



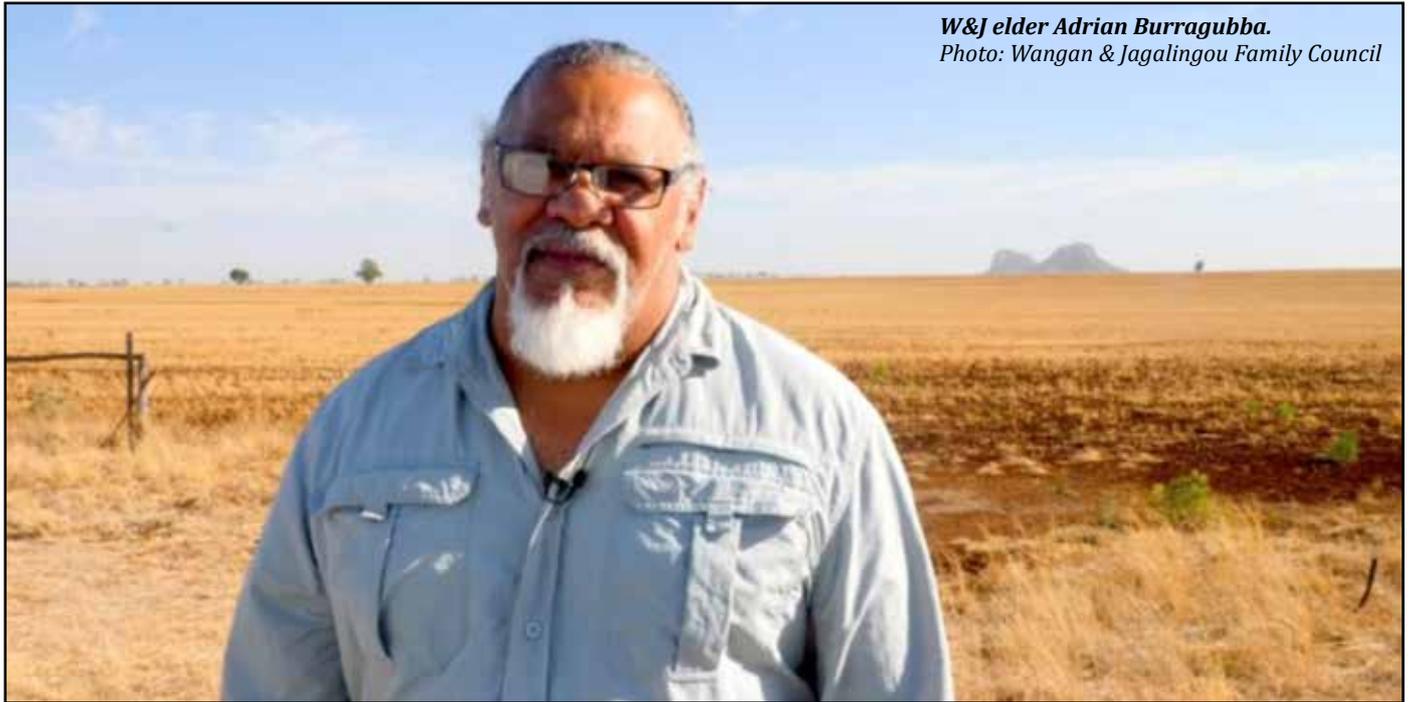
# Fossil Fool Bulletin

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

[Fossilfool.com.au](http://Fossilfool.com.au)

FFB 3:20 • 28 APRIL 2020

## Adani bans traditional owners from site



*W&J elder Adrian Burragubba.*

*Photo: Wangan & Jagalingou Family Council*

***In an uncontested decision in the Queensland Supreme Court, Adani achieved its goal of banning traditional owners from parts of their ancestral lands.***

Adrian Burragubba, his son Coedie McAvoy, and members of the W&J Council are prevented from entering the area over which the Queensland government extinguished native title and handed as freehold to the mining corporation for the Carmichael mine infrastructure.

According to SBS, Supreme Court Justice David Boddice accepted evidence from Adani that statements posted on social media as recently as March constituted threats to enter.

"I find that the applicant (Adani) has established the respondents and those

they represent (Wangan and Jagalingou Traditional Owners Council) have trespassed on the land and there is likelihood of a repetition in the future," Justice Boddice said.

### **No legal right, says Judge**

"They have no legal right to enter or remain on the land," he said.

He added there is a "great risk of injury and death" to employees and trespassers as the mine site is constructed.

Justice Boddice said Adani has responsibilities under workplace health and safety laws and disruption to the worksite would cause "unnecessary cost" and "significant ongoing expense" that could not be compensated by awarding damages later.

Adrian Burragubba, who faces imprisonment if he enters the area where a ceremonial site is established to honour the ancestors and the land that is facing destruction, says it's just more of the same dishonesty from Adani.

He says he and others with rights in the land were in prior occupation of the area they are now excluded from, which was Unallocated State Land before the government changed the tenure to freehold and gave it to Adani, making them trespassers in their own land.

Burragubba, the cultural leader and senior spokesperson for the W&J Council said: "This move by Adani simply continues the injustices against us. Adani had already secured its legal

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• P2: Energy program lacks legal foundation

• P3: Property owners reject gas study

P5: QRC boss mislead farmers on gas project

## Adani bans W&J

• Continued from p1

entitlements against my rights and interests. But they continue their vindictiveness, and spying on us, because we refuse to concede. This is just the latest stand-off in our battle with Adani."

Burragebba has brought numerous court actions against the proposed Adani coal mine and has declared bankruptcy due to costs.

"We did not enter the land as trespassers, the land tenure was changed after we were there," he said.

"The state government extinguished our native title on the Unallocated State Land and handed it to Adani. We were camped and holding ceremonies in our country and told to leave.

"We have not returned to our ceremonial site since Adani's security force confronted us. The video evidence Adani uses is of us leaving the area.

"We did not engage in this Supreme Court legal action taken by Adani because we know from experience that the rules were already set against us and Adani would just incur more costs for us.

### Draconian laws favour Adani

"We know their mine and their licenses lack legitimacy in the face of our rights; and as Aboriginal people we have always known that.

"That it is made legal to destroy our country and our way of life, and bar us from access to our sites, doesn't make it just.

"Adani relies on draconian laws, that benefit the state and corporations, to control us and take away our rights.

"But I have an inalienable right to my culture and the lands of my ancestors. I will always be connected to my Country, and speak for it.

"I'm not a trespasser on my own land and never will be. It is still my land. And that fact derives from a law much older than the legal instruments that Adani wields agents us."

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## Govt program has no legal foundation



***The Auditor General has been asked to investigate the Commonwealth Government's Underwriting New Generation Investment Program (UNGI), which threatens to undermine investment in the essential power sector.***

New research by The Australia Institute's Climate & Energy Program reveals the Government's flagship program to generate more electricity has no legal foundation, formal guidelines, assessment criteria, procurement process or clear implementation plan.

### Key findings:

- According to advice, the UNGI program faces significant legal uncertainty;
- Despite assurances in 2018, there are still no formal guidelines or criteria for project selection, nor a clear procurement process;
- The agency identified to deliver UNGI appears unclear as to its role and is incapable of delivering at least one selected project;
- The Federal Government has already shortlisted UNGI projects, made initial agreements and advanced detailed negotiations with proponents, and entered an MOU with the NSW Government to support projects under UNGI.

### Essential service undermined

"The electricity sector is an essential service and right now it is being undermined by the Federal Energy Minister's own underwriting program. The captain's call to offer government support to a dozen power projects was undertaken with no transparency, guidelines or legal foundation," said Richie Merzian, Climate & Energy Program Director The Australia Institute.

"It is worrying that despite years of problems with this underwriting program, in the last few months the Federal Government has powered on, undertaking 'advanced negotiations' with project proponents and signed an MOU assuring the NSW Government of its allocation of three projects.

"Contrary to the Energy Minister's claim, the program's criteria were not finalised in December 2018. The December 2018 documentation makes clear it lists only "indicative" criteria that would not be used without further program development, of which there is still no evidence.

"The program is so opaque even the agency appointed to deliver it, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, appears unclear as to its role and, in one instance, unable to deliver on a promised project being a NSW coal fired power station upgrade.

### Throwing more fossil fuel on the fire

"The electricity sector remains the heaviest polluting part of the economy and the underwriting program would throw more fossil fuel on the fire with taxpayer support for six gas and coal fired power plants.

"There are a number of major concerns with the design and implementation of the program that have been raised and ignored by the Federal Government, leaving few other options but to ask the Auditor General to investigate.

"In times of crisis like dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, such dodgy programs threaten the vital trust the Australian public places in the Federal Government."

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# Property owners reject gas study

**A new fracking study released by gas company-funded research body GISERA reveals the shockingly narrow and limited scientific basis of the industry, says Lock the Gate Alliance.**

The study, which looked at only six of the thousands of CSG wells across Queensland, was majority funded by vested interests, with fracking company Origin Energy contributing 74%, or \$245,670, to phase one and 61%, or \$1.28m to the second phase.

“Basic sampling of air, water and soil should be undertaken as a matter of course across the industry. The fact GISERA is describing sampling for six months at six wells as ‘comprehensive’ is a damning indictment of the industry’s almost non-existent duty of care to farmers, communities, and the environment,” said Lock the Gate (LTG) National Coordinator Naomi Hogan.

“It’s also no surprise Origin has been so eager to fund this study, given the pollution incidents its fracking operations in Queensland have been linked to in the past.

## Gas-funded science not credible

“We wouldn’t be accepting cancer research from tobacco companies, so we should not be accepting fracking research from gas companies.”

Property Rights Australia was even less impressed with the study.

“Like a rat with a gold tooth, it is all front and pretty grubby underneath.

Even in these articles with a headline of authoritative assurance, with a bit of knowledge and thought it soon becomes apparent of a more tarnished reality,” the group said.

## Hundreds of studies show gas harms

Origin Energy has previously admitted to contaminating water with BTEX – a mixture of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene – at around eight coal seam gas wells near Miles. Globally, there are hundreds of peer reviewed scientific studies that point to the fracking industry causing water pollution, chemical spills on local farms and air pollution.

“Farmers’ fears are clearly grounded in evidence, and having gas industry-funded reports that only investigate a relatively tiny number of wells will do nothing to reassure them,” LTG’s Hogan said.

“It is deeply disappointing that the good name of CSIRO continues to be sullied by the gas industry through its funding of GISERA (Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance).

“Let’s be clear, GISERA is not an independent scientific body. Rather it is overseen by a collection of fracking executives who want to see gas wells pierce the country like a pin cushion.

“Six wells, which were spread across only two properties, is an extremely small sample, given there have been about 19,000 CSG wells drilled

across the Surat and Bowen basins in Queensland, many of which have been fracked.

“The study itself acknowledged a long list of limitations due to the small size of the sample, its tiny geographic spread, and the short time frame during which studies were conducted.

“Origin seems desperate to defend its decision to pour money into high risk fracking.

“If Origin stopped trying to silence farmers and Traditional Owners, and started listening to their own customers, the company would hear a call for it to move more swiftly to renewable energy, and stop dirty fracking activities.”

## Groundwater drained by industry

Hogan said direct pollution impacts were not the only concerns the Alliance and its members held regarding unconventional gas.

“We also know that the unrelenting expansion of CSG in Queensland is having a significant, long term draining effect on groundwater across the Western Downs,” she said.

The 2019 Underground water impact report (UWIR) for the Surat Basin revealed that more than 100 farming bores had already been drained due to CSG, with more than 500 bores expected to be impacted in the coming years as the industry expanded.

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## Farmers say former MP, now QRC boss, mislead them on gas

**Queensland Resources Council boss Ian Macfarlane should apologise to Cecil Plains farmers for misleading them over coal seam gas development in the fertile agricultural region, say farmers.**

In 2013, the then LNP Member for Groom stood up in front of a crowd of farmers in Cecil Plains and told them that “you don’t extract coal seam gas and you certainly don’t mine this sort of country unless the farmer says you can”.

There was unanimous opposition to Shell and PetroChina’s (Arrow Energy) plans to drill highly productive farmland at Cecil Plains when

the Surat Gas Project received federal approval in 2013, and Cecil Plains farmers vowed to lock their gates against the project.

Last week, Macfarlane was quoted in a media release from his now employer, the Queensland Resources Council, welcoming the Shell and PetroChina decision to officially green light the first stage of the Surat Gas Project.

Cecil Plains dry land and broad acre farmer Russell Bennie, who grows a range of pulses and cereal crops and whose property is covered by Arrow Energy petroleum licence 238, said he was disappointed, but not surprised

by Macfarlane’s actions since 2013.

“I was at the meeting when he said that and I recall him saying that,” Bennie said.

“As soon as he joined the Queensland Resources Council it was clear that he’d sold out.

“This is typical of the vast majority of politicians we’ve ever struck. We started this process under Anna Bligh and she sold us down the river as well.

“Mr Macfarlane has shown time and time again what appears to be a lack of consistency.”

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## Inside the news

The fossil fuel industry-led push for tax cuts and regulatory relief is one of the biggest concerns about what will happen when the post-coronavirus economy emerges.

Check the articles on pages 8-10 for the fossil fools' efforts. Two very informative articles are recommended: Ketan Joshi (**Fossil fuel web leading Australia to a Deadly Recovery**) and Dan Gocher (**A gas-fired recovery? Seriously?**) on page 9.

On page 5-6 we see how **New Hope Coal** and **Shine Energy** are also pushing for their carbon bombs.

**Covid-19** is an inevitable outcome of environmental destruction, just as was our recent season of climate warming-fuelled **bushfires**.

It is of the greatest importance we don't let our rulers push back to **business as usual**, especially business that profits from extracting carbon from the ground, burning it, and putting it into the atmosphere.

It's more important than ever to watch what the **fossil fools** are up to.



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<https://wanganjagalingou.com.au/donate/>

# In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 15,260 words of news for your convenience.  
Click on the [links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

## THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/indigenous-activists-permanently-barrred-from-queensland-s-adani-mine-site>

### Indigenous activists permanently barred from Queensland's Adani mine site

Stefan Armbruster, SBS, 24/04/2020

Queensland's Supreme Court has barred two Aboriginal traditional owners and their representatives from returning to a ceremonial camp they set up at the controversial Adani mine site.

The mining giant won its bid for a court order against Wangan and Jagalingou man Adrian Burragubba and his son Coedy McAvoy, after the court found the men had threatened to continue to enter the Carmichael mine site, despite a temporary injunction against trespassing issued last October.

A breach carries a possible prison sentence.

Last August the two men set up camp and a ceremonial site on the property after the State Government extinguished native title over the 1,385 hectares of Wangan and Jagalingou land in Queensland's Galilee Basin.

Burragubba has brought numerous court actions against the proposed Adani coal mine and has declared bankruptcy due to costs.

Supreme Court Justice David Boddice accepted evidence from Adani that statements posted on social media as recently as March constituted threats to enter.

"I find that the applicant (Adani) has established the respondents and those they represent (Wangan and Jagalingou Traditional Owners Council) have trespassed on the land and there is likelihood of a repetition in the future," Justice Boddice said.

"They have no legal right to enter or remain on the land," he said.

He added there is a "great risk of injury and death" to employees and trespassers as the mine site is constructed.

Burragubba and McAvoy did not have legal representation and did not appear at the hearings.



**BMD think it is safe to send workers from all over Qld to work on Adani's railway. To prove this, owners Mick and Denise Power should FLY WITH THE WORKERS TO THE CAMPS for the next work shift. Call BMD with this challenge, then comment on the Galilee Blockade Facebook page how it went. Info and tips:**

<https://galieeblockade.net/challenge/>

<https://www.australianmining.com.au/news/adani-awards-new-railway-contract-for-carmichael-mine/>

### Adani awards \$220m railway contract for Carmichael mine

Tara Hamid, Australian Mining, 22/04/2020

Adani Mining has continued the construction of the Carmichael mine and rail project in Queensland, with employees working under strict coronavirus safety measures.

The company has awarded Australian rail company Martinus a civil construction contract worth over \$220 million to build the rail requirements for the Carmichael mine.

Under this contract, Martinus will deliver 86-kilometres of rail formation works, a road over rail bridge, nine waterway bridges, more than 200 culverts and 35 rail crossings.

Assembly of Adani's first mining trucks is now also complete, with two heavy vehicles having left Mackay to make the 300-kilometre trip to the Carmichael Mine site this week.

## COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.ntnews.com.au/news/queensland/new-hope-mine-owners-plead-for-government-approval-to-create-jobs/news-story/7b455831740b04261b045c575ec61352>

### New Hope mine owners plead for government approval to create jobs

Steven Wardill, Courier-Mail, 21/04/2020

The owner of a proposed new Queensland coal mine – which has been waiting 4,736 days for approval – has pleaded for the Palaszczuk Government to make a decision so it can create jobs.

New Hope boss Andrew Boyd yesterday said that while Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk had tasked her ministers to find shovel-ready projects to create work during the coronavirus crisis, the company's Acland Stage 3 mine remained in limbo.

"We are willing and able to help Queenslanders recover from this once-in-a-lifetime event," Boyd said.

Mines Minister Anthony Lynham said, "We will await the outcome of the

High Court action before finalising the remaining approvals for this project.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/apr/23/proposed-queensland-coal-fired-power-plant-collinsville-emissions-financing>

### **Proposed Queensland coal-fired power plant under cloud over emissions and financing**

*Ben Smees, 23/04/2020*

Carbon emissions from a new coal-fired power station at Collinsville in north Queensland would be comparable to generators built in the state 15 to 20 years ago, according to sources familiar with the proponent’s submissions to the federal government.

The company behind the proposal, Shine Energy, has held discussions about obtaining a concessional infrastructure loan from the federal government via the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.

In February the government awarded Shine \$4.4m to conduct a feasibility study. The grant was broadly considered a concession to pro-coal Queensland Nationals MPs.

The new information about the proposal – obtained by sources with knowledge of Shine’s closely guarded business case and other information submitted to the federal government before it was awarded the feasibility study grant – casts doubt on key public claims about the environmental merit and commercial viability of a Collinsville plant.

Shine has submitted information that shows that by using a dry-cooling system the plant’s emissions intensity would be comparable to the last two plants built in Queensland – Kogan Creek, commissioned in 2007, and Millmerran, commissioned in 2002. Both produce emissions at a rate slightly above .80 tonnes of carbon dioxide per megawatt hour.

Sources say Shine’s studies identified it could pollute about 10% to 15% less carbon dioxide if it built a plant with a wet-cooling system, which requires large volumes of water.

Richie Merzian, the climate and energy director at the Australia Institute, said the federal government had spent \$1.3bn attempting to improve the emissions intensity of coal since 2003.

“It is damning that the best technology they can find now has the same emissions intensity as plants built 15 years ago,” Merzian said. “If the best they can do is build another plant like Kogan



*A depiction of an LNG tanker alongside a floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) at the gas import terminal proposed for Port Kembla, NSW.*

*Graphic: Australian Industrial Energy*

Creek, it will do little for reliability, given this plant is the most unreliable on the grid per unit of energy.”

## **OIL & GAS LEAKS**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-21/controversial-narrabri-gas-project-may-no-longer-be-necessary/12168130>

### **Expansion of Port Kembla gas import terminal could spell end for Narrabri project**

*Patrick Bell, ABC, 21/04/2020*

A contentious proposal to extract coal-seam gas in north-west New South Wales has become “unnecessary”, according to one analyst, after the State Government approved the expansion of a separate gas import terminal.

Santos has invested more than \$1 billion in a project at Narrabri which involves drilling more than 850 wells in coal seams, mostly on state land in the nearby Pilliga forest.

But it has divided the local community and received fierce criticism due to the risk to water and land resources it is said to pose.

Now, planning approval has been granted for an increase in capacity at the Port Kembla gas import terminal near Wollongong to meet about 75% of the state’s gas needs.

Bruce Robertson from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) said that made the

Narrabri project redundant because its production costs were too high.

“It’s approximately twice what any other project is on the east coast of Australia,” Robertson said. “It is cheaper to import Australian gas into Australia than it is to actually get gas in Australia from an Australian producer.”

The approval of the Port Kembla expansion has intensified opposition to the Narrabri project from Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Member for Barwon Roy Butler.

“I’ve never understood the economics behind the Narrabri project,” he said. “It’s for 70 petajoules at a time that we’re exporting 3,300 petajoules of gas a year.”

He said the economic benefit did not justify the potential environmental risk.

The Narrabri Gas Project must go before the Independent Planning Commission for determination.

Mike Young from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) said the approval to expand Port Kembla did not have direct implications for Narrabri.

“I’m sure that the approval of the Port Kembla gas terminal would be a relevant matter for consideration, but it certainly doesn’t mean that we don’t need more gas,” he said.

<https://themarket Herald.com.au/leigh-creek-asxlck-signs-jv-with-china-new-energy-2020-04-21/>

## Leigh Creek signs JV with China New Energy

*Samantha Goerling, The Market Herald, 21/04/2020*

Leigh Creek Energy has signed a binding term sheet with China New Energy for their proposed Joint Venture.

The JV will undertake In-Situ Gasification (ISG) operations in China, starting with commercial interests of CNE in Shanxi Province in the north of the country, as well as third party interests.

Under the terms of the agreement, Leigh Creek will hold an initial 35% interest in the JV, while CNE which is part of the Shanxi Meijin Energy Group, will hold a 65% interest.

Managing Director Phil Staverley said, "However, given the COVID-19 situation it is very difficult for LCK to be able to predict when LCK staff will be allowed to travel and return to Australia from China and as such timing remains fluid."

<https://inqld.com.au/business/2020/04/27/fracking-given-the-tick-no-damage-to-environment-says-csiro/>

## Fracking given the tick – no damage to environment, says CSIRO's three-year study

*John McCarthy, In Queensland, 27/04/2020*

The CSIRO, has given fracking the all clear, saying its research has found

that it has little or no impact on the environment.

The three-year study by CSIRO's Gas Industry Social and Research Alliance unit (Gisera) investigated the CSG sector after significant environmental damage in the US was blamed on fracking.

But the report found little to no impacts on air quality, soils, groundwater and waterways.

However, it revealed that water produced from the wells immediately after fracturing contained hydraulic fracturing chemicals, elevated concentrations of major ions (salts), ammonia, organic carbon, some metals and organic compounds, but these concentrations reduced to a pre-fractured state within 40 days.

Gisera has been criticised for the funding it receives from the coal seam gas industry.

Activist group Lock the Gate likened the study to accepting health advice from a cigarette company and criticised it for being too narrow.

"Six wells, which were spread across only two properties, is an extremely small sample, given there have been about 19,000 CSG wells drilled across the Surat and Bowen basins in Queensland," Lock the Gate coordinator Naomi Hogan said.

## CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.smb.com.au/business/companies/climate-revolt-looms-for-woodside-on-gas-emissions-goals-20200427-p54nkb.html>

## Climate revolt looms for Woodside on gas emissions goals

*Nick Toscano, SMH, 28/04/2020*

Australia's largest oil and gas producer, Woodside, is headed for a clash with investors over demands to slash greenhouse gas emissions as influential shareholder advisors recommend defying the board and backing calls for bolder climate action.

Motions pushing for Woodside to commit to hard targets to curb direct emissions and emissions created by the end-users of its products – known as "Scope 3" emissions – are likely to attract considerable support at an investor meeting on Thursday after key proxy advisory firms urged shareholders to vote against the board.

Woodside, which has an ambition for "net zero" emissions for its own operations by 2050, has urged shareholders to vote down the resolutions, saying it was supportive of the Paris climate accord's goals to limit global warming well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels and its gas exports were helping to displace higher-emissions fuel sources such as coal-fired power.

Another motion calling for Woodside to review its associations with fossil fuel industry lobbyists to determine if their climate positions were inconsistent has also been backed.

Dan Gocher, of the ACCR, said gas usage had to decline if the world was to meet its Paris climate goals, and Woodside's plans to expand gas output by 6% a year to 2028 were not consistent with scenarios that would limit warming to 1.5 degrees.

## NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-22/could-queensland-turn-to-nuclear-to-power-the-regions/12147768>

## Could nuclear reactors called SMRs be a possible energy source for Queensland?

*ABC Radio/22/04/2020*

The debate over nuclear technology is a controversial one, yet many leaders in the field believe it is time for an open and calm discussion about the energy alternative.

Key points:

- Small modular reactors (SMRs) could be the way forward for nuclear power in regional locations;



- SMRs could be seen as a more cost-effective nuclear option;
- Solar and wind energy are more likely to remain the forerunners for alternative energy.

## FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/gas-to-fire-economic-recovery-and-capitalise-on-cheap-oil-prices-20200421-p54lw8.html>

### Gas to fire economic recovery and capitalise on cheap oil prices

Mike Foley, SMH, 21/04/2020

Energy Minister Angus Taylor wants Australia to capitalise on depressed global oil and gas markets to deliver cheap energy for industry and boost the strategic oil reserve during the coronavirus crisis.

The price of crude oil has plummeted, driven down by a price war and coronavirus restrictions.

Taylor said the government was looking to invest in gas projects to provide more cheap energy, and indicated he would also snap up cheap oil to boost Australia's strategic reserves.

"Gas already plays an essential role in energy reliability, but it could be even more important through a gas-fired recovery. We want to have demand for affordable gas matched with priority upstream investment opportunities to bring gas where it is needed and provide economic stimulus."

Gas funding could be made available through the \$1 billion Underwriting New Generation Investment fund, which the Morrison government is using to assess a shortlist of six renewable pumped hydro projects, five gas and one coal plant upgrade.

Resources Minister Keith Pitt said mining and gas projects should be prioritised to help economic growth, arguing they are "being held up by activists using our court system to employ green 'lawfare'". Opposition resources spokesman Joel Fitzgibbon said there needs "to be a discussion about further incentives for exploration" and "a rational discussion about the rise and rise of environmental activism".

Independent Warringah MP Zali Stegall said she remained committed to her Climate Change Bill, which would legislate a net zero emissions target to parliament later in the year. She called on the government to "prioritise low emissions economic stimulus plans".

The International Renewable Energy Agency released a report last week

that estimated a renewable energy-driven transition to net zero emissions, which removed fossil fuels from global power supply, would boost global GDP by \$155 trillion above the current trajectory.

<https://www.watoday.com.au/politics/queensland/queensland-regional-fund-sits-at-0-a-year-after-trad-promised-it-20200420-p54leq.html>

### Queensland regional fund sits at \$0 a year after Trad promised it

Lydia Lynch, Brisbane Times, 21/04/2020

The Queensland government is yet to set up a \$100 million infrastructure fund it promised for the regions a year ago.

Treasurer Jackie Trad offered a three-year coal royalty freeze for big mining companies in May 2019 if they agreed to contribute \$70 million to a community infrastructure fund to build in some of the towns in which they operated.

Mining companies are ready to throw tens of millions of dollars into the fund, but the government was yet to set one up, with Treasury officials still finalising how it would work.

The government pledged \$30 million to kick-start the fund and hoped miners would chip in \$70 million.

Both BHP and Peabody have agreed to support the fund "in principle".

A Queensland Resources Council spokesman said: "While our current focus is on COVID-19 and keeping Queenslanders and workers safe, the establishment of the Resources Community Infrastructure Fund and its success remains a priority."

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/recovery-tsar-eyes-gas-tax-and-skills-to-get-economy-up-and-running-20200422-p54m4x.html>

### Recovery tsar eyes gas, tax and skills to get economy up and running

Chip Le Grand, 22/04/2020

The business leader hand-picked by Scott Morrison to shape Australia's post-COVID economic recovery has warned against sinking public money into "nation building" infrastructure projects that are not commercially viable.

Neville Power, the chairman of the National COVID-19 Co-ordination Commission, said part of his work will be helping to identify and promote major projects which can help restart the national economy as it emerges from its greatest contraction for a century.

He is also advising state and federal governments to pursue tax and regulation changes that will deliver "immediate kicks" and build greater economic self-reliance, nominating business investment incentives, the reskilling of displaced workers and cheaper gas supplies as priorities.

Power is a former chief executive of mining company Fortescue Metals.

Power said the disruption to global supply chains presented Australia with an opportunity to revive its manufacturing sector.

He said that, provided the right tax and cost settings, this could include high-tech, precision design and manufacturing and the domestic, industrial-scale production of largely imported goods. A key ingredient is the supply of cheap energy to industry, he said.

"We need competitive energy prices, particularly gas, to attract large-scale manufacturing like fertiliser and petrochemicals. There is absolutely no reason why Australia can't be very competitive with those.

Power said the best way of lowering gas prices was to increase supply.

"We have significant reserves of gas on the east coast that are not connected up. We have significant reserves in central Australia and significant reserves in Western Australia. There are options to connect our major demand centres with our major supply centres."

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/no-green-new-deal-for-australia-as-coalition-tightens-embrace-of-fossil-fuels-21226/>

### No green new deal for Australia as Coalition tightens embrace of fossil fuels

Michael Mazengarb, Renew Economy, 24/04/2020

Unfortunately for Australia it is becoming increasingly clear that the Morrison government is steadfast in giving life support to the fossil fuel industry, clearly indicating its preference for short-term opportunities for fossil fuel interests, and its ministers have been clearly working to reinforce the position of the oil, gas and coal sectors.

Resources minister Keith Pitt has gone in to bat for the gas and coal sectors, while energy minister Angus Taylor is working to prop up demand for oil and relaxing already weak regulations on the oil sector, including fuel standards.

This includes the Morrison government gifting almost \$100 million to

the United States to purchase oil that will remain stored in the United State's Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Last week, Taylor announced that the government would also be looking to soften fuel standards to allow the industry to redeploy stockpiled aviation fuels for use in other parts of the transport sector. Australia already has weak fuel standards by most international standards, and a further weakening of the standards will likely lead to worse environmental and health outcomes.

Pitt made the government's priorities even clearer, welcoming the expansion of Australia's gas sector with Arrow Energy's commitment to a new gas project in Queensland.

Despite Covid-19, the threat of climate change has not subsided and the need to transition the global energy system to one with significantly less greenhouse gas emissions will remain a pressing global issue during and after the world has dealt with the pandemic. And studies show that acting on climate change will deliver substantial economic benefits for those who embrace it.

The International Renewable Energy Agency this week published new analysis that shows ambitious investment in the clean energy sector would provide substantial benefits to the global community, boosting global economic output by as much as \$160 trillion by 2050 above a 'business as usual' scenario.

A global poll conducted by Ipsos in April found that 71% of adults globally still view climate change as serious a long-term crisis as Covid-19. The figure was lower in Australia, with 59% agreeing with the proposition locally.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/gas-revival-key-to-renewables-push-energy-minister-says-20200424-p54n2n.html>

### **Gas revival key to renewables push, Energy Minister says**

*Mike Foley, SMH, 24/04/2020*

Energy Minister Angus Taylor wants Australia to use the plummeting price of gas to support fast-start gas plants to get more renewable energy into the grid and deliver cheaper power to manufacturers.

Coronavirus travel restrictions have caused a huge fall in global oil prices. The global gas market, which is tied to the oil price, has also dropped significantly.

Taylor expects the newly-cheap fuel supply to bring on investment in so-called fast-start gas plants, which he says will fill gaps in the energy grid created by the switch to renewable energy.

"Gas-related projects look much more attractive at a lower price. So whether it's an electricity generator or an ammonia plant, ethanol or petrochemicals, it creates great opportunity," Taylor said.

"More gas means more capacity to absorb renewables [into the grid] because gas is flexible, dispatchable generation."

Former BP Australasia president and Climate Council councillor Greg Bourne expects one of the proposed gas import terminals for the East Coast, which can be built more quickly and cheaply than an onshore or offshore gas field, to be developed in the near future, to capitalise on the low oil price.

"I think that would completely remove the need for Australia to worry about its onshore production capacity," Bourne said.

Experts say for Australia to meet its commitment to the Paris Agreement, fossil fuel use must start to decline immediately, and that the contribution to global warming from gas as industrial fuel has been underestimated.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/the-lucky-group-enjoying-fewer-constraints-under-covid-developers-20200423-p54mqg.html>

### **The lucky group enjoying fewer constraints under COVID: developers**

*Elizabeth Farrelly, SMH, 25/04/2020*

The world is in shutdown, yes? Well, actually, no. You and I are in shutdown, strapped to the chair, straitjacketed and muzzled. But the land-clearers, fossil-fuel extractors, single-use plastic waste generators and grabbit-and-run developers are more avid than ever. They're not just proceeding apace. They're revving up. Having a ball.

And no, to be clear, I'm not saying rip off your mask and rush out into the streets. I'm saying exercise your mind. While you and I are dutifully swallowing our daily dose of Stan and Netflix, remnant forest is being logged, Adani is undermining the Galilee Basin, coalmines are being approved and extended and developers are rejoicing as government empowers itself to speed approvals, supercharge ministerial discretion and diminish protections.

While we stewed, housebound, through Easter, greater planning change was effected – with more haste, less fanfare, less discussion and the potential for far more dramatic consequence – than at any time since Sydney landowners ganged up on Governor Macquarie and told him what the rules really were.

First, on March 24, came the COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures) Act 2020 (NSW), which slid through both houses of Parliament and became law, all in a single day. That sketched a new superpower landscape. A week later, Planning Minister Rob Stokes dug a little hole and tucked into it a landmine called the Planning System Acceleration Program.

The amended act gives Stokes between six and 12 months of virtually unlimited discretion to authorise any development on any land "without the need for any approval under the act or consent from any person". No agreement is required from Parliament, cabinet or the department, and definitely not from the public. Nor need other legislative controls apply – heritage, environment, water.

<https://medium.com/lobbywatch/a-gas-fired-recovery-seriously-27cee36e8712>

### **A gas-fired recovery? Seriously?**

*Dan Gocher, Medium, 24/04/2020*

Australia's Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, Angus Taylor, has suggested that the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis will be gas-fired. That's right, our Minister for Emissions Reduction is advocating for more emissions.

Seriously, is that the best we can do?

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/fossil-fuel-web-leading-australia-to-a-deadly-recovery-82812/>

### **Fossil fuel web leading Australia to a Deadly Recovery**

*Ketan Joshi, Renew Economy, 25/04/2020*

Like me, you wake up in the morning, unlock your phone, mutter "Okay, get on with it" and spend the next thirty minutes being systematically slapped hard in the face by a long, slowly-progressing queue of coronavirus articles that have built up overnight. This is compulsory now. You cannot opt out of the daily Rona face slap ritual.

This buzzing maelstrom is the perfect cover under which fossil fuel executives can don a false moustache and a top hat, clasp their hands behind their

back and skip through the distracted, exhausted crowd, while whistling a jaunty tune. They have a newfound cover for the thing they like to do: pulling carbon from the ground and pushing it into the sky.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/apr/27/zali-steggall-calls-for-probe-of-coalition-plan-to-underwrite-gas-hydro-and-coal-power>

**Zali Steggall calls for investigation of Coalition plan to underwrite gas, hydro and coal power**

*Adam Morton, The Guardian, 27/04/2020*

Independent MP Zali Steggall has asked the auditor general to investigate a Morrison government scheme to underwrite gas, hydro and coal power, saying it lacks transparency and citing legal advice that the Coalition had no constitutional or legislative authority to introduce it.

Announced in late 2018 after the government abandoned Malcolm Turnbull’s proposed national energy guarantee, the underwriting new generation investment (Ungi) scheme promises public support for new dispatchable power generation projects to increase competition in the electricity grid. Twelve projects have been shortlisted, including six pumped hydro plants, five gas generators and an upgrade to the Vales Point coal-fired power plant.

Steggall has written to the auditor general, Grant Hehir, asking him to consider investigating the program “as a matter of priority”. Her letter refers to research by The Australia Institute, a progressive thinktank, suggesting the program has no constitutional or legislative standing, no guidelines or criteria to assess projects, and its development and implementation did not follow a clear process.

She said despite these apparent flaws the government had shortlisted projects, started “advanced negotiations” to support gas-fired plants in Victoria and Queensland and entered a

memorandum-of-understanding with the New South Wales government to support three projects in the state.

Steggall, who entered parliament last year on a climate action platform, said the focus on fossil fuels was questionable and there was little visibility of how and why the projects shortlisted for underwriting had been chosen.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/bioenergy-push-for-emissions-reduction-and-regional-growth-20200427-p54nom.html>

**Bioenergy push for emissions reduction and regional growth**

*Mike Foley, SMH, 27/04/2020*

Bioenergy could be the Morrison government’s next step in its emissions reduction strategy, with the Australian Renewable Energy Agency calling for public submissions to develop an industry growth strategy.

Energy and Emissions Reduction Minister Angus Taylor said growth in use of bioenergy can reduce emissions, aid the agriculture sector and boost Australia’s fuel security.

Bioenergy is produced by processing organic materials, including agricultural waste and broadacre crops, to produce a range of energy sources including heat, methane and liquid fuels.

Renewable energy advocates question the benefits of bioenergy projects that grow broadacre crops such as wheat, corn or soybeans solely to make ethanol for transport fuel. They argue it is more sustainable, with lower emissions, to harness waste processing systems that recycle food waste through biodigesters to produce gas or heat to make electricity.



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