighting the need for serious reform of the political donations system.

Palmer's big spend skewed election

The political party returns for 2018-19, released this week, reveal:

- The biggest fossil fuel donor was Clive Palmer's Mineralogy, which donated \$83,681,442 to Palmer's United Australia Party.
- The biggest donor to the major parties was gas company Woodside, which donated \$135,400 to Labor and \$147,940 to the Liberal National Coalition.
- The fossil fuel industry in total donated \$85,719,747 to Australian political parties. • Excluding donations to the United Australia Party (UAP), fossil fuel industry donations totalled \$1,894,024.
- The top three fossil fuel industry donors, excluding Clive Palmer linked companies, were Woodside, Adani (through Adani Mining and the Carmichael Rail Network Trust) and the gas industry lobby group Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA). These donated a total of \$692,299.

Which party was the fossil fuel winner?

The Coalition received the most from fossil fuel industries, receiving a total of \$1,147,376.

However, Labor received \$725,448 in donations from fossil fuel industries.

Woodside was the largest fossil fuel donor to the Liberal Party, donating \$137,750.

Woodside was the largest fossil fuel donor to Labor, donating \$135,400.

Adani (through Adani Mining and the Carmichael Rail Network Trust) was the biggest donor to the Nationals, donating \$121,800.

Labor disclosed a total of \$49,995,144 in receipts, but only provided the details for \$48,162,246.



Clive Palmer's multi-million spend virtually bought the election for Scott Morrison's Coalition. Photo: Clive Palmer via Twitter

The Liberal Party disclosed a total of \$48,196,905 in receipts, but only provided the details for \$43,980,577.

The National Party disclosed a total of \$3,099,872 in receipts, but only provided the details for \$1,042,174.

Over \$8 m from undisclosed sources

Between the parties, \$8,106,924 of receipts have undisclosed sources.

"This political donations data reveals the influence of the fossil fuel industry in Australia's political system," said ACF's Economy and Democracy Program Manager Matt Rose.

Writing in *Crikey*, Bernard Kean noted that Climate sceptic Michael Hintze also gave the federal Liberals \$35,000.

"While donations from the fossil fuel sector were consistent with previous years, Palmer's spending dramatically shifted the political playing field against climate action," Keane said.

"Even grouping the Labor and Greens spending together and combining it with third-party spending like GetUp (\$2.3 million) and the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (\$360,000), election spending aimed at promoting any kind of climate action, limited or ambitious, was hopelessly outmatched by fossil fuel interest cash in the system.

"In a year that would become known for the catastrophic consequences of climate change across the country, its election was dominated by fossil fuel interests spending up big to prevent any climate action," Keane concluded.

Santos may get gasfield for \$80K

Santos' donation of nearly \$80,000 to the Liberal and National Coalition is deeply concerning given the recent gas announcement as part of the energy deal between NSW and the Federal Government, according to Lock the Gate Alliance.

The energy deal signed last week required NSW to find 70PJ of gas annually, almost exactly the amount that would be produced by Santos' Narrabri CSG project if it was approved.

Santos also gave nearly \$70,000 to the Federal Labor Party, according to donation records released today.

"Santos appears to have been hedging its political strategy, donating significant sums of money to both major parties in the lead up to last year's Federal Election," said Lock the Gate NSW coordinator Georgina Woods.

"What benefit does Santos see these donations as providing to their shareholders? The Government's insistence that NSW find more gas as part of last week's energy deal could be viewed as a return on that investment.

"This doesn't pass the sniff test and underscores how mining money is compromising Australian politics.

"Santos' Narrabri gasfield has the potential to create upheaval and groundwater impacts for the farmers and communities in the north west. Yet the NSW and Federal Governments are happy to accept Santos' cash."

New Hope Group wants to bankrupt 84-year-old



Aileen Harrison, president of the Oakey Coal Action Alliance, has been singled out by New Hope following the farming group's defeat in the Land Court as part of the ongoing battle to save prime agricultural land from New Acland's Stage 3 expansion.

Photo: Nathan Morris, ABC

New Hope Group, owner of the New Acland coal mine on Queensland's Darling Downs, is threatening an 84-year-old grandmother who is an alpaca farmer at Oakey.

Aileen Harrison, president of the Oakey Coal Action Alliance, has been singled out by New Hope following the farming group's defeat in the Land Court as part of the ongoing battle to save prime agricultural land from New Acland's Stage 3 expansion.

While Aileen and other members of OCAA are now attempting to take the matter to the High Court, New Hope has issued Harrison with a letter claiming that she should personally pay their legal costs following the Court of Appeal decision.

This would likely bankrupt Harrison, who has already suffered terribly due to the mining expansion.

Mine forced family out of home

In 2010, Harrison and her husband Ken were forced out of their home, which was on a property they shared with their daughter, due to the Acland Stage 2 mine.

The noise and dust from the mine had become intolerable as it encroached within 1.2km of their home.

"It was our home, our retirement home, on our daughter's property, and they wouldn't compensate any of us for it," Harrison said.

"None of us were compensated for that house. New Acland got it for nothing. It didn't seem right and it wasn't fair."

The Harrisons now live in a donga near Oakey on their daughter's property after the family moved, where they care for their alpaca flock.

"All we want to do is live on this land peacefully with our family and our alpacas, but New Acland coal seem to be trying to take the little that we have left from us" said Mrs Harrison.

"I don't know where we would live or what we would do if New Hope took us to court and we were forced into bankruptcy.

Company has damaged the region

"This company has already done so much damage to this region, and the water and farmland is too important to put at risk.

"This country should be here for future generations, like my grandchildren, to farm and grow food and fibre so that we can keep on feeding and clothing Queenslanders.

"Soil in this region is in the top 1.5 per cent in Queensland and the groundwater here is precious. It shouldn't be destroyed for a coal mine."

Weakened planning commission may put Santos on fast track

The NSW Government looks set to weaken the Independent Planning Commission following a review by the Productivity Commission, potentially putting the Narrabri CSG project on a fast-track following the 'energy deal' announced this week.

The review recommends, among other things:

- Preventing the IPC from considering modifications to developments, no matter how large and serious the impact or how strong the public objection;
- Fast-tracking the process so the IPC can only hold a single public hearing on a project;
- Limiting the IPC's scope to obtain its own expert or legal advice if the Department of Planning has already done so, compromising its independence.

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has accepted the recommendations of the review.

This comes after the NSW Government folded to mining industry pressure last year and introducing a Bill to limit climate change considerations by the IPC when determining coal and gas projects. A public hearing inquiring into that Bill is scheduled for this week.

"These changes to the IPC appear to reduce the opportunity for local communities to have a say on big mining and gas projects that threaten their livelihoods and their local environments," said Georgina Woods, of Lock the Gate Alliance.

"We're deeply concerned that these reforms will now put the Narrabri CSG project on a fast-track to approval, following the NSW Government flagging its intention to find more gas as part of its 'energy deal' with the Federal Government.

"As NSW communities are counting the cost of the worst bushfire season ever, it's appalling that the NSW Government's priority is to make it easier for mining and gas projects to railroad rural communities, destroy farmland and belch more carbon dioxide into our atmosphere."

Call for \$1.5 billion Adani rehab fund

The rehabilitation bond held by the Queensland Government is a fraction of what would be required to clean up Adani's mess.

It was revealed this week Adani paid the Queensland Palaszczuk Government a mere \$25 million rehabilitation bond – a miniscule amount when compared to Lock the Gate's 2017 expert estimate that rehabilitating the mine would cost about \$1.5 billion.

The detailed analysis was undertaken using publicly available documents regarding the planned rehabilitation and closure strategy proposed by Adani Mining and applying the Queensland Government's standard financial assurance calculator plus a contingency.

"There is a massive risk that Australian taxpayers will be left to cover the remaining costs of the rehabilitation of the Adani coal mine," Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Carmel Flint said.

"This financial assurance amount is vastly inadequate given the proposed scale of the project.

"We estimated that the financial assurance required for the first five years of the full 60Mtpa mine plan should be at least \$1.5 billion in order to protect taxpayers from financial risks.

"It's clear the \$25 million revealed today is totally inadequate to cover the risks to Queensland taxpayers.

Six unfilled mine pits to be left

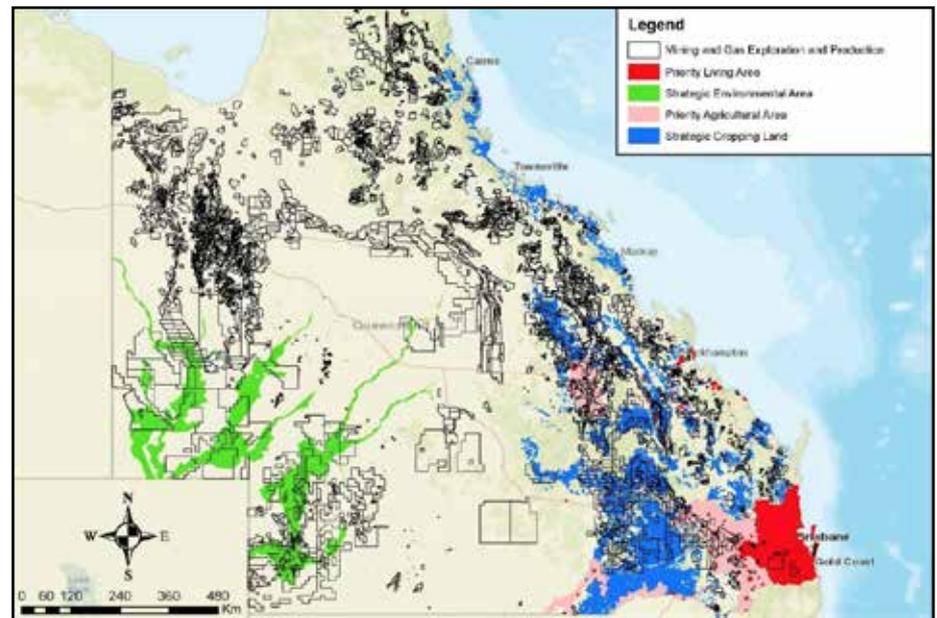
"Even worse, Adani plan to leave behind six vast unfilled mine pits after mining, which will drain Central Queensland groundwater aquifers.

"Queenslanders should not be left to live with the huge mess Adani plan to leave behind, and certainly shouldn't pay for it."

Although there has been reports that Adani is contemplating 'downsizing' the project, it is the 60Mtpa mine that has been approved and as far as Lock the Gate can ascertain there has been no revised proposal submitted.

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Coal and gas threaten top land



Mining and petroleum titles overlaid on top of areas of regional interest.

Map: Lock the Gate

Lock the Gate Alliance has released startling mapping showing the extent to which Queensland's most precious farmland and environmental areas are under threat due to coal and gas mining.

The mapping, created based on publicly available Queensland Government resources, shows that 37% of the highest quality farmland and most important ecological areas are covered by coal or gas mining projects and exploration permits.

That translates to 7.7 million hectares of the best farmland and significant environmental areas being covered by mining and gas titles.

Mapping further reveals:

Of the roughly 10 million hectares of mapped Strategic Cropping Areas, 2.3 million is covered by mining titles and 2.6 million by petroleum titles

Of the 4.3 million hectares of Priority Agricultural Areas, approximately 1 million is covered by mining titles and 705,000 by petroleum titles.

When the Regional Planning Interests Act (RPIA) was introduced in 2014, the Newman Government said it would 'address the power imbalance between farmers and resources proponents' and prioritise 'agricultural activity on what is a finite and critical resource'.

Lock the Gate Alliance Queensland spokesperson Ellie Smith said the new mapping showed the RPIA had not achieved what was originally intended.

"The Regional Planning Interests Act has undeniably failed Queenslanders," she said.

"Even though only 11% of Queensland is identified by the government as the highest priority farmland and ecological areas, this new mapping shows an astonishing 37% of those areas are covered by coal or gas mining and exploration permits.

"We want changes to regional planning laws to make sure communities have a stronger role in helping our regions be the best they can be.

"We want laws that protect our best agricultural land, communities, and ecological and cultural assets."

Land sold out from under rural Qlders

Longreach grazier, Angus Emmott said, "This mapping shows Queenslanders, particularly rural Queenslanders, are having their most precious land sold out from under them to mining and gas companies.

"We call on the Palaszczuk Government to strengthen the RPI Act so the special places it is meant to protect are off limits to resource companies.

"Queensland's ability to produce food and fibre is facing a death of 1000 cuts. We need strong laws to protect what's left."

• Download the report:

https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/lockthegate/pages/6429/attachments/original/1580789906/Old_RPIA_Mapping_Summary_Report_Final_layout.pdf?1580789906

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Inside the news

This week's **FFB** comes to you a little late, due to the editor having unavoidable alternate commitments.

Adani contractors continue to occupy the attention of protesters, with **Greyhound** declining to extend a three-month contract with the company. **Hastings Deering**, which is assembling the massive trucks and excavators for the mine, has found activists with banners at its gate (p8).

Wangan & Jagalingou spokeswoman Murrawah Johnson is in Germany for railway signalling contractor **Siemens'** AGM, and has asked to meet CEO Joe Kaeser (p8-9).

Following Adani's lead in **intimidating and bankrupting** mine opponents, **New Acland Coal** is considering going after hundreds of thousands of dollars in court costs against 84-year-old Aileen Harrison, president of **Oaky Coal Action Alliance**. The move would bankrupt both her and the group's treasurer, both pensioners who stand in the way of the mine's expansion onto prime agricultural land (p9).

As the **Independent Planning Commission** hearing into the Santos **Narrabri** gasfield draws nearer, **Santos** has been pinged for eight gas leaks in its exploratory drilling program. The EPA is investigating (p10).

Many **Kimba** locals are not happy that Resources Minister **Matt Canavan** has decided to park the country's **nuclear waste** in their area. It will comprise low-level waste from hospitals and universities, but also temporary storage of intermediate waste such as spent fuel rods from the Lucas Heights reactor. (p10).

Canavan resigned from Cabinet this week to support **Barnaby Joyce** in a National Party leadership spill. Leader **Michael McCormack** survived the spill (p15-16), leaving Canavan's position up in the air. It has been reported none of the Nats' women voted for Barnaby.

Fossil Politics this week covers **PM Morrison's** unpopular scene-setting speech at the National Press Club and his **'dirty fuel deal'** with NSW.

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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 21,330 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/28/greyhound-cuts-ties-with-adani-mine-after-backlash-from-climate-activists>

Greyhound cuts ties with Adani mine after backlash from climate activists

Graham Readfearn, *Guardian*, 28/01/2020

The bus company Greyhound Australia has ruled out any extension of work on the controversial Adani coal project after a backlash from climate change campaigners.

On Sunday the SchoolStrike4Climate group launched a campaign to boycott travel with the company until it publicly ruled out working on the mine.

Greyhound is providing transport to workers for the construction company BMD, which is building the railway to take the coal to Adani's Abbot Point port.

In a statement, Greyhound Australia said it had "received numerous messages, emails and phone calls from people expressing their thoughts both for and against the Carmichael Rail Network and Adani Carmichael project".

It said: "Following considered deliberation, and in the best interests of our staff, customers, and partners, Greyhound Australia has decided to not enter into a contractual agreement with BMD to service construction of the Carmichael Rail Network beyond our preliminary 31 March 2020 commitment."

<https://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/adani-chief-says-activists-intimidating-contractor/3930992/>

Adani chief says activists' intimidation 'won't work'

Jack Evans, *Gladstone Observer*, 28/01/2020

Adani CEO Lucas Dow has said the company will not be intimidated by the increasing activism campaigns which have recently begun targeting contractors and associated businesses.

It follows campaigns against bus company Greyhound that asked its staff to "not undermine" the company after signing on to transport Adani workers.

"We are not intimidated, and construction is progressing well," Dow said.



Activists protest at Hastings Deering, which is assembling coal trucks for Adani's Carmichael Mine. Photo: Galilee Blockade

"Anti-coal activists have thrown everything they've got at us in order to stop our project from court cases to multi-million-dollar advertising campaigns, but they haven't succeeded.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/adani-deposits-25m-as-security-for-mine-rehabilitation-costs/news-story/df7da77013f3b773dc1f451aac8b62c5>

Adani deposits \$25m as security for mine rehabilitation costs

Sarah Elks, *Aus*, 29/01/2020

Indian mining giant Adani has had to hand over millions of extra dollars to the Queensland government as financial security to rehabilitate its central Queensland coalmine site in the event of environmental damage.

Last year the state government twice increased the amount Adani had to pay in financial assurance, hiked from \$11.6m to \$15.8m in April and then to \$24.8m in November.

Adani is up to date with its payments, which are required of all Queensland resources companies to protect taxpayers from costs incurred to reduce environmental harm or carry out rehabilitation, should miners fail to meet their obligations.

The decision followed an overhaul of the entire financial assurance scheme by the state in April.

It was estimated the state's resources industry had created 220,000ha of "disturbance", with an estimated rehabilitation cost of \$8.7bn.

A departmental spokesman said the amount was increased because Adani had "updated its operational plan and disturbance map to increase the mine infrastructure area and water storage".

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/feb/04/indigenous-envoy-challenges-siemens-in-germany-over-adani-mine>

Indigenous envoy challenges Siemens in Germany over Adani mine

Graham Readfearn, *Guardian*, 04/02/2020

An envoy from an Australian Indigenous group has travelled to Germany to push for a meeting with the head of technology giant Siemens, claiming the company failed to properly check that traditional owners supported Adani's controversial Carmichael coal project in Queensland.

The Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, which has spent years challenging the Adani mine, says the company was wrong to claim the project had been approved by its people.

W&J council representative Murrawah Johnson, who is in Germany, has asked to meet Siemens' chief executive, Joe Kaeser, and will attend the company's AGM in Munich on Wednesday.

Also on Tuesday, 19 health groups advocating action on climate change from countries including Australia, the UK, US and India published an open letter to Siemens, asking the company to “end its association with Adani and its climate-wrecking coalmine”.

In January, Siemens said it had reviewed its reported \$30m contract to provide signalling technology to the mine’s railway, and that it would complete the work.

Speaking to Munich, Johnson said “free, prior and informed consent” – a cornerstone of negotiations between First Nations peoples and project developers – did not exist for the Adani mine.

She accused Siemens of relying on “talking points” from the mine’s supporters, including former resources minister Matt Canavan, the Queensland government and Adani itself, rather than hearing directly from traditional owners.

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/production-before-worker-safety-for-bhp/news-story/c0219ed3bfc556f636be7d6d76e61a52>

Production before worker safety for miner

Sarah Elks, Aus, 31/01/2020

A confidential investigation found mining giant BHP had a “mandate” to put production ahead of safety, as part of an internal probe into the near-drowning of a dozer operator at one of Australia’s largest coalmines.

The damning secret report into the July 2018 incident at BHP’s Peak Downs open-cut coal operation in central Queensland raised serious concerns about safety at the company, before a horror spate of eight deaths in 18 months in the state’s quarries and coalmines.

The report described how a 62-year-old coalminer was operating a dozer in a water-filled pit before dawn on July 9, 2018, at the BMA Peak Downs mine. The dozer tipped and the man was trapped in the dozer’s cab as the water rushed in and rose around him, forcing his workmates to smash the cab’s window to rescue him. The man nearly drowned and now has post-traumatic stress disorder.

The secret report states, “There is a mandate to keep trucks running to meet production targets. There is an asset requirement to have this mandate.”

Months later, on New Year’s Eve 2018, at BMA’s Saraji Mine – next to Peak Downs – a Mr Houston, 49, died when his dozer rolled 18m down an embankment and landed upside-down in 2m of water and mud. He was trapped and died.

The state government had charged BMA and a senior mining official over the death of Houston.

More than 18 months after the Peak Downs accident, the Queensland Mines Inspectorate has confirmed it is investigating new complaints about BMA’s investigation into the incident.

A QMI spokesman said there had been 15 separate inspections onsite at BMA’s Peak Downs and Saraji mines since the July 2018 dozer incident.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-02/new-acland-coal-pursues-oakey-coal-action-alliance-for-costs/11897078>

New Acland Coal pursues Oakey Coal Action Alliance for legal costs ahead of possible High Court appeal

Nathan Morris, ABC, 02/02/2020

Queensland miner New Acland Coal is considering seeking hundreds of thousands of dollars in court costs from a landholder group led by an 84-year-old pensioner, ahead of a possible High Court appeal.

Aileen Harrison is the president of a landholder group known as the Oakey Coal Action Alliance (OCAA), who, since 2015, has been locked in a lengthy legal battle against plans to expand the New Acland Coal mine, 180 kilometres west of Brisbane.

The group’s primary concerns centre on what it says is the irreversible impact of the mine on groundwater and prime agricultural land.

Both Harrison and OCAA’s treasurer are pensioners, and if enforced, the action would bankrupt them both.

“They brought three top barristers, [and] they need more money, well why is that our fault?” Harrison said.

Last year the ABC revealed that Adani had engaged their lawyers to employ an aggressive ‘attack dog’ strategy to silence critics and bankrupt unsuccessful court opponents.

OCCA secretary Paul King said the situation they face was no different.

“They’re attacking old ladies, it’s vexatious, it’s designed to intimidate people that want nobody to object to anything,” he said.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/business/sa-business-journal/cooper-energys-sole-gas-project-faces-delays-due-to-victorian-bushfires/news-story/0665649a-0f35664733334afe21edcfe0>

Cooper Energy’s Sole gas project faces delays due to Victorian bushfires

Cameron England, Advertiser, 28/01/2020

Bushfires have pushed back the first gas production from Cooper Energy’s Sole project in Victoria until February, the company said.

In its quarterly report, the Adelaide-based energy company said while the Orbest gas plant, which will receive gas from the offshore project was not damaged, its commissioning was interrupted by the bushfires.

In November last year Cooper was expecting the Sole Project to be producing gas by the end of the calendar year.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/png-gas-talks-collapse-as-marape-calls-time-20200201-p53wst>

PNG gas talks collapse as Marape calls time

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 01/02/2020

The troubled talks between the Papua New Guinea government and Exxon-Mobil on a potential \$20 billion LNG expansion have broken down.

Prime Minister James Marape said he had “stopped negotiations” because of the US major’s “unacceptable” demands.

The collapse of the discussions appears to eliminate any possibility of a decision to start engineering work on the three-train expansion, delaying the biggest growth project for Exxon’s partner Oil Search.

Marape was elected last year on a pledge to “take back” resource development from major internationals to improve the benefits of projects flowing to the economy and local communities.

Marape has been determined to negotiate better terms for the expansion of the Exxon-led PNG LNG than were agreed for the Total-led Papua LNG project under his predecessor Peter O’Neill. But the two projects are being carried out together in order to avoid billions of dollars of duplicated investment, so the collapse of the talks on P’nyang appears to leave Papua LNG in limbo.

<https://www.katherinetimes.com.au/story/6604561/nt-station-manager-wants-protection-from-frackers/>

NT station manager wants protection from frackers

Chris McLennan, *Katherine Times*, 29/01/2020

Big River Station manager Daniel Tapp says landowners will be in a weaker position to negotiate with energy companies after proposed NT laws pass.

Tapp, a leader of the anti-fracking movement who runs a station on the Roper River, says the draft Bill leaves landholders in a weaker position when negotiating with gas companies.

Organisations like the Lock the Gate Alliance claim the proposed Bill fails to implement a key Pepper Inquiry recommendation for a legally enshrined right to an access agreement in legislation.

<https://www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/story/6612049/eight-leaks-discovered-as-second-csg-hearing-gets-underway/?cs=4704>

Eight gas leaks discovered as hearing gets underway

Jamieson Murphy, *Qld Country Life*, 04/02/2020

State government officials will be grilled about a number of “leaks” at Santos’ Narrabri Gas Projects at a parliamentary inquiry on Tuesday.

It’s the second hearing into whether the NSW Chief Scientist’s 16 coal seam gas recommendations have been implemented by the NSW government, after the first hearing in December was described as a “train wreck”, with many questions going unanswered.

The first hearing did uncover that eight leaks at the Narrabri Gas Project were found by the NSW Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during 2018-19.

Two of the leaks were repaired within 24 hours, however the EPA is still investigating if the remaining six were “gas releases” that were part of the wells’ operation or whether they “should be classified as leaks and further action taken”.

NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-01/kimba-farm-eyre-peninsula-chosen-for-nuclear-dump/11920514>

Federal Government chooses Kimba farm Napandee on the Eyre Peninsula for nuclear dump

Eugene Boisvert, *ABC*, 01/02/2020

The Federal Government has selected a farm on South Australia’s Eyre

Peninsula as the site of a controversial nuclear waste dump.

Jeff Baldock’s Napandee property 20 kilometres west of Kimba will be used to permanently store low-level waste and temporarily store intermediate-level waste.

The decision to use the 160-hectare area for what the Government calls a “disposal and storage facility” was made after four years of consultation.

Nearly 62% of people voted in favour of the site being used in November, while a site near Hawker in the Flinders Ranges was opposed by Aboriginal traditional owners and residents.

“I am satisfied a facility at Napandee will safely and securely manage radioactive waste and that the local community has shown broad community support for the project and economic benefits it will bring,” Resources Minister Matt Canavan said.

Local federal Liberal MP Rowan Ramsey said waste would come in from more than 100 sites around Australia, such as hospitals and universities, and the Lucas Heights nuclear reactor in Sydney.

Processed medium-level nuclear fuel rods from Lucas Heights will be temporarily stored at Kimba while a permanent site is found for them, he said.

A group called No Radioactive Waste Facility for Kimba District will hold a rally against the decision in the town on Sunday.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/feb/01/matt-canavan-announces-nuclear-waste-dump-location-in-south-australia>

Matt Canavan announces nuclear waste dump location in South Australia

AAP/Guardian, 01/02/2020

A farming property on South Australia’s Eyre Peninsula will become a nuclear waste dump, the federal government has announced, but opponents of the facility are making a last-bid ditch to stop it.

It will employ about 45 people and the government will give the community a \$31 million package.

Before the announcement, Peter Woolford, the president of the No Radioactive Waste on Agricultural Land in Kimba or SA committee, said five years of consultation had taken its toll on the town and his group was calling on the federal government to abandon both

sites. “Matthew Canavan’s process has been arbitrary, completely lacking in clarity and an extremely divisive process.

“It is time for him to acknowledge that the prerequisite of ‘broad community support’ does not exist in Kimba, and allow the community to move forward.”

The dump is opposed by environmental and Indigenous groups.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2020/jan/29/guardian-to-ban-advertising-from-fossil-fuel-firms-climate-crisis>

Guardian to ban advertising from fossil fuel firms

Jim Waterson, *Guardian*, 29/01/2020

The Guardian will no longer accept advertising from oil and gas companies, becoming the first major global news organisation to institute an outright ban on taking money from companies that extract fossil fuels.

The move, which follows efforts to reduce the company’s carbon footprint and increase reporting on the climate emergency, was announced on Wednesday and will be implemented with immediate effect. The ban will apply to any business primarily involved in extracting fossil fuels, including many of the world’s largest polluters.

Last year, the editor-in-chief, Katharine Viner, announced the *Guardian* would adjust its style guide to represent the scale of the environmental challenge facing the Earth, using terms such as “climate emergency” and “global heating” rather than “climate change” and “global warming”. At a corporate level, the company has emphasised its commitment to becoming carbon-neutral by 2030, while also almost entirely divesting its Scott Trust endowment fund from fossil fuel investments.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7947297/Public-hospital-REFUSES-15M-donation-coal-company-concerns-mining.html>

Struggling public hospital refuses to accept a \$15M donation – because it was made by a coal mining company

Tita Smith, *Daily Mail Aus*, 31/01/2020

A struggling hospital has been accused of ‘ideological grandstanding’ after turning down a \$15million cash injection – because it came from a coal mining company.

The hospital board has refused Wal-

lahar 2 Coal Project's offer to donate \$14.8 million over the mine's 28-year life span because of 'community sentiment' and 'public health effects'.

The project, due to begin in 2022, has been approved by the state government and the independent planning commission, which takes into consideration pollution and health impacts.

Wyong Coal Wallarah 2 general manager Peter Allonby and site manager Kenny Barry claimed a board member said hospital board members compared the handout to 'taking money from a tobacco company'.

Deputy Premier John Barilaro said the decision would impact the Wyong community.

'For them to reject what is a very generous donation from a company wanting to be a good corporate citizen is a slap in the face for that community,' he said.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/29/australia-already-carrying-its-load-on-emissions-and-must-adapt-to-warmer-climate-pm-says>

Australia already 'carrying its load' on emissions and must adapt to warmer climate, PM says

Sarah Martin, Guardian, 29/01/2020

The prime minister, Scott Morrison, has rejected suggestions Australia could increase its international advocacy on climate change, saying the country is already "carrying its load" and must adapt to a warmer climate regardless of emissions policy.

Morrison used a keynote speech at the National Press Club on Wednesday to talk up the government's current policies, including its emission reduction targets.

"We know that Australia on its own cannot control the world's climate as Australia accounts for just 1.3% of global emissions," Morrison said.

"We also know that no fire event can be attributed to the actions of any one country on emissions reduction. But Australia must play its part and we are playing our part.

When asked if the government could "step up and advocate" for more ambitious global action on climate change given its role as a "proud middle power", Morrison said Australia was already doing enough.

"Australia is carrying its load and more. We are doing what you would expect a



Prime Minister Scott Morrison addressed the National Press Club on January 29.

Screenshot: ABC

country like Australia to do, but what I won't do is this: I am not going to sell out Australians – I am not going to sell out Australians based on the calls from some to put higher taxes on them or push up their electricity prices or to abandon their jobs and their industries," he said.

Seeking to recast the government's policy approach as one of practical action "right now", Morrison also argued that Australia should focus on resilience and adaptation to respond to the effects of climate change over the coming decades, given it could not be stopped.

His focus on "climate action now" included hazard reduction burning, building new dams, developing new drought-resistant crops, and a drought resilience plan.

The prime minister also flagged that he would soon have further detail to announce on a new bilateral agreement with New South Wales on energy and emissions reductions, with other states and territories to follow.

Morrison indicated that improved access to domestic gas supplies would be a key element of the new agreements.

"We need to get the gas from under our feet. There is no credible energy transition plan for an economy like Australia in particular, that does not involve the greater use of gas as an important transition fuel," Morrison said.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/morrison-questions-importance-of-global-climate-treaties-to-treat-symptoms-of-climate-change-36305/>

Morrison questions importance of global climate treaties, to treat symptoms of climate change

Michael Mazengarb, Renew Economy, 29/01/2020

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has appeared to downplay the importance of major international climate change agreements in a speech to the National Press Club, that further flags his intention to focus on treating the symptoms of climate change, rather than addressing the cause.

Despite dedicating a substantial portion of his speech speaking about the Coalition government's need to work to adapt and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, Morrison offered no new commitments from the governments in terms of policy or funding.

The speech further signals an intention to focus attention on the responses to the impacts and symptoms of climate change, rather than taking preventative action by accelerating reductions in Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging other countries to do the same.

Morrison suggested it was potentially futile for Australia to try and force other countries to reduce their emissions, and promoted the often repeated message of the coal lobby that Australia is doing the world a service by selling its coal to other countries.

"We know that climate change has exacerbated Australia's current bush-fire crisis, and yet the Prime Minister is

now calling to add more fossil fuels to the fire,” Greenpeace Australia Pacific’s Dr Nikola Casule said.

“This is yet another move in a string of logic-defying false solutions to the climate crisis proposed by the Prime Minister, instead of meaningfully committing to reduce Australia’s emissions, which are driven by burning coal, oil and gas.”

“No amount of resilience building or adaptation will prepare Australia for the full brunt of global warming of 3 degrees or more – which is the trajectory we are on,” Australian Conservation Foundation’s climate change campaigner Suzanne Harter added.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/quid-pro-coal-morrison-support-for-nsw-renewables-contingent-on-fossil-fuel-expansion-74494/>

Quid pro coal: Morrison support for NSW renewables contingent on fossil fuel expansion

Michael Mazengarb, Renew Economy, 31/01/2020

The Morrison government has landed its first bilateral agreement on energy policy, securing a commitment from the New South Wales government to ramp up its fossil fuel industries in return for chipping in funds to support “emissions reduction” activities as part of a \$2 billion funding deal.

The federal and New South Wales governments say they have agreed to contribute funds for investment in new renewable energy projects, in return for expanding the use of both coal and gas throughout the state.

It is already being described as a “climate deal with the devil”, and an effective bribe. It’s a clear signal of the Morrison government’s determination to push the development of Australia’s fossil fuel resources, and it is prepared to use the eagerness of state governments to receive funding for new zero-emissions electricity projects to leverage support for the coal and gas sectors.

In this deal, the NSW state Liberal government has vowed to “remove barriers” to increase the supply of coal to the Mount Piper coal fired power station, which has operated well below its maximum capacity for several months due to supply quality issues from its primary source of coal. This will secure the operation of the Mt Piper station for at least another two decades.

Morrison has also secured a commitment to expand gas production in

NSW, with the Berejiklian government committing to supply an additional 70 petajoules worth of gas into the east-coast gas market each year, most likely through the controversial and highly contested Narrabri proposal.

The assertion that expanding New South Wales’ gas production would lead to lower electricity prices was questioned by energy market experts from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

“Producing yet more high-cost gas is no panacea to Australia’s problem of high domestic prices in a low-priced gas world currently suffering a supply glut,” IEEFA gas market analyst Bruce Robertson.

“The ACCC has clearly shown that price fixing by gas producers has been occurring over recent years. The cartel of gas producers will ensure prices stay well above international prices.”

The Australian Greens labelled the agreement as a ‘deal with the devil’, saying that a commitment to expand NSW’s gas extraction activities would undermine efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The agreement was also slammed by the Climate Council’s CEO Amanda McKenzie, who said a deal to increase gas use in Australia would further exacerbate climate change and the effects of bushfires that have already devastated large parts of the state over the summer.

“Every dollar toward fossil fuel projects is a dollar toward making heat-waves worse and fires more damaging. It is just crazy, given everything we have lost this summer to even suggest opening new fossil fuel reserves,” McKenzie said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-31/nsw-strikes-landmark-energy-deal-with-federal-government/11916314>

NSW strikes ‘landmark’ energy deal with Federal Government, Greens MP calls it ‘climate criminality’

Emma Elsworthy, ABC, 31/01/2020

A “landmark” agreement between the Morrison and Berejiklian governments that will see more than \$2 billion invested into a new gas-fuelled energy deal has been slammed as “climate criminality” by the Greens.

The Greens have rejected Morrison’s statements, arguing reliance on “toxic methane gas” puts Australia’s “weak climate targets on a certain path to failure”.

“NSW is doing a climate deal with the devil, locking in pollution that will blow Australia’s emissions targets and put us on a path to climate catastrophe,” Greens MP Adam Bandt said.

“As a global warming gas, methane is up to 86 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

Coal supply to the Mount Piper Power Station, which supplies around 15 per cent of the state’s energy, will also be secured.

The station has been in “coal conservation mode” since September due to the low coal supplies at nearby Springvale mine, the station’s sole source of power.

The plan also promises financial support for a new pilot renewable energy zone in the Central West to help large-scale renewable generators pump energy into the grid.

Georgina Woods from Lock The Gate said the Commonwealth’s commitment to supply 70 PJ of gas suggested Santos’s “water-hungry” Narrabri coal seam gas field would be central to the deal.

The project, which is awaiting approval from the Independent Planning Commission, has received fierce criticism due to the risk to water and land resources it is said to pose.

“Rural communities should not be forced to sacrifice land, water and their economic security in the name of quick and dirty resource exploitation,” she said.

“Coal seam gas is a heavily polluting industry that leaks vast amounts of methane and won’t do anything to bring down carbon emissions.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/massive-green-deal-nsw-environment-minister-spruiks-2-billion-energy-package-20200131-p53wgg.html>

‘Massive green deal’: NSW Environment Minister spruiks \$2 billion energy package

Lisa Visentin, SMH, 31/01/2020

NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean has championed the state’s \$2 billion energy deal with the Commonwealth as a “massive green deal”, which marked a new consensus within the Coalition on tackling climate change.

But some climate change advocates have criticised it, seizing on the agreement by the NSW government to inject an additional 70 petajoules of gas into the east coast market.

Mr Kean said the deal amounted to a major investment in renewable energy, with the federal government tipping in \$960 million for emissions reduction initiatives in NSW matched by \$1 billion in funding from the state government.

However, Climate Council chief executive Amanda McKenzie labelled NSW's commitment to boost its gas supply a "pollution policy".

"More gas isn't a climate policy; it is a pollution policy. While fires are still threatening lives and properties, why is the government investing in making the problem worse?" she said.

"Every dollar towards fossil fuel projects is a dollar toward making heatwaves worse and fires more damaging."

Nature Conservation Council chief executive Chris Gambian welcomed the investment in clean energy projects, but rejected claims that gas "represents a necessary or viable transition fuel".

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/narrabri-is-critical-ceos-back-east-coast-fracking-as-pm-steps-on-gas-20200130-p53w5a.html>

'Narrabri is critical': CEOs back east coast fracking as PM steps on gas

Colin Kruger, SMH, 30/01/2020

The chief executives of Santos, Beach Energy and manufacturer Qenos have backed calls by Prime Minister Scott Morrison to open up gas markets on the east coast, noting it would help lower energy prices.

Qenos boss Stephen Bell said, "We've got to remove the impediments to the development of gas. NSW and Victoria are the two largest consumer states for gas and yet both of those states have got all sorts of things in place blocking the development of new resources."

In an address to the National Press Club on Wednesday, the Prime Minister demanded eastern states clear any roadblocks to the development of their gas reserves saying "there is no credible energy transition plan" from coal to clean energy without gas as a transition fuel.

"I was really please to hear the PM put gas at the top of his agenda," said Santos chief executive Kevin Gallagher who is trying to push through the approval of its controversial \$3 billion Narrabri gas project, which could supply up to half of the state's gas needs.

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2020/01/31/morrison-big-win-santos/>

Morrison delivers big fossil fuel win for major donor Santos

Bernard Keane, Crikey, 31/01/2020

Scott Morrison's energy deal with NSW, announced this morning, is a huge win for fossil fuel company Santos, a major political donor with extensive ties to the Coalition.

Morrison's deal with Gladys Berejiklian's Coalition includes "commitments from the NSW Government to facilitate investment opportunities to inject an additional 70 petajoules of gas per year into the east coast market" and "an undertaking from the NSW Government to remove barriers to coal supply to the Mount Piper Power Station".

Greenpeace pointed out that the Mount Piper coal-fired plant generates toxins such as mercury and sulphur dioxide at far higher per unit levels than permitted in China or the EU.

Santos is a major political donor: in 2017-18 it handed over \$95,000 to Coalition branches and slightly less to ALP branches around the country, with particular generosity aimed at the Queensland LNP and ALP. Queensland is home to its Gladstone LNG facility.

The company has handed nearly \$2.5 million in donations to both sides of politics in the last 20 years.

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/is-the-gas-deal-just-hot-air/news-story/dfe5e166d5da1f300d0c1e28f01e9481>

Is the gas deal just hot air?

Sharri Markson, Daily Telegraph, 01/02/2020

It would have been a potentially awkward situation, the Prime Minister standing side-by-side with Matt Kean, the minister no one has heard of, to announce a \$2 billion energy deal for NSW.

So instead the energy ministers who cut the deal – Kean and his federal counterpart Angus Taylor – were sidelined, and the PM and Premier Gladys Berejiklian shared the spotlight.

After Kean's interview on my Sky program, where he said on-air that federal Liberals wanted more action on climate change, the PM was far from pleased.

He rang the Premier livid over Kean's comments.

And Berejiklian, after agreeing with Morrison, then phoned Kean telling him she was not annoyed at him but

that the PM was upset and he needed to lay low for a while. In other words, stop giving media interviews which annoy the PM.

It now turns out that Morrison not only dropped the energy ministers from Friday's big announcement but he also changed the nature of the \$2 billion spend, pitching it as all about increasing gas supply in NSW to lower electricity bills.

Kean says that gas actually has very little to do with the deal.

"The exciting thing is that \$3 billion will be spent on green infrastructure in NSW, and the commitment to gas doesn't involve any money," Kean said when I phoned him.

Despite Morrison's big gas pitch, no funding is going towards gas, according to the NSW Energy Minister. Not a single dollar.

The agreement states that the NSW government has to develop options to increase gas supply and has a new target to inject an additional 70 petajoules of gas per year into the market.

The NSW government is likely to give the go-ahead for the Narrabri Project, along with the green light for a new import terminal which the private sector will build.

But if Narrabri or the new import terminal don't proceed or the 70 petajoules of gas isn't injected into the market by 2022, the agreement, which hasn't been publicly released, states that the NSW government will conduct a "gas market review" to address gas market supply.

So the only consequence of the NSW government not meeting its additional gas target, when the PM is so eager to get more gas into the NSW market, is a review. Yes, a review.

The \$2 billion announced by Morrison and Berejiklian is expected to go towards projects like hydrogen technology, electric vehicle infrastructure, towards farmers and primary industry to commercialise lower emissions technology, to energy efficiency programs and to invest in and build more renewable energy technology and new income streams.

It will set up NSW to deliver a 35 per cent emissions reduction target by 2030.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/feb/01/scott-morrison-is-stuck-in-a-time-warp-more-gas-is-not-the-answer>

Scott Morrison is stuck in a time warp – more gas is not the answer

Simon Holmes à Court, *Guardian*, 01/02/2020

The prime minister, Scott Morrison, surrounded by advisers out of the fossil fuel industry, is stuck in a time warp.

His claim that “there is no credible energy transition plan, for an economy like Australia in particular, that does not involve the greater use of gas as an important transition fuel” is demonstrably wrong. There are many.

A decade ago solar and wind were expensive, gas was cheap, batteries had no conceivable role in a power grid and pumped hydro storage was a forgotten technology. Conventional wisdom held that gas was a “transition fuel” – that since gas generation has half the emissions of coal power (if we foolishly turn a blind eye to emissions caused when extracting gas), we could reduce emissions by switching out coal power stations for gas turbines.

The energy transition story is playing out quite differently in Australia. Over the last decade renewables tripled from 8% to 23% in the National Electricity Market and 11 coal power stations shut down. We didn’t burn more gas, we just burnt it more strategically.

There’s no doubt that gas has played a very important role in keeping the lights on. Morrison claims we need a lot more of it to continue the energy transition already in play. The experts disagree.

A clutch of deep decarbonisation studies going back a decade have shown a future where Australia burns far less fossil gas (and coal), the lights stay on and electricity is affordable.

A quick look at the data shows that if we need to get the gas out from under our feet, it’s not for us, but for gas exporters – many of whom are generous political donors and stingy taxpayers.

So, Scott Morrison, let’s come clean and let the public know that there’s no domestic case for increasing gas extraction. Given that gas extraction threatens landscapes and has a major problem with emissions, it’s better we leave it in the ground.

• *Simon Holmes à Court is senior adviser to the Climate and Energy College at Melbourne University*

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/radical-overhaul-of-states-planning-commission/news-story/6f9f73285dcd9c2d74c0122f7319b72c?>

Radical overhaul of state’s planning commission

Anna Caldwell, *Daily Telegraph*, 01/02/2020

NIMBY-style petition campaigns to stop development will be thwarted and new commissioners with better “decision making skills” will be hired in a dramatic overhaul of the state’s troubled independent Planning Commission.

The government will accept all 12 recommendations of a high level review of the planning commission on the back of a series of attacks over major development decisions.

The changes will make the independent Planning Commissioner’s chair accountable to the minister.

Importantly, the IPC will now be clearly responsible for delivering on the government’s “agreed objectives and performance measures”.

The changes include limiting public objections which have been strangling development, by raising the threshold under which the IPC will even consider a development.

Specifically, any development will require 50 unique community objections before it is referred to the IPC, which will destroy the business model of nimby-objectors who get thousands of people to sign the same form or petition as a means of slowing approvals.

Previously, a development was referred to the IPC when it had 25 objections and they did not need to be unique.

The review also suggests objectors must reside within a set distance of the development.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/life/science/2020/02/03/nsw-clean-gas-plan/>

Scott Morrison’s dirty deal over so-called ‘clean gas’ a risk to human health

David Shearman, *New Daily*, 03/02/2020

The Trumpian deal between the Commonwealth and NSW will increase greenhouse gases from fossil-fuel production at a time when bushfires rage from global heating.

Extending the life of Mt Piper coal-fired power station will continue the deaths, premature births and diabetes from air pollution in NSW communities.

The government ignores these human realities to pacify its coal lobby – in the same way it fails to mention the national and international deaths and illnesses from inadequate climate change policy.

The evidence shows that whether local or imported, gas produces almost the same emissions as coal when the escape of methane during its extraction and its transport are measured.

Furthermore, these escaped or fugitive methane emissions are 85 times more potent in global heating than carbon dioxide – the “gas bomb” of global heating.

Australia does not always measure these fugitives; it “estimates” them with figures suitable to reduce our domestic emissions profile.

Morrison’s wish to use more gas at a time when NSW is burning could be described as ignorant, unconscionable or both, for it is against the spirit of the Paris agreement and the advice of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and of 11,000 scientists from 153 countries.

However it raises many questions for those in NSW and indeed all Australians and particularly the concerned farmers in Narrabri.

Does NSW wish to provide the prodigious amounts of water used in fracking when the state will have increasing water constraints?

To produce this gas, is NSW prepared to take the risks from the contaminants in this water, added chemicals used in drilling and extraction processes, and naturally occurring radioactive materials, arsenic, mercury and volatile organic compounds – many of which can be harmful to human and animal life and to productive land?

In the process of gas extraction, many naturally occurring chemicals from coal seams and shale are brought to the surface in groundwater and are possible causes of cancer or birth defects.

Studies in US gas fields have shown increases in some cancers, birth defects and premature births in communities within a few kilometres of gas wells.

Indeed, how can you use less gas and prevent this unhealthy deal between the Commonwealth and your state government?

• Write to your member of state Parliament objecting to unhealthy projects

being promoted to assuage climate deniers in the federal government and ask them to read the science and not the information from the gas industry.

- To reduce greenhouse emissions oppose gas in all new housing and public developments.
- Recognise that burning gas indoors has health harms particularly for children.

Doctors fervently oppose political deals that have communities pay a cost in suffering and death.

It is to be hoped that the health of NSW citizens is not betrayed for 30 pieces of silver from the federal government.

• *Dr David Shearman AM PhD FRACP is Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the University of Adelaide and co-founder of Doctors for the Environment Australia.*

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/morrison-refusal-to-move-on-climate-and-the-prosperity-doctrine-99530/>

Morrison's refusal to move on climate, and the "prosperity doctrine"

Giles Parkinson & Michael Mazengarb, Renew Economy, 03/02/2020

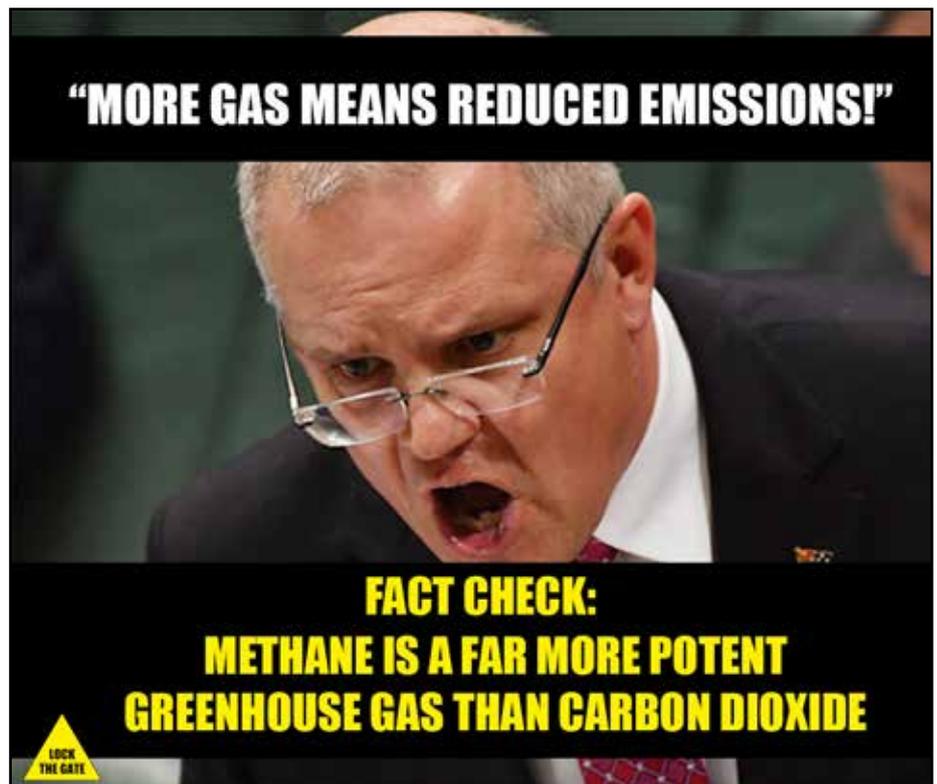
It's become, quite literally, the burning question of the Australian summer. How do you explain a prime minister who says he accepts the science of climate change, acknowledges the link between climate change and the devastating bushfires, who bears witness to the suffering and losses, and then chooses to do nothing about it?

The most commonly cited causes for Morrison's inaction are the influence of the radical MPs and senators within Liberal and National Party ranks who completely reject the science of climate change, and who seem to have a vice-like hold over Coalition numbers, and their leaders.

And then there is the power and influence of the fossil fuel lobby that not only appears to have a financial grip on the Coalition, but also a mortgage over some of Morrison's key advisory positions. And let's not forget, of course, the Murdoch media.

There is another influence, however, that is worth noting now as citizens and investors struggles to comprehend Morrison's tin-eared response to victims and fire-fighters at the height of the crisis, his lack of empathy, his refusal to adjust his climate policies in any meaningful manner since, and his focus on "resilience" and adaptation.

And that influence – we should be reminded – is Morrison's Christian



faith, and in particular the "prosperity doctrine" or "prosperity gospel" to which his church subscribes. This belief holds that the world's resources are there to be exploited, that Christians have a duty to do so, and that only Jesus can have an influence over climate.

What exactly is this "prosperity doctrine"? The key point, as explained by Bishop George Browning in "The Anglican" in late 2018, is to remove any impediment to personal gain and prosperity. On the issue of climate change, it is what helps deliver "traditional conservatives", if that is who Morrison claims he is, into the embrace of the radical right.

"The goal of government is therefore not to regulate for the common good, but for the prosperity of the individual, even to the detriment of common good," Bishop Browning writes. "The attitude of the conservatives in the present government on environmental issues is evidence enough of this stance."

For some reason, the exploitation of wind and solar resonates less well with the Pentecostal evangelists than the exploitation of coal, gas and oil.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the group that publishes the 'Doomsday Clock', which they recently moved to just 100 seconds to midnight, also does a good breakdown of the historical evangelical approach to climate change.

"Some evangelicals cite religious reasons for avoiding climate solutions. They subscribe to the belief that "God will take care of everything" or even that climate change is a sign of their coming salvation after the "end times," they write.

<https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/pro-coal-agenda-is-rat-poison-for-morrison-20200204-p53xi3>

Pro-coal agenda is rat poison for Morrison

Phillip Coorey, AFR, 04/02/2020

From an optical perspective, the timing of Tuesday's Nationals' leadership challenge could not have been worse.

With the first Parliamentary day of the year set aside to discuss the bushfires and remember the victims, the Nationals moved to install as leader a fellow who does not subscribe to the science of climate change and does not rate it as an issue of concern.

Barnaby Joyce and his co-conspirator Matt Canavan were running on an anti-environmentalist agenda of coal-fired power, land clearing and tearing up the Murray Darling Basin Agreement.

It may work wonders in their necks of the woods but to their Coalition colleagues in seats where voters are now talking about nothing but climate change, it was rat poison after a savage summer of fire saw lives lost, homes destroyed and forests and animals wiped out en masse.



National Party leader, Michael McCormack (right) held on to the leadership after a challenge from Barnaby Joyce (centre) backed by Matt Canavan. Sources suggest all the National Party women voted againsts Joyce. Graphic: The New Daily

Thanks to the Joyce move, the climate tensions came to a head in the joint Coalition party room meeting held straight after the Nationals leadership ballot.

Joyce and his backers continued to rail against climate policy as some construct of “greenies” and ideologues trying to exploit a crisis.

Multiple sources say all the women voted against Joyce.

<https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/climate-war-rages-inside-the-coalition-20200204-p53xi8>

Climate war rages inside the Coalition

Phillip Coorey, AFR, 04/02/2020

Nationals leader Michael McCormack said the Coalition should hold the line against further action on climate change after a leadership coup against him by Barnaby Joyce failed but reignited fierce internal debate in the Coalition over its policy direction.

While McCormack must now keep at bay his own enemies who do not

believe climate change is an issue, Scott Morrison is being pushed by Liberals to do more following the devastating bushfires.

Moments after Joyce lost the spill, he and his backers, including George Christensen and David Gillespie, spoke in the joint party room meeting against climate change.

They were taken to task by Liberal colleagues who say climate change is even more of a red-hot issue in their seats following the bushfire – and some want the government to do more on policy.

Pressure to do more from the left of politics will also build after Adam Bandt replaced the retiring Richard Di Natale as Greens leader and immediately signalled a more aggressive approach towards emissions reduction.

Joyce ran for the leadership on an anti-environmental platform. Backed by Matt Canavan he vowed to do more to promote coal and build coal-fired

power stations, enable widespread land clearing and wind back the Murray-Darling Basin plan so less water was dedicated to the health of the river system.

He told a subsequent joint Coalition meeting, which is held every Tuesday morning when Parliament sits, that the government should not be “succumbed” on climate change by “greenies” because it was not an issue in Nationals’ electorates.

Christensen backed Joyce and Gillespie while Senator Canavan, who lost his ministry for backing Joyce, spoke about the importance of the coal industry and the jobs it creates in regional communities.

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