



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 3:11 • 25 FEBRUARY 2020

EPA dumps Chief Scientist's risk measures

NSW govt has a pattern of dismantling various commitments and processes to make it easier for the Narrabri gas project to proceed

The NSW Environmental Protection Agency appears to have abandoned a key coal seam gas risk mitigation measure recommended by the NSW Chief Scientist, placing landholders at future risk should the industry go ahead in the state.

The EPA has quietly conceded it will not proceed with implementing a long-term environmental rehabilitation fund recommended by the Chief Scientist.

The environmental authority also admitted it was not sure insurance would be available to protect landholders from spills and contamination.

The concerning revelations follow the EPA's appearance at a Legislative Council inquiry earlier this month into the long-delayed implementation of the NSW Chief Scientist's recommendations on coal seam gas.

Robust approach to risk abandoned

Under questions from parliamentarians the EPA told the inquiry it would shortly release the Government's final response to recommendation 9, which proposed a "robust and comprehensive" three-tier approach to guarding against environmental risk.

The recommendation was for site-based security deposits, enhanced insurance coverage, and an environmental rehabilitation fund for management and response to environmental harm into the future.

The EPA's response was subsequently uploaded quietly to the agency's website and reveals the Government has



A coal seam gas well-head. Photo: North West Protection Advocacy

shelved plans for a long-term environmental rehabilitation fund, despite such a fund also being recommended by the Auditor-General for the mining industry more broadly.

The EPA's response also concedes that it may not be possible for coal seam gas operators to obtain insurance and proposes that "Operators choosing not to hold relevant insurance will be required to instead prove to the EPA the existence of sufficient potential clean up funds."

Reviewing the document, *Fossil Fool Bulletin* notes that it states:

We understand that access to adequate insurance for gas operations is not straightforward in the Australian insurance market with the types of activities

and risks that insurance companies will cover. We understand that the market is moving towards being more selective with the types of risk insurance companies will cover and the price of insurance coverage, with high-risk activities, such as fracking, commonly excluded.

Yet on the following page, the EPA says:

The risks arising from gas projects are low.

Further on, the EPA states:

The availability of adequate environmental impairment liability for coal seam gas activities in the insurance market is not straightforward. The local Australian insurance market is less

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• P2: Santos employees dodge Knitting Nannas

• P3: Report exposes Qld govt gas failure

P4: Morrison govt clings to coal dreams

Santos people: What are they thinking?

By Rosie Lee

The banality of watching Santos employees in Brisbane go out to get their lunch like they do every day, really struck me last week (while the Knitting Nannas protested outside their Brisbane HQ).

I must have seen fifty of the Santos uniformed 'ordinary people' slowly filed past in a constant stream to get a coffee or lunch.

In ones and twos just quietly going about the business of destroying the Siding Springs Dark Sky Park. A probably perfectly nice girl who is maybe paying off her car by destroying the livelihood of a farming family by depleting the aquifer that they rely on to water crops or put food on the table. Each farmer feeds 600 people (according to ABS).

The young boy in his standard Santos-embroidered polo shirt who looks like he's fresh out of uni, top of his class, wrestling with the so far insoluble problem of what to do with the 430,000 tonnes of salt created by the Narrabri gas project, taking his sandwich back to his air-conditioned desk to face the long afternoon far away from the problem in the Pilliga forest. Where koalas quietly die.

The sweatless, blue-shirted blokes strategizing where to spend community bribes to buy social licence.

The employees whose eyes don't register a flicker of recognition as they pass by signs on the wall outside their office outlining opposition to their 850 fifty-foot gas flares that burn 24/7 in a fire zone, or detail their hazardous toxic chemical compounds. Who don't dare make eye contact with the older women dressed in bright yellow lined



Knitting Nannas from Brisbane and the Northern Rivers, NSW, gathered outside Santos' Brisbane HQ last week. Nanna Rosie (fifth from left) shares her thoughts about people coming and going from the building. Photo: Knitting Nannas, Facebook

up to challenge their company's climate change inducing methane emissions, in case they register some sense of responsibility. Who don't register any inkling they understand the message that is being delivered on behalf of many who oppose their 'quiet' dirty business. 23,000 submissions were sent against it.

Just another ordinary day at work, moving forward on the destruction of the recharge zone of the Great Artesian Basin.

Or that guy – is he the guy who is trying to find a way round the insurmountable problem of toxic water and the dead zones where it already spilled and nothing will ever grow?

All these perfectly nice ordinary people quietly going about their business.

Climate change makes it the business of all of us to challenge their right to go about this dirty business as though it's perfectly alright.

Only a matter of weeks before the Independent Planning Commission decide – will they allow these perfectly ordinary people to destroy the North West of NSW and turn it into a dirty industrialised gas field like Queensland?

Don't be a Quiet Australian. And don't expect me to be one.

There simply isn't any more time.

– Nanna Rosie

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Coal funding 'insult to bushfire affected communities: ACF'

In response to reports that the Morrison Government is set to give \$11 million to upgrade the ageing Vales Point coal-fired power station, the Australian Conservation Foundation's climate change program manager Gavan McFadzean said:

"While Australians express alarm about the climate-driven bushfire crisis, our Federal Government is looking to fuel future fires with public money to prop up coal-fired power.

"To put public money into coal-fired power is an insult to bushfire-affected communities, many of which have been leading the calls for action to tackle climate change.

"Every year Vales Point stays open, it emits around 6.9 million tonnes of climate pollution.

"A Vales Point grant would be just the latest move by this Government to prolong and expand the coal industry, following the announcement of a \$4 million feasibility study into a new coal-fired power plant for Collinsville in north Queensland.

Trevor St Baker, the owner of Vales Point, donated more than \$100,000 to state and federal Liberal and National parties in 2018-19. Since then, the government has progressed several of his projects.

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NSW coal emissions bigger than UK and France combined

New research from The Australia Institute shows that the New South Wales Government's attempts to force planners to ignore the carbon emissions of the state's coal exports contradicts NSW climate policy, the Paris Agreement, corporate expectations and economic opportunities for growth.

Key findings

- NSW coal emissions are bigger than direct emissions from France and the UK, almost as big as Australia's, and nearly four times bigger than direct emissions from NSW itself.
- Stopping consideration of downstream emissions contradicts NSW climate policy and the spirit of the Paris Agreement.
- Despite the NSW Mineral Council's claims to the contrary, the Independent Planning Committee is legally bound to consider "downstream emissions".

"With the state ravaged by unprecedented bushfires, it beggars belief that the NSW government would look to reduce consideration of climate change in planning decisions," says Rod Campbell, Research Director at The Australia Institute.

"Under pressure from the coal industry the NSW government is going in the wrong direction, trying to limit how independent planning decisions can deal with NSW's main source of climate impacts, like the fires that have ravaged the state.

"If the NSW Government caves to the mining lobby and changes planning rules to favour them, Australia's already tarnished reputation will suffer along with the climate.

"The contradictions between NSW climate and coal mining policy are best resolved with a moratorium on new coal mines, delivering certainty for clean investment and economic growth for the state."

Report exposes govt gas failure



Photo: North West Protection Advocacy

The Queensland auditor-general's report on managing coal seam gas activities exposes an incredible failure by successive governments to protect landholders and adequately regulate the unconventional gas industry.

The report, released last week, sought to examine the effectiveness of government departments and authorities in regulating the coal seam gas industry in the state.

Lock the Gate Alliance National Coordinator Naomi Hogan said the report showed the dangerous unconventional gas industry had been allowed to run rampant across Queensland without adequate regulation, to the detriment of regional communities, agriculture, and the environment.

"In their mad rush to exploit the state's gas resources, successive Queensland governments permitted the proliferation of the risky CSG industry without a safe, reliable regulatory framework in place," she said.

"The lack of consistent regulation is particularly worrying given governments have allowed polluting gasfields to pockmark some of the state's most valuable agricultural land.

"The report reveals a litany of serious ongoing concerns from landholders about consultation failure, failure to compensate for negative impacts, and failure to protect agricultural interests."

Particularly troubling remarks from the report include:

- Concerns from landholders and other stakeholders persist regarding

the effectiveness of the framework in managing issues such as priority agricultural areas, offsite impacts, and the long-term environmental effects of coal seam gas activities.

- Some stakeholders commented to us that the consultation seemed to be more of a notification than a meaningful consultation. For stakeholders to feel that consultation is meaningful, it needs to occur at a time when they can influence the outcome.

- Landholders and their representatives continue to express concern that they have struggled to obtain remedy and/or compensation for offsite impacts.

Hogan said, "CSG drilling in the Surat Basin has drained 127 water bores, with the Palaszczuk Government now predicting a total of 571 will run dry in the future due to rampant gasfield expansion.

"Unfortunately, landholders can feel overwhelmed due to a lack of information about who to turn to for assistance when gas companies come knocking, and are often bullied by CSG companies into accepting wells and infrastructure on their properties.

"Regional Queenslanders deserve better. Lock the Gate Alliance calls on the Palaszczuk Government to increase landholder rights in dealing with CSG companies and amend regional planning laws to prevent CSG on priority agricultural lands and ecological areas."

- **Download the report here:**

<https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/tableOf-ice/TabledPapers/2020/5620T255.pdf>

Advanced economies reject new coal power – except for Australia’s Morrison government



While the federal government is considering taxpayer support for a new coal power station to be built in Queensland, there are currently no coal power plants under construction anywhere else in Australia or North America, and only one plant being built in the Western Europe, says the Australia Institute.

Key Findings:

- Around Australia and in other developed regions such as Western Europe and North America, there are virtually no coal-fired power stations being built.
- The one Western European plant under construction in Germany and nine years behind schedule; the plant was originally set to open in 2011 it is now scheduled for operation in 2020.
- There are no coal-fired power stations under construction in the United States, Canada or Mexico.
- The last coal plant built in North

America was completed in May 2019, a tiny 17MW combined heat and power plant on the campus of the University of Alaska.

- The last pre-construction coal-fired power project, the Holcomb Expansion Project, was cancelled in January 2020.

There are no coal-fired power stations being built in Australia. Right to Information requests reveal government advice that an ultra-supercritical coal plant in North Queensland, similar to the plant being proposed, would only be viable with high electricity prices and without a significant carbon price.

Despite the coal power plant proposed for Queensland being promoted as a ‘clean’ and ‘low emissions’ coal plant, Shine Energy claims it is ‘essential’ for investor confidence that the government indemnify them against any risk of a future price on carbon.

“Despite the government’s enthusiasm for coal, around Australia and in other developed regions such as Western Europe and North America, there are

virtually no coal-fired power stations currently being built,” said Richie Merzian, Climate & Energy Program Director at the Australia Institute.

“It is cruel to raise the hopes of our regional workforce that new construction and power plant jobs are imminent when all the research shows that coal power plants are uneconomic. Across Australia, North America and Western Europe, there is just one coal plant being built – and it is running nine years behind schedule.

“No similar ultra-supercritical coal plant has been built in Australia, a tell sign that such a project is simply uneconomic.

“It beggars belief that policymakers are continuing to bend over backwards trying to prop up our ageing coal industry rather than seek to support industries that are currently facing enormous costs as a result of climate change, including agriculture and tourism.”

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Chief Scientist’s recommendation dumped

- Continued from p1

willing to provide these products than at the time of the Chief Scientist and Engineer’s review.

In other words, insurance companies think coal seam gas activities are too risky to expose themselves to.

Cosy energy deal

Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Georgina Woods said it was a worrying development at a time when the NSW and Federal Governments were cozying up over their recently inked energy deal.

Part of that deal includes the request that the NSW Government find 70 petajoules of gas, almost exactly what the Santos’ proposed Narrabri gasfield would likely yield.

“This latest development continues the pattern of the Berejiklian Government dismantling various commitments and processes to make it easier for the Narrabri CSG project to proceed – following the announce-

ment last week the IPC would be weakened.” Woods said.

“Through this latest announcement, the NSW Government appears to be conceding that it will not put in place the risk mitigation measures that the Chief Scientist said were necessary to properly manage the CSG industry.

“If the CSG industry goes ahead without insurance and without a fund established that can pay to clean up spills and contamination damage, the risk and any associated harm are all going to be loaded onto landholders and the people of New South Wales.

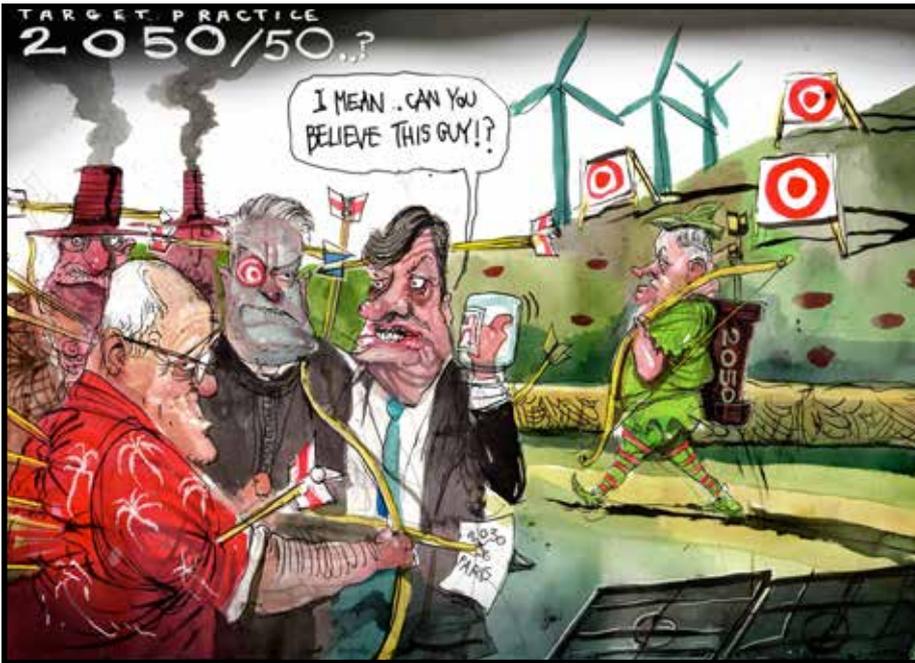
“This failure means a red light for coal seam gas in New South Wales. Having failed to put in place the promised ‘world-class’ regime to protect people, water, soils and landscapes from coal seam gas, the government must urgently stop the Narrabri gasfield.”

- Download the EPA response here:

<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/-/media/epa/corporate-site/resources/licensing/19p1963-safeguarding-environmental-liabilities-csg.pdf>

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



Inside the news

Nothing will end the **climate policy crisis** in Australia unless you change the culture of political parties which is fuelled by a very poor remuneration structure and incentive arrangements fuelled by a **dangerous donation system**. So says Oliver Yates in a very good article published by *Renew Economy*, which explains how politicians are rewarded and promoted primarily for their value to the party in soliciting donations (p14).

The toxic nature of the climate wars was illustrated when **Barnaby Joyce** (Nationals) and **Joel Fitzgibbon** (Labor) had a 'Neanderthal' type public **screaming match** in the corridors of Parliament (p13). One suspects the Neanderthals probably had better manners.

News that the debate on climate change is disproportionately influenced by automated bots – generating a quarter of all climate denialist Twitter tweets – is cause for alarm (p11-12).

Matt Canavan may have departed as resources minister, but he has left the residents of Kimba, SA, with a **10,000-year toxic legacy**, says *Independent Australia* (p11). A site near Kimba has been selected by Canavan to store low-level radioactive waste, dangerous for 300 years. But along with it comes 'temporary' storage of intermediate-level waste which needs to be kept safe for 10,000 years. It is unlikely permanent storage for the more dangerous waste will be found, so the Kimba district will be left with it for the foreseeable future.

Bob Brown has described the crowd that greeted his **Stop Adani convoy** to north Queensland last year as "Cranky, nasty, inhospitable," in the documentary *Convoy*. The peaceful convoy was, he adds, "faced with this unruly mob fuelled up by extreme-right activist politicians and publicans letting the grog flow". The film is screening in locations around the country (p6).

Environmentalists are delighted with today's news that **Equinor** has **dumped** its oil exploration plans for the Great Australian Bight (p9). This makes it the fourth fossil fuel company to quit the Bight, after **BP**, **Chevron** and **Karoon Gas**.



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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 23,580 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/greens-mp-found-in-contempt-over-anti-adani-shirt-20200218-p54202.html>

Greens MP found in contempt over anti-Adani shirt

Lydia Lynch, *Bris Times*, 18/02/2020

Queensland's powerful ethics committee has recommended Greens MP Michael Berkman be found in contempt of Queensland Parliament after he wore an anti-Adani shirt inside the building last year.

Speaker Curtis Pitt referred Berkman to the parliamentary ethics committee after the MP attended a student climate protest outside Parliament on March 15.

Berkman left the protest and went up to a balcony inside Parliament House with two of his children and "was clapping and waving to the crowd".

Under parliamentary rules banners, signs and T-shirts associated with a political cause or campaign cannot be brought into the precinct.

Given Berkman is still in his first term as an MP, "and appeared unaware of the seriousness of his actions" and that there "was no element of dishonesty or malice", the ethics committee decided no further action would be taken against him.

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/adani-mine-a-good-thing-for-creating-jobs-says-albanese-20200219-p542d6.html>

Adani mine a 'good thing' for creating jobs, says Albanese

Lydia Lynch, *Bris Times*, 19/02/2020

Labor leader Anthony Albanese says the approval of Adani's controversial central Queensland mine has been a "good thing".

Albanese was speaking at a Queensland Media Club lunch in Brisbane on Wednesday when asked whether he would stop beating around the bush and say whether he supported the mine or not.

"In terms of the Adani mine that has been approved, that is a good thing that those jobs have been created," he said.

"I support jobs regardless of where



Queensland Greens MP Michael Berkman on the balcony in Parliament while wearing an anti-Adani T-shirt. Photo: *Brisbane Times*

they are, and that is a very good thing, and I support those jobs and the economic activity that will arise from it."

Acknowledging the party's woes in parts of the state, Albanese said that to have any hope of winning back regional votes ahead of the October state election, Labor now needed to show it respects Queensland coal miners.

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/movies/bob-brown-takes-the-gloves-off-to-give-unruly-mob-a-lashing-20200220-p542oz.html>

Bob Brown takes the gloves off to give 'unruly mob' a lashing

Karl Quinn, *SMH*, 21/02/2020

Bob Brown is uncharacteristically scathing in his description of the crowd that greeted his Stop Adani convoy to north Queensland last year.

"Cranky, nasty, inhospitable," he calls them in the documentary *Convoy*, which screens at the Transitions Film Festival on Friday. The peaceful convoy was, he adds, "faced with this unruly mob fuelled up by extreme-right activist politicians and publicans letting the prog flow".

Convoy is an unashamedly slanted account of the road trip in April and

May last year, from Tasmania to Clermont in Queensland and then back to Canberra, in a bid to draw attention to Adani's controversial and economically questionable proposed mine in the Galilee Basin.

There are, though, plenty of commentators who have subsequently ascribed huge impact to the convoy, with some going so far as to sheet blame for Labor's failure to win government to the campaign against the Queensland coal mine.

But Brown won't have a bar of it.

"If only we could determine who is in government," he says. "Bill Shorten sitting on the fence, backed by his ministers, lost the election. If Shorten had said, 'I will stop the Adani mine', he'd have lost the same number of seats in Queensland but would have won a whole stack more seats for his leadership in the rest of metropolitan Australia, and he'd be prime minister now."

Nor was the return of a Coalition government a worse outcome as far as the Stop Adani movement is concerned.

"Labor would have put a stamp of approval on this mine, and that would have been harder to fight," he says.



Adani workers were delayed by a mermaid on an access point this week.
Photo: Frontline Action on Coal

“The failure of vision and social justice and environmental wellbeing on this issue under Labor is monumental, and it’s continuing. While Albo’s (Anthony Albanese) own electorate was shrouded in bushfire smoke so you couldn’t see one corner from the next, he was in Queensland talking up coal. Appalling.”

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-18/australia-climate-how-germany-is-closing-down-its-coal-industry/11902884>

Germany is shutting down its coal industry for good, so far without sacking a single worker

Eric Campbell, ABC, 18/02/2020

Black coal mines like this one in Essen, which opened its first shaft in 1875, once fired the furnaces that made Germany the economic powerhouse of Europe.

But this is no longer a working mine – it’s a museum, set up by Seeger and some other former miners to show tourists how life once was in Germany’s western industrial heartland.

That’s because Germany shut down its last black coal mine in 2018.

Miners were offered a new job or an early retirement and a centuries-old way of life came to a sudden end.

As Australia looks to expand coal exports and build new mines, like Adani’s proposed Carmichael project, Europe’s biggest economy is phasing out its entire coal industry for good.

Having already extinguished black

coal, Germany is now doing the same to brown coal – a cheaper, dirtier fossil fuel that spews even more carbon emissions.

Black coal may have been shut down for economic reasons but a new move to phase out brown coal is purely environmental.

Under what’s known as the Coal Compromise, struck in January 2019, the rest of Germany’s coal industry will soon start retiring their mines and power plants.

Corporations have been given nearly two decades to completely shut down and the Government has promised 40 billion euros (\$65 billion) to coal regions to ease the transition.

Ende Gelaende, which means “Game Over”, is a radical environmental group set up specifically to stop brown coal. And it wants to stop it now.

The group does not march in the streets. It fields thousands of disciplined activists in military-style formations to occupy coal regions and shut down infrastructure.

Ende Gelaende is non-violent but its tactics of mass invasion are devastatingly effective in outmanoeuvring police.

STOP WATER MINING THE NEXT RESOURCES BATTLE



<https://www.theage.com.au/business/companies/emissions-for-australia-s-second-heaviest-polluter-fall-after-outages-20200219-p542ak.html>

Emissions for Australia’s second-heaviest polluter fall after outages

Nick Toscano, Age, 19/02/2020

Prolonged outages at large coal- and gas-fired power stations in Victoria and NSW contributed to a sudden drop in the greenhouse gas emissions generated by Australia’s second-heaviest polluter, new data shows.

Emissions from power giant EnergyAustralia – operator of the Yallourn coal-fired power plant in Victoria’s Latrobe Valley, the Mt Piper coal-fired plant in NSW and several gas plants nationwide – fell by 1.6 million tonnes, or 7%, in the year to June 30.

Coal-fired power companies are Australia’s worst carbon emitters, according to the Clean Energy Regulator, with the top five alone contributing 116 million tonnes of carbon equivalent in 2017-18.

EnergyAustralia’s emissions drop last financial year – from 21.7 to 20.1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent – was largely driven by a 9% decline in output from unplanned outages and planned maintenance outages across its big generators.

<https://www.theage.com.au/business/companies/king-coal-isn-t-dead-yet-just-ask-glencore-20200220-p542mw.html>

King Coal isn’t dead yet – just ask Glencore

Clara Ferreira Marques, Age, 20/02/2020

Thermal coal has become a byword for the resource industry’s climate crimes. From BlackRock down, fund managers are reluctant to touch a mineral that releases more carbon dioxide than any other energy source. Large miners, from BHP Group to Anglo American, are trying to dump it.

Coal is also – for now at least – profitable.

It’s the unpalatable truth that explains why Glencore, the world’s largest exporter of the black stuff, sticks with a dying fuel. Morals aside, the details suggest Chief Executive Officer Ivan Glasenberg and his team may well be right.

The risk of meddling with a moribund commodity, even when you account for much of the world’s seaborne supply, is that you can end up with worthless assets.

Unfortunately for a warming climate, that looks a distant enough prospect

for the world's largest commodities trader.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-20/coal-fired-power-station-proposed-not-viable-says-economist/11983782>

Proposed coal-fired power station for Collinsville could become white elephant, economist warns

Michael Atkin, ABC, 20/02/2020

A new coal-fired power station proposed for Collinsville in North Queensland could become a white elephant and leave taxpayers exposed, according to a leading economist.

The Morrison Government has provided \$4 million towards a feasibility study into the power station which it hopes can produce reliable and affordable power to back development in the region.

But economist Frank Jotzo, who specialises in climate and energy policy, doubts a new coal-fired power station will be commercially viable.

He argues the high cost of building and running the plant, coupled with the falling cost of other energy sources, particularly renewables, means it is unlikely to be viable over a 40-to-50-year life span.

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/origin-energy-says-coal-plant-closure-date-open-to-review-20200220-p542pd.html>

Origin Energy says coal plant closure date open to review

Nick Toscano, SMH, 21/02/2020

The closure of Australia's largest coal-fired power plant could be brought forward as Origin Energy assesses a "range of scenarios", including the impact of climate change and the influx of renewable energy, which could influence its shutdown date.

After pushing back against a move by shareholder activists last year to bring forward the 2032 closure of the Eraring coal-fired generator in New South Wales by two years, Origin on Thursday indicated it remained open to retiring the facility or winding it down in a staged approach sooner than 2032.

The company was considering "various scenarios" in assessing the plant's future, which factored in the economics of running the plant and the impact of global warming in the wake of this summer's devastating bushfire season.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/agl-sticks-to-complex-crib-point-gas-project/news-story/a3512592756f255f6076d1351b924fef>

AGL sticks to 'complex' Crib Point gas project

Perry Williams, Aus, 17/02/2020

Power giant AGL Energy has conceded it underestimated the challenge of developing Australia's first gas import plant, with the project delayed partly due to mounting environmental opposition from communities in Victoria's Mornington Peninsula.

Opposition from local groups and a decision by the Victorian government to conduct a full environmental assessment on the facility slowed momentum, with first gas now likely in the second half of 2022.

"A project that seemed simple: a jetty and a pipe is far more complex and has far more challenges in relation to how a community views a project like that," AGL's general manager for energy supply and origination, Phaedra Deckart, told a CEDA forum on.

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/business/companies/agl-calls-for-gas-import-solutions-to-avoid-looming-crisis-20200217-p541ka.html>

AGL pushes LNG imports as solution to looming gas crisis

Nick Toscano, Brisbane Times, 17/02/2020

Australia's biggest energy supplier, AGL, says the development of terminals for importing liquefied natural gas along the east coast is needed if the nation is to avoid a looming supply shortage in the southern states.

Deckart said AGL was committed to its environmentally contentious proposed import terminal at Crib Point despite a bitter community backlash, and it was "very close" to submitting the project's environmental effects statement, which could be lodged as early as May.

"We take the community concerns very seriously - that's why it's taken us longer than we had expected to ensure we complete a robust environmental effects process," she said

The Commonwealth has struck a \$3 billion agreement in return for NSW committing to increasing production of natural gas. It has already flagged a hard line in talks with Victoria, which has a moratorium on onshore gas drilling despite facing supply shortage and some of the nation's highest gas prices.

<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/queensland/state-unsure-how-many-fracking-permits-have-been-issued-in-queensland-20200218-p541xi.html>

State unsure how many fracking permits have been issued in Queensland

Lydia Lynch, Age, 18/02/2020

Regulators are not sure how many people have been given permission to look for, produce or process coal seam gas across the state, Queensland's independent auditor has found.

The Queensland Audit Office revealed the two government departments that regulate the state's gas industry are not sharing data properly, meaning the audit office cannot verify how many leases for coal seam gas activities have been granted.

The audit office was also unable to figure out how many audits or inspections the regulators had undertaken.

The coal seam gas industry is regulated by two separate government offices, the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and the Department of Environment and Science.

While it did not find any specific compliance issues, the audit office could only provide "limited assurance" about the regulation of environmental and safety obligations of the industry.

<https://smallcaps.com.au/leigh-creek-energy-farm-queensland-oil-gas-permits/>

Leigh Creek Energy has inked a deal to farm into two "highly prospective" oil and gas permits in South West Queensland.

Danica Cullinane, Small Caps, 12/02/2020

The energy junior today announced its wholly-owned subsidiary Leigh Creek Oil and Gas has executed a farm-in agreement with Bridgeport Energy for a 20% stake in permits ATP 2023 and ATP 2024 located in Cooper-Eromanga, Australia's most prolific oil and gas basin.

According to Leigh Creek, the permits are expected to provide "both revenue and growth in the short to medium term" while the company continues to evaluate options for its South Australian syngas project, the Leigh Creek energy project.

fossilfool.com.au

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/finance-news/2020/02/18/lng-producers-tax-revenue/>

In the midst of an LNG export boom, why are we getting so little for our gas?

Diane Kraal, New Daily, 18/02/2020

So worried is the government about the meagre income it is getting from gas during the middle of Australia's biggest gas export boom that it asked an independent adviser to chair a review and is getting treasury to run the ruler over his recommendations.

Australia gets paid for gas mined from under its waters by the "petroleum resources rent tax" set up by the Hawke government in 1988.

But payments peaked around \$2.5 billion in 2000-01.

They are now less than half that, and much lower still as a share of the economy and as a share of gas exported.

Qatar, which exports about the same amount of gas as Australia, is said to have totalled more than \$20 billion in 2018.

<https://www.echo.net.au/2020/02/equinor-withdraws-from-great-australian-bight/>

Equinor withdraws from Great Australian Bight

Echonet Daily, 25/02/2020

After years of relentless campaigning by conservation groups and coastal communities, it has been announced today that Norwegian oil company Equinor has abandoned plans to drill in the Great Australian Bight.

The Wilderness Society is just one of the many entities who have welcomed the announcement. Last month, the Wilderness Society South Australia commenced legal proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia to challenge Equinor's environmental approval.

Equinor is the fourth fossil fuel company to withdraw from the Bight in recent years, following the exit of BP, Chevron and most recently Karoon Gas.

Wilderness Society South Australian Director Peter Owen says the Wilderness Society welcomes Equinor's decision to responsibly withdraw from the marine wilderness that is the Great Australian Bight.

'It's been a while coming, but the right decision is the right decision and we have no doubt that the hundreds of thousands of people that have supported the campaign to Fight for the Bight will be both delighted and relieved to hear this news.'



People protested on the steps of South Australia's Parliament, asking for oil explorers such as Equinor to be kept out of the Great Australian Bight. Photo: Mark Parnell

<https://www.michaelwest.com.au/santos-blows-7-billion-in-five-years-and-no-relief-for-gas-customers/>

Santos blows \$7 billion in five years and no relief for gas customers

Bruce Robertson, Michaelwest.com.au, 19/02/2020

As Santos reports its profits this week, there is one number you are unlikely to hear from chief Kevin Gallagher: \$7 billion. That's \$7 billion in gas losses over five years.

Santos reports its annual results on February 21.

There is one figure they will not be highlighting – the nearly \$7 billion they have written off their investments in the Coal Seam Gas (CSG) and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facilities at Gladstone in the last 5 years.

In every result since 2014, the company has had to take write-offs on this unsuccessful venture.

The CSG to LNG venture was embarked upon with the great hope of providing cheap gas to Asia and starting an export boom.

For Santos, it has resulted in under-utilised LNG facilities at Gladstone as the CSG fields have failed to produce gas at the rates forecast or at the prices expected.

The stated purpose of the deal between the NSW and Federal governments is to bring down the price of gas for consumers in NSW. Santos has committed to supplying the 70PJ from

Narrabri to NSW. The 70 PJ of gas is equivalent to 60% of the NSW market.

While it may be true that Santos will supply gas from its Narrabri project to NSW consumers, it will not bring down the price of gas for four reasons:

Narrabri (Gunnedah) gas is nearly twice the cost of the most expensive developed gas field on the east coast of Australia. Producing high cost gas is no way to bring down the cost of gas.

Santos will be able to divert cheaper gas to exports while supplying Australian consumers with expensive Narrabri gas.

There is a cartel of producers on the east coast of Australia that controls the price of gas and ensures that Australians pay well above global parity prices.

Santos remains significantly short of gas at its export terminals. Santos needs approximately an additional 100PJ of gas to supply its terminals to ensure full production.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/new-methane-data-shows-gas-industry-can-no-longer-hide-behind-burping-cows-79698/>

New methane data shows gas industry can no longer "hide behind burping cows"

Michael Mazengarb, Renew Economy, 20/02/2020

An international team of research scientists have found there has been a substantial underreporting of methane

emissions, a potent greenhouse gas, and annual methane emissions may be up to 40% higher than first thought.

The scientific review found that methane emissions prior to the industrial revolution were substantially lower, as much as one-tenth lower, than originally thought.

These pre-industrial emissions were produced by 'biogenic' sources, such as from the decomposition of organic matter such as plants, and geological sources which include seeps and volcanic activity.

"This result indicates that anthropogenic fossil methane emissions are underestimated by about 38 to 58 [million tonnes] methane per year, or about 25 to 40% of recent estimates," the research paper says.

These findings suggest that methane emissions attributable to human activity, created primarily from the extraction of fossil fuels, is substantially higher than first thought and have grown dramatically since the 1750s with the increasing use of coal, gas and oil.

And it puts into question the suitability of Australia's new push to produce yet more gas at Narrabri, Burrup in Western Australia and in the Northern Territory.

Gas is not a transition fuel – it has a huge greenhouse gas footprint, as this report shows. Leaks of methane occur all along the supply chain for gas and liquefied natural gas," says Bruce Robertson, from the Institute of Energy, Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

"These leaks make gas a potent greenhouse gas contributor. The gas industry can no longer hide behind burping cows. The gas industry is the cause of mounting methane emissions."

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/why-the-dash-for-gas-and-cash-is-not-an-option-20200220-p542tb.html>

Why the dash for gas – and cash – is not an option

Greg Bourne, SMH, 21/02/2020

A paper published on Thursday in the scientific journal *Nature* by Benjamin Hmiel and colleagues shows that the proportion of methane emissions made by man is 25 to 40% greater than previously estimated.

The gas industry, business and politicians need to take note. Far from being the "saviour" in our transition to a

low and eventual net-zero emissions future, gas may just bring on and accelerate the rate of global warming.

Having had a career in the oil and gas industry for more than 30 years and having personally drilled for, produced and marketed those hydrocarbons, I know how hard it is to contain them.

Oil spills you can easily see; gas leaks and fugitive emissions are much harder to detect.

When the gas producers talk about transition, what they really mean is this: coal is on its way out; oil will eventually be in trouble; but gas will save our companies' bacon. Let's dash for gas. Let's dash for cash.

The gas industry has touted itself as clean and green. The LNG industry has prided itself on having brought energy to the world that would have otherwise been produced from coal.

However, the reality is that in this decade, extra gas is more than likely displacing or at least slowing down the introduction of renewable energy.

The only silver lining is that now we know that a higher proportion of methane emissions come courtesy of humans, we have the opportunity to leverage that information to more rapidly reduce our emissions.

• *Greg Bourne is a councillor with the Climate Council.*

<https://independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/gas-and-resource-companies-prevail-over-common-good.13610>

Gas and resource companies prevail over common good

Shay Dougall, *Independent Australia*, 19/02/2020

The Queensland Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 (RPI Act) has loopholes they are driving drilling rigs through and there are major lessons for Lake Eyre Basin and others that should be learned from the experiences on the Darling Downs.

The major problems with the RPI Act were raised in 2013 at the introduction of the Regional Planning Interests Bill in detailed submissions registering concerns to the committee investigating the 2013 Bill.

Frustratingly, their fears as detailed, have indeed come to pass in the intervening years since the enactment of the RPI Act.

The RPI Act does not need superficial review. A complete reset is needed to

correct flaws right down to the RPI Act's very foundations to be able to genuinely deliver its supposed purpose:

'The Queensland Government's Regional Planning Interests Act (RPI Act) will deliver on the government's commitment to protect prime agricultural land and provide greater power to landholders in negotiating with resource companies.'

The Darling Downs has already suffered as a result of the deficiencies of the Act. Residents have found themselves subject to gas industry imposition with nearly no rights, remedies or protections in place as a direct result of the RPI Act and other resource-related legislation.

The re-engineering of the regulatory environment around the development of the gas industry has meant that directly by design of the RPI, that these farming families find themselves living within a few hundred metres of heavily industrialised gas infrastructure such as compressor stations, salt dumps, water treatment facilities, electrical substations, battery banks, carbon injection and storage trials, and solar farms.

Let the experiences of the Darling Downs be used to bring to light the failures and ensure history does not repeat itself in Lake Eyre Basin, Eastern Queensland, the Northern Territory and New South Wales.

<https://www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/story/6640559/black-soil-plains-move-too-much-for-safe-gas-pipeline-report/>

Black-soil plains move too much for safe Queensland Hunter gas pipeline: report

Jamieson Murphy, *Qld Country Life*, 20/02/2020

The shifting-nature of the Liverpool Plain's black soil makes it an "impractical" place for a gas pipeline, a report has revealed.

It the latest in a raft of concerns farmers have raised about the proposed \$1-billion Queensland-Hunter Gas Pipeline.

In 2015, an independent report was prepared by SoilFutures Consulting for the now defunct Eastern Star Gas Narrabri-to-Wellington pipeline, which was proposed to run through the Liverpool Plains.

It revealed the shrink and swell properties for the vertosols – cracking clay soils – on the Liverpool Plains were "among the highest in the world", with some cracks reaching a depth of up to six metres.

"[The plains have] highly expansive soils, which will lead to any pipeline placement with in the expansive zone of the soils having a high risk of failure," the report states.

The extensive report concluded it was "clearly impractical to place a safe and stable gas pipeline" in the Liverpool Plains.

NUKE MADNESS

<https://independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/canavan-goes-leaves-10000-year-toxic-legacy.13579>

Canavan goes: Leaves 10,000-year toxic legacy

Dave Sweeney, Independent Australia, 10/02/2020

For over two decades Australian federal governments have played short term politics with long-term radioactive waste and failed. The latest chapter in this sorry saga is no exception.

Former Resources Minister Matt Canavan started February by formally declaring that a patch of ground near Kimba in regional South Australia was slated to become home to Australia's radioactive waste.

The contested decision was made on Saturday but by Tuesday, Canavan was off the A team and on the backbench, collateral damage in a failed National Party leadership challenge.

The radioactive waste he signed off on has up to another 10,000 years in office. The current federal plan would see low-level radioactive waste, which needs to be isolated from people and the environment for around 300 years, interred at the Kimba site.

The more problematic intermediate-level wastes, which need to be isolated for up to 10,000 years, are planned to be stored above ground pending future underground disposal at a separate site.

There is no clear proposal, process, funding or timeline for this pivotal next stage. This is not a proven plan – it's a political promise.

There is a real risk this waste will become stranded in a place with far fewer institutional assets to manage it than those sites where it is currently housed.

Most of Australia's radioactive waste is stored at two secured Commonwealth facilities at Lucas Heights in NSW and Woomera in SA.

The Lucas Heights facility has the capacity to continue to store the most

problematic intermediate level waste for many years. ARPANSA, the Federal nuclear regulator, has clearly stated there is no urgent need to re-locate this material.

• *Dave Sweeney is the Australian Conservation Foundation's nuclear-free campaigner and was a member of the Federal advisory panel on radioactive waste.*

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-18/solar-thermal-power-should-be-major-export-expert-says/11971938>

Solar thermal power the way forward for is Australia despite hiccups, nuclear engineer says

Rebeka Powell, ABC, 18/02/2020

As the world looks to Germany as a shining example of how to shift away from polluting coal power, a Queensland-based nuclear expert says solar thermal power is the way forward for Australia.

Paul Wilson, a nuclear engineer with almost five decades' experience, said he was disappointed Australia was not showing leadership or innovation in renewables.

"We're very good in Australia at innovation and at engineering and I think we should take a leaf out of the German book," he told the Drive program.

"And they're basically trying to systematically close down their coal mining industry but they're doing it by replacing jobs.

Dr Wilson said the answer for Australia lay in the heart of Queensland's farming regions.

"I think we just build a series of slightly smaller solar thermal power stations down through the inland sort of west of the Darling Downs and going south," he said.

"Link them all together with a direct current route."

'Why aren't we selling them?'

"There is no engineering impediment whatsoever," he said.

"We've got more sunlight in Australia than just about any other country. Why aren't we already a world leader?"

Dr Wilson described nuclear power as simply "too risky".

"If you look at the fact that we've got something like 430 nuclear power stations operating around the world, you work out that over the history we've had four total core meltdowns," he said.

"The chances of having a total core

meltdown is about 1%. Are you prepared to take the risk? That's a very high-risk value.

"In addition to that the likelihood of any form of nuclear accident at a new power station is 22%."

He also said the cost factor was also a major deterrent from going nuclear.

"It's not the cost of building it. They are expensive to build and they are expensive to run but it's the cost of demolition when it gets to the end of its life," he said.

"We have I think there are 153 mothballed nuclear power stations around the world. We have successfully demolished, out of plain sight, only seven of them.

"And when you want to demolish a power station you're talking \$100 billion. It's way beyond the value of the electricity it had produced."

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/concerns-rise-for-great-barrier-reef-health-as-corals-start-to-bleach-20200220-p542lx.html>

Concerns rise for Great Barrier Reef health as corals start to bleach

Peter Hannam, SMH, 20/02/2020

Corals in the far north of the Great Barrier Reef have started to bleach, leaving the federal government's lead reef agency at a state of "heightened alert" about the prospect of a mass bleaching event unfolding over the next two to four weeks.

David Wachenfeld, chief scientist of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, said survey teams had found "significant bleaching" at three reefs in the Shelburne Bay/Wuthathi region of Cape York in the far north.

However, with most of the Great Barrier Reef park now at 2 to 3 degrees above normal, the heat stress on corals that causes bleaching and possible death is rapidly mounting in many regions, Dr Wachenfeld said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/feb/21/climate-tweets-twitter-bots-analysis>

Revealed: quarter of all tweets about climate crisis produced by bots

Oliver Milman, Guardian, 21/02/2020

The social media conversation over the climate crisis is being reshaped by an army of automated Twitter bots, with a new analysis finding that a quarter of all tweets about climate on an average day are produced by bots.

The stunning levels of Twitter bot activity on topics related to global heating and the climate crisis is distorting the online discourse to include far more climate science denialism than it would otherwise.

“These findings suggest a substantial impact of mechanized bots in amplifying denialist messages about climate change, including support for Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris agreement,” states the draft study.

The Brown University study wasn’t able to identify any individuals or groups behind the battalion of Twitter bots, nor ascertain the level of influence they have had around the often fraught climate debate.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/new-government-data-shows-slight-drop-in-australia-s-emissions-amid-new-coal-fight-20200223-p543jp.html>

New government data shows slight drop in Australia’s emissions, amid new coal fight

Rob Harris, SMH, 24/02/2020

A booming multibillion-dollar gas export sector is hampering Australia’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with new government data showing the nation’s overall emissions fell 0.3% in the 12 months to September last year.

The annual report shows while emissions from within Australia’s domestic energy network continue to fall, those generated by natural gas production increased by 16.9% in the same period.

Both the Coalition and Labor are engaged in fierce internal debates over future emissions reductions targets, as the Morrison government wrestles with demands for it to adopt a carbon-neutral 2050 policy to take to the United Nations climate summit in Glasgow in November.

Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese declared on Sunday that Australia’s coal export industry could continue to thrive under the target that Labor adopted last week, with the party also riddled with internal divisions over the message its ambitious policies send blue-collar workers in coal-mining regions.

Emissions generated by exports have increased 54% on 2005 levels and are now 39.1% of Australia’s total emissions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/23/g20-sounds-alarm-over-climate-emergency>

G20 sounds alarm over climate emergency despite US objections

Richard Partington, Guardian, 24/02/2020

The G20 group of the world’s wealthiest nations have agreed for the first time to collectively sound the alarm over the threat to the financial system posed by the climate emergency.

Overcoming objections from Donald Trump’s US administration, G20 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting in Saudi Arabia over the weekend agreed to issue their first ever communique with references to climate change.

Concerns about the economic damage from rising global temperatures and extreme weather events have risen up the agenda among world leaders, central bankers and financiers in recent years. The financial system continues to fund activities that are inconsistent with meeting climate targets, paving the way for trillions of pounds of financial losses in the future and catastrophic environmental consequences should the world economy fail to adapt.

The communique issued at the end of the meetings in the oil-rich Gulf state would be the first to include references to climate change since the foundation in 1999 of the group of 19 leading industrial nations and the EU.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/feb/25/unprecedented-globally-more-than-20-of-australia-forests-burnt-in-bushfires>

‘Unprecedented’ globally: more than 20% of Australia’s forests burnt in bushfires

Lisa Cox, Guardian, 25/02/2020

More than 20% of Australia’s forests burned during the summer’s bushfire catastrophe, a proportion scientists believe is unprecedented globally, according to new research.

Research published in *Nature Climate Change* focused on the bushfire crisis finds that 21% of the total area covered by Australian forests – excluding Tasmania – has burnt so far in the 2019-20 bushfire season.

The 21% figure contrasts dramatically with the proportion of forest burnt in any season on any other continent in that timeframe, which for most continents and forest types was 4-5%.

The paper adds that the 21% is likely to be an underestimate because the data has not included fires in Tasmania and Australia’s fire season is still going.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/feb/18/santos-nine-and-big-banks-paid-tens-of-thousands-for-pre-election-political-access>

Santos, Nine and big banks paid tens of thousands for pre-election political access

Christopher Knaus, Guardian, 18/02/2020

Fossil fuel giant Santos, two of the major banks and Nine Entertainment were among the big corporates that paid tens of thousands of dollars to mix with Labor and Liberal politicians through party business forums in the lead-up to the 2019 federal election.

The major parties have long relied on business forums and observer programs as a significant source of funds, selling memberships and subscriptions to companies in exchange for access to events, special policy briefings and boardroom meetings.

Santos paid Labor \$55,000 and the Liberals \$27,500 for business forum memberships. The company said it was also a member of the business forum for the Nationals.

“These forums have transparent membership fees and services, and provide the opportunity to discuss important public policy issues not only with politicians, but with other members of the business community,” a Santos spokeswoman said. “The involvement of a wide range of businesses in these forums helps to ensure that campaign funds are received from multiple sources with wide-ranging policy positions and interests so that no single interest unduly influences the political process.”

Berkman is using the analysis to support his proposal to ban corporate donations in Queensland. His bill is due before Queensland parliament on Tuesday but is unlikely to pass.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/feb/21/bushfires-highlight-need-for-urgent-climate-action-and-a-real-target-anthony-albanese-says>

Bushfires highlight need for urgent climate action and ‘a real target’, Anthony Albanese says

Katharine Murphy, Guardian, 21/02/2020

Labor has to take the initiative in defending Australia against the dangers of climate change because the summer of catastrophe has highlighted our national vulnerability and because business and the states are now demanding national leadership, according to Anthony Albanese.

The Labor leader will use a speech to a progressive thinktank on Friday to commit the ALP to adopting a net-zero target by 2050 if it wins the next federal election, without the use of carryover credits from the Kyoto period.

Albanese will argue the lesson of the summer is preparation can help avert further tragedy, “and only positive, forward-thinking leadership can steer us through”. Courtesy of bushfires that claimed 33 lives and destroyed 3,000 homes, caused more than 1m animal deaths and saw more than 12m hectares burned, Australians have learned “we’re now living in dangerous times”.

Albanese will say climate change was a factor in the bushfires, and people touched by the tragedies of the summer now understood Australia had a lot to lose. “But the good news is we also have a lot to gain.”

The Labor leader will argue taking action on climate change means “more jobs, lower emissions and lower energy prices”.

“We should be a clean-energy superpower, harnessing the wind and sun to spark a new manufacturing boom and power generations of jobs; developing a hydrogen industry; creating manufacturing jobs here in Australia in new industries that provide well-paid jobs.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/liberal-mp-craig-kelly-backs-advance-australia-s-climate-change-resources-in-classrooms-20200221-p54366.html>

Liberal MP Craig Kelly backs Advance Australia's climate change resources in classrooms

Michael Koziol, SMH, 23/02/2020

Liberal MP Craig Kelly says he will work to get Advance Australia's educational resources for children – which will deride climate change as a “hoax” – used in classrooms in his electorate.

Kelly, who represents the south Sydney seat of Hughes, said he “absolutely” supported the right-wing activist group in its attempt to distribute the resources to primary school children.

Last week plans were revealed by Advance Australia – which bills itself as a right-wing version of progressive lobby group GetUp – to develop materials on climate change targeted at children. The resources would include a “Smart Scientist's Kit”, an e-book of “10 climate facts to expose the climate change hoax”, as well as an educational video and speaking tour by a “renowned climate scientist”.

Advance Australia's national direc-



Joel Fitzgibbon and Barnaby Joyce indulge in a climate change screaming match in the corridors of Parliament House. Photo: Twitter

tor Liz Storer said the material was required to “give a counter-narrative of what we believe is the truth”, because children were being indoctrinated by the left.

NSW Liberal Environment Minister Matt Kean said the materials should not be allowed in schools. «Let kids be educated in line with the science and stop these vested interests trying to pollute the curriculum,» he said.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/state-deal-blocking-world-s-largest-coal-port-from-fossil-fuel-exit-20200221-p5433v.html>

State deal blocking world's largest coal port from fossil fuel exit

Tom Rabe, SMH, 24/02/2020

The head of the world's largest coal port says it must transition away from the fossil fuel and diversify Newcastle's economy before it's too late, but controversial NSW government policy is stopping it.

As the government worked to improve its climate policy following a summer of drought and bushfires, Port of Newcastle chief executive Craig Carmody said \$2 billion of private investment was waiting for the green light to develop a container terminal and move the Hunter away from coal.

However, a once-secret facet of the Baird government's 2013-14 port privatisation deal – which would force Newcastle to compensate its competitors if it transported more than 30,000 containers a year – could keep the local economy tethered to coal for decades.

Carmody said the controversial “port commitment deeds” (PCD) placed on Newcastle, which have been deemed “anti-competitive and illegal” by the competition watchdog, were forcing

the company to remain reliant on coal.

Carmody warned that if a deal could not be struck, the city would face another crisis 20 years after BHP pulled out of Newcastle.

“This town remembers BHP and the cliff they fell off,” he said. “You transition when you can afford to transition, not when everything is a fire sale.”

He said the port was attempting to diversify, with about half of NSW's wind turbines now imported through Newcastle. Rows of the giant, unassembled turbines sit next to the harbour, waiting to be transported to regional NSW where they will be erected between Canberra and Sydney.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/politics/australian-politics/2020/02/24/barnaby-joyce-joel-fitzgibbon/>

'Neanderthal': Joyce, Fitzgibbon in unedifying clash for the cameras

Samantha Maiden, New Daily, 24/02/2020

Labor frontbencher Joel Fitzgibbon has called Barnaby Joyce a “Neanderthal” in a clash in the corridors of Parliament over the ALP's new emissions reduction target.

A red-faced Joyce returned fire after Fitzgibbon crashed his press conference attacking Labor's policy record on climate change policy.

Earlier, Sunrise host David Koch shut down an interview with the pair as it descended into chaos and the former deputy prime minister delivered a sarcastic response on Labor's record.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/greens-seek-laws-to-block-adani-clive-palmers-galilee-coal-mines-77918/>

Greens seek laws to block Adani, Clive Palmer's Galilee coal mines

Michael Mazengarb, *Renew Economy*, 24/02/2020

The Australian Greens are seeking a ban on the construction of new coal mines in Australia, with the federal Senate debating proposed legislation that would prohibit new mines being established in Queensland's Galilee Basin.

Legislation has been tabled by Queensland Senator Larissa Waters, which would effectively target Adani's Carmichael coal mine, which had its approvals rubber-stamped by the federal government and the Queensland state government last year following the re-election of the pro-coal Morrison government.

Following the approval of the Adani coal mine, a long list of additional mines have been proposed for the Galilee Basin, including the mammoth Galilee coal project proposed by Clive Palmer, which could be up to four times the size of the Adani mine.

The long line of projects has prompted the Galilee basin to be described as a "carbon bomb", that would undermine efforts to limit global warming to no more than 2 degrees above pre-industrial temperatures.

The bill was reviewed by the Environment and Communication Legislation Committee, which recommended against the passage of the coal mine ban, reflecting the membership of the committee, half of whose members were Liberal and Nationals senators.

In additional comments, Labor senators said that they would not support the bill, citing the existing approvals granted to the Adani project, which should be respected, and the potential Constitutional issues their revocation could raise.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/the-toxic-political-culture-that-makes-good-policy-impossible-in-australia-40804/>

The toxic political culture that makes good policy impossible in Australia

Oliver Yates, *Renew Economy*, 24/02/2020

Many politicians – even those with good intentions – are trapped in system that cannot produce good government. Most are trapped in political parties with toxic cultures involving a highly unhealthy system of patronage and bullying where their basic role to act in the interest of the people as our representatives and has been lost.

Australian politicians are some of the most highly rewarded in the world. Surprisingly to many they have a "variable remuneration" system almost guaranteed to weaponize a poor culture of internal bullying and facilitate illogical, bad behaviour and basic wholesale mismanagement of our country. A system offering vastly more spoils than in similar countries.

Our politicians are rewarded by political parties with various roles and positions. Ministers appointed by the party, for example, receiving variable remuneration (a bonus called a "salary supplement") worth about 100% of their salary for just holding the position of a senior Minister. There are similar corrosive "salary- supplements" for many positions our politicians hold.

They get this extra compensation for serving the party well.

You serve the party well by raising significant \$\$\$ for the party from donors.

This all spills down to the fact that for politicians in major parties see their key role is to raise money for the Party and therefore benefit themselves financially.

It almost goes without saying that behind every weak or climate change denying minister is a successful donation book.

That is why our political system is structurally dysfunctional and you see continued internal fighting and bullying; no hope of bipartisan agreements; an unwillingness to uphold the Westminster standards of ministerial responsibility and honesty; and where integrity goes out of the window as political parties claim the legal right to mislead and deceive the voters.

Winning is all that matters and it is into this mess that we throw climate and energy policy.

When you understand the underlying cause, nothing will end the policy crisis in Australia unless you change the culture of political parties which is fuelled by a very poor remuneration structure and incentive arrangements fuelled by a dangerous donation system.

• *Oliver Yates is a former CEO of the Clean Energy Finance Corp, and an independent candidate in last year's federal election.*



HELP W&J PEOPLE GET JUSTICE FROM ADANI: MAKE A DONATION
 Wangan Jagalingou Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
 BSB: 034-003
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