



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 2:23 • 17 MAY 2019

Climate election: Reef at stake

The outcome of Australia's federal election this weekend could decide the fate of the Great Barrier Reef and the nation's unique marine wildlife, the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) says.

On the eve of the election AMCS, the country's peak marine conservation group, says the poll comes at a crucial time with the next Australian government holding the future health of Australia's oceans in its hands.

Climate emergency, extinction crisis

Darren Kindleysides, CEO of AMCS, said: "As Australians go to the polls, we are in a climate emergency, our nature faces an extinction crisis and the future of the Great Barrier Reef hangs in the balance. Time is running out and we cannot afford for the next Australian government to squander time on inaction and half-measures.

"This is the climate election and our glorious Great Barrier Reef is right at the coal face for climate impacts. We've been calling for policies that give our Reef a fighting chance – policies that move us rapidly away from mining and burning fossil fuels and clean up our Reef's water.

"But as well as our rapidly warming oceans causing catastrophic coral bleaching, our marine wonders are facing many other threats.

"We have a tsunami of plastic pollution to hold back and clean up. We still have unsustainable fisheries catching threatened species. We have a network of marine parks stripped of huge areas of protection, removing sanctuaries for our fish and wildlife like dolphins, turtles, dugongs, sharks and rays."



Kindleysides said the election had seen concern for the future of Australia's environment emerge as the biggest single concern among the majority of voters.

The ABC's Vote Compass survey of 119,000 people found the environment rated ahead of all other issues, with 29 percent ranking it as their primary election issue.

Kindleysides added: "Australians have made it clear they want more action from their political leaders – that's why we pored over the details of policy platforms of the main parties and released our election scorecard. Our assessment has revealed stark differences between the environmental policies of the main parties."

The areas assessed were:

- Rapid shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy
- Rejection of new thermal coal mines
- Cut Great Barrier Reef water pollution
- Restore marine sanctuaries
- Protect endangered wildlife from fishing
- Tackle plastic pollution

Kindleysides said: "Our nation's \$31 billion marine tourism industry needs strong policies. Our Great Barrier Reef and the 60,000 jobs it supports need leadership on climate and water quality. Whoever forms our next government will have the future of our Reef and amazing oceans in their hands."



• P2: Scientists call for action from new govt

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• P4: Four lessons for coal transition

Scientists call for action from new govt

62 scientists and experts have signed an open letter to the next Parliament of Australia, calling for whichever party that wins government this Saturday to make urgent action on climate change a top priority for the 46th Parliament of Australia.

Prominent signatories of the open letter include: Nobel Prize winners Professor Peter Doherty AC and Dr. Sue Wareham OAM, former Australian of the Year Professor Fiona Stanley AC, former Chief Scientist for Australia Professor Penny Sackett and many of Australia's leading scientists from disciplines including climate change, health, economics, energy, and finance, including Professor Hilary Bambrick, Professor Will Steffen and Professor Barbara Norman.

"Australia is failing when it comes to addressing climate change and whichever party wins government this Saturday needs to make urgent action on climate change a top priority for the next Parliament of Australia," said Richie Merzian, Climate & Ener-

gy Program Director at the Australia Institute.

"However you assess the fairness of a country's emissions reduction target: by population, economic cost, or a combination, Australia Institute analysis shows Australia's current reduction target is unambitious, unfair and irresponsible.

"The Government is relying on the climate outlier advice of Brian Fisher to terrify Australians about the alleged cost of climate action, while Australians struggle to deal with the very real costs of climate inaction.

Fires, floods and droughts

"Climate change is an enormous threat to the security and wellbeing of all Australians. Climate change is already increasing the frequency of fires, floods and drought, as well as serious health impacts. Climate change is already a major threat to key industries, including agriculture and tourism and is already costing Australians billions

of dollars every year, and will continue to rise unless we act.

"Beginning with my time as Australia's Chief Scientist, I have made it my life's work to push governments to listen to the science" said Professor Penny Sackett, former Chief Scientist for Australia.

"Australians have paid dearly for the chain dragging of previous governments on climate action: we are now in a climate crisis.

"The next Australian Government must take the immediate and drastic action required to keep global warming on the safer side of 2 degrees. The time is not 2050, or even 2030. The time is now."

The open letter co-ordinated and published by the Australia Institute Climate & Energy Program appears as a full-page advertisement in The Age on May 16.

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Coal mines drain 6 billion litres from Sydney's water

An alarming NSW Water submission that highlights the destructive impact coal mining is having on the Sydney Water Catchment Area must be heeded by the NSW Government.

The concerns were raised in Water NSW's latest submission to the ongoing Independent Expert Panel into Mining in Sydney's Catchment.

Within the document, Water NSW stated: "environmental consequences from mining in the Special Areas are greater than predicted when the mining was proposed and approved".

"Some of these environmental consequences have caused (or are likely to cause) breaches of conditions in the relevant development consents, including performance criteria to protect watercourses and Sydney's drinking water catchment."

No further approvals impacting water

Water NSW goes on to call for improvements in the regulation of mining in the catchment area, and crucially states, "no further approvals should be given for mining that would permit the level of environmental impacts and

consequences that have occurred in Wongawilli Creek, WC21, and Swamps 1a, 1b and 5 at Dendrobium, and Waratah Rivulet and Eastern Tributary at Metropolitan".

WaterNSW noted mining-related surface water losses at Dendrobium alone were as much as 1.28 billion litres a year.

One previously permanent water course was now dry for 1.7 kilometres, or 90 per cent of its length, causing "complete aquatic habitat loss". Species affected include the vulnerable Littlejohn's tree frog.

Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Georgina Woods said a moratorium on new mines and expansions of existing mines needed to be implemented immediately to protect Sydney's water.

She said Water NSW's submission followed revelations late last year that showed six billion litres of water had been diverted from creeks feeding Sydney water catchments into underground coal mines in the Special Areas.

"Mining company and NSW Government assurances that expanded coal mining under Sydney's water catch-

ment would not do serious damage were misplaced," Ms Woods said.

"This catchment supplies water to our biggest city – a growing city that is facing drought and needs to take every precaution to safeguard precious water.

"There are new and expanded coal mining proposals in these areas being considered by the Department of Planning and the Government needs to immediately pause these projects.

"Any waste of water in the catchment of a growing city is reckless and unacceptable.

"We call on the Premier to impose a moratorium on any further coal mining approvals in the Special Areas while we await the final report of the Expert Panel this year."

Planning Minister Rob Stokes said, "We are committed to protecting our precious water resources right across NSW and will give detailed consideration to the recommendations of the panel once its final report is complete in August."

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Govt must stand firm against Adani's propaganda war

The Queensland Government has been urged to stand firm in the face of relentless bullying from Adani and protect the state's water, after the multinational company fired a new salvo in its propaganda war.

The Queensland Government has sought updated advice from CSIRO and GeoScience Australia on the latest version of the of Adani's Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems Management Plan, which was not the version that was reviewed by CSIRO and GeoScience Australia.

This includes further clarification around the evidence to support identification of the source aquifer of the Doongmabulla Springs Complex.

Central Queensland canegrower Len Thompson said it was clear Adani was struggling to locate the source aquifer for the Doongmabulla Springs.

"This mine should absolutely not go ahead if Adani cannot guarantee that these springs will not be negatively impacted," he said.

"Groundwater is so crucial in this country, and no mining company should be allowed to run roughshod over graziers, farmers, or the environment.

"The potential for tourism in this region is also significant and is much

more sustainable than the coal industry.

"I commend the Queensland Government for following due process and doing the work needed to protect the lifeblood of this region."

Adani's latest water whinge comes the same day it was reported Stephen Charles, a member of a non-partisan group of former judges campaigning for an effective federal integrity commission, said he could name around 20 issues worthy of investigation, and cited the rushed federal approval of the Adani mine as one example.

LTGA spokesperson Carmel Flint said contrary to Adani's whinging, the additional information requested was part of a standard process.

"Adani has now had more than ten attempts to locate the source aquifer of these ancient and unique Great Artesian Basin springs, and has failed," she said.

"More research is exactly what is required.

"This process has been drawn out not through any fault of the Queensland Government, but due to Adani's incompetence and political interference on a federal level."

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Qld undermines policy

Lock the Gate Alliance has slammed a recommendation by the Queensland Coordinator General to allow the Olive Downs coal project to leave three un-rehabilitated pit voids on the Isaac River flood plain after the mine closes.

The decision is completely at odds with the mine rehabilitation reforms passed by the Qld Government last year, which promised to ban final voids on floodplains.

"The decision to let Olive Downs leave three un-rehabilitated pit voids on the Isaac River floodplain is a ticking time bomb that represents a real long-term threat to the river and downstream users" said Rick Humphries, Mine Rehabilitation Coordinator with Lock the Gate Alliance.

"It completely undermines a key element of the Queensland Government rehabilitation reforms which promised to stop mining giants leaving behind contaminated hypersaline pit lakes on floodplains because the environmental risks to our precious rivers are too great.

"We're incredibly disappointed that the Queensland Government has failed the first crucial test of its new mine rehabilitation laws. The Coordinator General had the option to require the Olive Downs project to fully protect the floodplain by requiring the pits were backfilled.

"Instead the Coordinator General has backed the company against the interests of the Queensland taxpayers who will bear the long-term environmental cost of the un-rehabilitated voids," he said.

"Every dollar not spent by the mining industry to fix up their mess is a dollar cost to the taxpayer in the form of environmental risk and loss of the value of the un-rehabilitated land. If a mining project can't afford to return the mined land to a fully rehabilitated state that supports a post-mining land use then it should be rejected.

"We're calling for the Queensland Government to urgently reconsider this decision, and to require the Olive Downs mine to fully backfill and rehabilitate all pit voids consistent with the Government's new rehabilitation policy."

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May 15: Fifth anniversary for Bentley Blockade

May 15 marked the fifth anniversary of a victory for people of the Northern Rivers, whose Bentley Blockade ended plans for CSG in the area. See how it happened here:



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How to transition from coal: Four lessons

Chris Briggs, Elsa Dominish & Franziska Mey – The Conversation

With 12 coal power stations in Australia closed since 2013, a full transition out of coal is coming.

Around the world, governments and stakeholders are considering how to implement a “just transition” from coal to clean energy – a transition that’s fair for local workers and communities in coal regions.

Some coal-producing nations, such as Germany and Spain, are delivering major just transition packages. Other nations are less successfully trying to navigate social conflicts around the transition, such as Poland and South Africa.

But so far in Australia, there is little planning for the transition.

What can Australia learn from other international experiences to plan our own just transition? Through our ongoing research we found four important lessons.

Lesson 1: build a social compact

Climate science demands the energy transition be as rapid as possible. But faster transitions threaten the capacity of local labour markets to replace jobs lost in coal.

Unions have begun shifting from defensive support for coal towards a just transition perspective, but this support can unravel once job losses start to hit.

In South Africa, for instance, trade unions helped pioneer a just transition. But they brought legal action to stop renewable energy auctions amid coal closures without adjustment support for workers.

Germany, on the other hand, has managed industrial transitions in the western coal regions since the late 1960s through effective negotiations.

In 2018, Germany’s government-appointed “coal commission” developed a pathway for the full closure and transition of the coal industry by 2038. It involved a process with representatives from unions, industry associations, coal regions, scientists, local communities and environmental NGOs.

A social compact between the key parties is needed to manage the conflicts that can emerge over a transition out of coal.

Just transition commissions have been established in Canada, Scotland – and now South Africa.

So Australia should be considering two things to build a social compact for coal transition:

- a taskforce including all the key stakeholders to negotiate an overarching framework for a transition out of coal
- an on-going process for including stakeholders at national and regional level, because it will be a long-term process requiring negotiated trade-offs.

Lesson 2: plan early for closures

If transition planning is delayed until mass redundancies are on the horizon, labour markets will not cope with the volume of displaced workers.

Planning for closures is starting to emerge at an industry and company-level in some nations (such as Italy, Germany and Australia) - which includes retraining, support for early retirements and the redeployment of workers.

Victoria is a global leader on regional level adjustment. The La Trobe Worker Transfer Scheme is redeploying retrenched Hazelwood power station workers to other sites.

Site remediation is also an important way we can restore the local environment quality and create semi and low-skilled jobs at the most critical time of the transition. Mandatory requirements need to be established for funds allocated to the coal industry.

Lesson 3: diversify the regional economy

The Institute for Sustainable Futures has modelled the global employment impacts in the energy sector if we meet the Paris Climate Agreement.

The modelling found jobs will grow across almost all occupational categories. There will be big job losses among machine operators and assemblers as coal closures occur, but this group also experiences the strongest job growth within the renewables sector, especially solar.

But market restructuring alone will not deliver a just transition.

In each of the coal regions we examined, there is little prospect for

large-scale renewable energy because the best solar and wind resources are located elsewhere.

This means workers will rarely transfer seamlessly to new jobs without having to move away from home. And as many of the new jobs are in the construction phase, ongoing jobs will be replaced by a higher volume of temporary jobs.

Local solar and energy efficiency can be a source of new jobs but ultimately diversifying the regional economy is the solution for creating new jobs beyond coal. Each region has different mixes of sectors and capabilities, so economic diversification strategies need to be tailored.

These are some features of successful plans to diversify regional economies:

- develop links with related industries and establish new industries
- extend the capabilities of existing industries and workers
- fund labour-intensive projects, such as site remediation and plant decommissioning
- target infrastructure upgrades and skill development for coal regions.

Lesson 4: establish funds and authority for a just transition

Specialist funds are being established to oversee, develop and implement coal transition programs. The European Commission’s coal and carbon-intensive regions in transition initiative is investing funds in 13 coal regions.

In Germany, the coal commission has recommended a funding package of €40 billion to support the coal regions, with legislation due May 2019.

The Spanish government has established a €250 million fund, which includes support for workers, economic diversification and environmental restoration.

How is Australia placed?

National climate and energy policy is a fiasco in Australia. The federal government has no energy transition plan and refused to sign a Just Transition declaration at the Poland climate conference in December 2018.

On a positive note, there have been some innovative regional responses.

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



Four lessons for the transition from coal

• Continued from p4

The Victorian Government has established the La Trobe Valley Authority, which is funding economic diversification initiatives.

The ALP will establish a Just Transition Authority if it wins the federal election, which will develop regional transition plans and oversee redundancy schemes. Unions, industry and local communities will have direct input.

But without a coordinated exit schedule like the German coal commission, coal closures will still likely be abrupt, driven by technical breakdowns or renewables growth squeezing out less profitable generators.

The ALP scheme also only covers power generators – not coal mining – which will be more challenging because there are more low-skilled workers (around half are drivers and machine operators).

Social and political support can unravel very quickly once regional communities start to transition. In Queensland, mining unions are opposing any candidates that will not

support the Adani mine after their national body led the shift to a just transition policy by the ACTU.

Australia would be wise to invest heavily in just transition planning and investment alongside technology development.

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• Originally published in *The Conversation*:

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Inside the news

Adani continues to be a **difficult election issue** as voting day draws nigh, although the mine's fate presently lies with the Queensland Labor government, not whichever party forms the federal government.

This is Australia's first **climate change election**. It's critical that the incoming government take effective climate action. If **Labor** wins, we can expect some policy improvements, but not enough to save the planet. If the **Coalition** returns to power, we'll **burn**.

If **Clive Palmer** succeeds in buying himself a **Senate** seat and a hand in the balance of power, he'll be pushing hard for Adani's mine, **the key to his own coal plans** for the Galilee Basin.

The results of a **survey** for the Queensland Resources Council have been leaked to the ABC, and show the **mining industry's reputation is in the pits** (see p10). The ABC has not revealed the source of the leak, which has **FFB** very curious as to who wanted the information publicised.

Journalist **Michael West** explains how the Australian Energy Markets Commission is presiding over is a **massive wealth transfer** from the people of Australia to the governments of Singapore and China (p13). It's well worth reading the whole story to understand how the approval of **Jemena's** north Australian pipeline – an unregulated monopoly – will affect this country.

One Notion's new NSW senator, **Mark Latham**, has introduced a bill to kick-start a **nuclear power industry** in the state. This will please nuke promoter and NSW Nationals leader **John Barilaro**. The Coalition would love to see a nuke power station anywhere between **Jervis Bay** and the **North Coast** (p14).

In a **tribute** to the late **Bob Hawke** (p16), former Greens leader **Bob Brown** says he was Australia's first environmental PM. Hawke dumped the **Franklin Dam**, which can be compared to today's battle over the Adani mine. Brown says that if Hawke were PM today, the **Adani** coalmine proposal would be "**in the bin**".

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STOP WATER MINING
THE NEXT RESOURCES BATTLE



In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 24,000 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-11/dubious-environmental-group-infiltrates-stop-adani-movement/11100594>

Dubious environmental group Gatekeepers of Our Reef 'infiltrates' Stop Adani movement

Josh Robertson, *The Guardian*, 11/05/2019

A mysterious environmental group fronted by dubious online identities – including one endorsed by a former Liberal party staffer – has spent more than a year trying to forge ties with the Adani protest movement while urging activists to target Clive Palmer. ...

The Gatekeepers of Our Reef group is run by people who carefully hid their tracks while approaching Stop Adani organisers, who say they sought information on protest tactics while mounting a strange campaign against Mr Palmer.

Roger Mann, who volunteered to run the Gatekeepers group's social media from regional Victoria, said he was duped by people who cultivated him for months online.

"There would seem to be three players that I've been involved with – it's a lot of subterfuge to do that."

One of its organisers, "Dayna Thompson", falsely claimed in an online resume to be a research fellow at the University of Western Australia (UWA).

The ABC has been unable to find any property, business, electoral or online marketing records of a Dayna Thompson in WA. ...

A spokesman for Mr Palmer said: "He isn't aware of the group. Labor and Liberal engage in tactics like this all the time."

Online records seen by the ABC show the group used contact details of luxury hotels in Brisbane and Cairns when registering and paying for its stopclivepalmer.com website.

Last July, another group organiser, calling himself "Ben Ferguson", posted on international jobsites in Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast offering \$19 an hour for "tech-savvy students" to promote "an environmental organisation" on university campuses. ...



Don't forget which way to vote May 18! Photo: Bob Brown Foundation

<https://www.afr.com/news/politics/national/labor-will-be-destroyed-by-adani-in-central-and-north-qld-says-clive-palmer-20190510-p51m4m#logout>

Labor will be 'destroyed' by Adani in central and North Qld, says Clive Palmer

Mark Ludlow, *AFR*, 10/05/2019

Clive Palmer said Labor's vote was being "destroyed" in central and North Queensland by its mixed messages on Adani's \$2 billion controversial Carmichael mine.

Mr Palmer's United Australia Party is hoping to capitalise on Labor's conflicted position on Adani in next Saturday's election, with the businessman hopeful of picking up the Townsville-based seat of Herbert. ...

Labor strategists have confirmed that the issue of Adani has hurt the party's chances of picking up a swag of coal seats in Queensland including Herbert, Dawson (based in Mackay), Capricornia (based on Rockhampton) and Flynn (based on Gladstone). ...

Mr Palmer - who believes the UAP can also pick up six Senate seats - has backed the opening of the Galilee Basin to a string of coal projects, including Adani's Carmichael mine, GVK/Hancock Coal and his own Waratah Coal project. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/adani-hit-by-secret-review-of-mine-plan/news-story/70eb487a6cf1361ae5a22ac3e5b8ee2>

Adani hit by 'secret' review of mine plan

Charlie Peel, *The Australian*, 13/05/2019

Adani's proposed Carmichael coalmine has been hit by further delays, with the Palaszczuk government still refusing to sign off on federal approval for a critical groundwater management plan.

Queensland's environment department on Friday told Adani it had sent a list of issues to be reviewed by the CSIRO and Geoscience Australia, the two agencies that independently vetted Adani's groundwater management plan before it was granted federal approval on April 9.

The request for additional information was sent despite the Department of Environment and Science issuing a statement earlier this year that the mining giant's groundwater management plan would not be subject to a state review by its officials.

But Adani yesterday said the department was "once again engaging in a secretive and non-transparent additional review process".

The delay comes two weeks after Adani's black-throated finch management plan was sent back to the draw-

ing board when the department demanded the mining company agree to a number of additional requirements beyond the scope of its approved environmental impact statement. ...

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/federal-election-2019/queensland-shoots-down-reports-of-new-adani-groundwater-review-20190513-p51mqu.html>

Queensland shoots down reports of new Adani groundwater review

Tony Moore, Brisbane Times, 13/05/2019

The Queensland government says reports are wrong that it is seeking another review of the impact on groundwater flowing from the Great Artesian Basin to endangered springs to the south-west of Adani's proposed Carmichael coal mine.

Queensland's Department of Environment and Science says it requested further groundwater information from the CSIRO and Geoscience Australia after their reports were provided to the federal government in February 2019.

At the heart of the dispute is a federal government ruling that the impact on the bore water rising from the threatened Doongmabulla Springs – south-west of the proposed mine – cannot be more than 20 centimetres. ...

Adani on Sunday night issued a statement saying Queensland's Department of Environment and Science (DES) was seeking to further delay finalisation of the Carmichael project's Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem Management Plan (GDEMP), by "once again engaging in a secretive and non-transparent additional review process."

However, Queensland's Department of Environment and Science provided a statement on Tuesday morning saying that was wrong.

"Adani's claims about DES seeking another review are false," the statement reads.

"The Department of Environment and Science (DES) confirms its earlier public statements that it will not seek its own independent scientific review of Adani's Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem Management Plan (GDEMP) but will instead rely on the advice given by CSIRO and Geoscience Australia to the Commonwealth Government," it continues. ...

The Mackay Conservation Group (MCG) backed the Queensland government asking scientists further questions about Adani's groundwater plans as a necessary precaution for the protection of precious groundwater

resources, including the Great Artesian Basin and the Doongmabulla Springs.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-14/adani-csiro-emails-foi-melissa-price/11107276>

Adani water plan ticked off within hours despite lack of detail, internal CSIRO emails reveal

Michael Slezak, ABC, 14/05/2019

Internal CSIRO correspondence reveals the science agency was pushed to formally accept the Federal Government's approval of Adani's water plans in a single afternoon.

Despite the Government saying Australia's top science agencies "confirmed" Adani's water plans had "met strict scientific requirements", the emails show CSIRO was determined not to give a "categorical" response.

The correspondence obtained by the ABC through freedom of information laws exposes further discrepancies between what the Government said about the assessment of Adani's environmental plans, and what actually occurred. ...

Two days before the federal election was called, Environment Minister Melissa Price signed off on Adani's two groundwater management plans, meaning Adani had passed all the tests required by the Federal Government before it could start constructing its proposed Carmichael coal mine.

When announcing the decision, Ms Price said she was simply following the advice of scientists.

"I have accepted the scientific advice," she said, declaring that CSIRO and Geoscience Australia had provided "assurances that these steps address their recommendations".

But internal CSIRO correspondence explicitly shows the agency went out of its way to avoid giving any categorical advice of that nature.

The environment department wanted a letter from the CSIRO, stating whether Adani's plans satisfied the scientists' concerns about the company's plans.

They were asked to do that on the basis of a verbal briefing and a short summary document provided that day.

In drafting the letter, CSIRO research director Warwick McDonald said he had "been careful about not being categorical about the degree [to which] these responses will satisfy the recommendations".

He explained they couldn't give categorical advice because "the devil is in the detail that we do not have". ...

Despite the CSIRO advice lacking any categorical statement, Ms Price presented CSIRO approval of the plans as a key basis for her giving them the green light. ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/indigenous-elder-demands-green-light-for-adani-megamine/news-story/1788bdcc6ff4ebb4815e25e6c170c892>

Indigenous elder demands green light for Adani megamine

Steven Wardill, Courier-Mail, 14/05/2019

The key native title holder over lands impacted by the Carmichael coalmine has warned the State Government it risks a war with indigenous people if it continues to thwart the project.

Jangga elder Colin McLennan – whose country abuts the mine site and covers most of the project's proposed rail line – said a jobs crisis loomed in regional Queensland if Labor prohibited development in the Galilee Basin.

Speaking exclusively to *The Courier-Mail*, Mr McLennan took aim at Treasurer Jackie Trad for being the key figure preventing Adani's mine from proceeding, saying she should just join the Greens. ...

"There are five more mines coming on in that country," Mr McLennan said.

"It will be like war if they stop them. You can't just accept the way it is now." ...

The 3500-strong Jangga people have flexed their muscle repeatedly over the mine, forcing Adani to move the rail line route four times while eliciting significant job guarantees for indigenous people out of the Indian miner.

But after fighting for eight years to get the mine approved, Mr McLennan said he was angry at the Government's delaying tactics. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/may/14/adani-deal-with-myanmar-military-linked-company-raises-human-rights-alarm>

Adani deal with Myanmar military-linked company raises human rights alarm

Ben Smees & Emanuel Stokes, The Guardian, 14/05/2019

The Adani Group has signed a US\$290m commercial deal with a holding company controlled by the Myanmar armed forces, who have been accused by UN investigators of committing genocide and crimes against humanity.

The Indian conglomerate behind the controversial Carmichael coal project in north Queensland was granted permission in April to develop a container port in Yangon, on land owned by the Myanmar Economic Corporation. The MEC generates significant revenue for the Myanmar military, known as the Tatmadaw.

The Australian human rights lawyer Chris Sidoti is one of three authors of the UN report, which called for senior members of Myanmar's armed forces to be prosecuted for genocide against the country's Rohingya Muslim community.

The full report, published in 2018, recommended that no business should enter into an economic relationship with Myanmar's security forces or any enterprise they control.

Speaking to the Guardian, Sidoti said: "Through this project, Australian coal will be helping to fund the operations of the Tatmadaw and enriching the generals in Myanmar." ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/crime-and-justice/adani-court-bid-to-bankrupt-opponent-adrian-burrugubba-delayed-by-four-week-adjourment/news-story/>

Adani court bid to bankrupt opponent Adrian Burrugubba delayed by four-week adjournment

Vanda Carson, Courier-Mail, 15/05/2019

Indian mining giant Adani's bid to bankrupt a traditional land owner who fought to stop its \$2 billion Carmichael mine in the courts will be heard after the election.

The Adani Mining case against Wangan and Jagalingou traditional owner and lead spokesman Adrian Burrugubba, from Woolloongabba, was briefly mentioned in the Federal Court in Brisbane this morning before Registrar Katie Lynch.

The case was adjourned for hearing on June 12 after Ming-Jung Hsieh, a solicitor from Taylor David, the firm acting for Adani, told the court that process servers expected to serve Mr Burrugubba with a creditor's petition in two weeks.

Ms Hsieh asked for a four-week adjournment until June 12 and Registrar Lynch granted the request. ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/resources-experts-contract-not-renewed-after-criticism-of-adani-approval-process/live-coverage/>

Resources expert's contract not renewed after criticism of Adani approval process

Domanii Cameron, Courier-Mail, 14/05/2019

State Development Minister Cameron Dick has taken an indirect swipe at Adani while spruiking the \$1 billion Olive Downs coal mine in the Bowen Basin.

"Not a single negative submission was made about the mine (Olive Downs)," he said.

"Good projects that stack up will be approved in our state." ...

This is despite only requiring minor adjustments to its assessment of the area's black-throated finch population, which is now plaguing the Adani Carmichael coal mine.

A Palaszczuk Government resources expert who described the Adani mine approval process as a "mess" has not had her contract renewed.

Queensland's Resources Investment Commissioner Caoilin Chestnutt made the sensational claims while in India in February, warning that the Government's controversial review of the mine's black-throated finch management plan could force the Indian miner "back to the drawing board". A Natural Resources, Mines and Energy Department spokesman last night confirmed Ms Chestnutt's "short term contract", which wraps up next week, had not been renewed. ...

<https://www.news.com.au/world/breaking-news/rothschild-withdraws-from-advising-adani/news-story/3739003fa72f76fd2df1848b69b9bdb8>

Rothschild withdraws from advising Adani

Reuters, News.com, 14/05/2019

Rothschild & Co has decided not to advise India's Adani in the financing or development of the \$US4 billion (\$A5.74 billion) Carmichael coal mine in Queensland, Australia, a letter from the bank to an environmental group says.

The bank is also not advising the firm on the planned sale of stake in the Abbot Point Coal export terminal, said the May 12 confidential letter to Friends of the Earth, France.

A spokeswoman for the bank confirmed the authenticity of the letter but provided no further comment.

The decision comes as banks and other financial institutions are facing increasing pressure to cut investments in coal, blamed for adding more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere than any other fuel, as the world moves to curb greenhouse gas emissions. ...

<https://www.afr.com/news/politics/national/adani-challenging-payments-to-aecom-for-work-on-carmichael-mine-20190514-p51n3w>

Adani refuses to pay for work on Carmichael mine

Mark Ludlow, AFR, 14/05/2019

Indian energy giant Adani is attempting to challenge a \$12.5 million payment to engineering firm AECOM for work they did on the company's plans for a 389-kilometre rail link from its Carmichael mine to Abbot Point coal terminal.

Adani's lawyers were back in the Supreme Court [Tuesday] over the amount of money they owed AECOM for work done on an earlier version of the rail line and on the mine. ...

Adani – which said it just wants a fair go on its final environmental approvals for the Carmichael mine – has taken AECOM to court to challenge a December decision that awarded \$12.5 million to AECOM for work the engineering and design firm claims it had done on the original Carmichael project. ...

AECOM said it was paid some money by Adani subsidiary Carmichael Rail Network, but alleged it was still owed \$16.9 million for work done on the original rail line.

In December the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, which arbitrates disputes, decided AECOM was owed \$18.7 million, which was then reduced to \$12.5 million.

But Adani is now challenging the decision in the Supreme Court in Brisbane claiming the QBCC did not have the jurisdiction to determine the money owed. ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/adani-mine-labor-mps-in-emergency-meeting-with-premier/news-story/36c-c3bd5312f7370f67e21db87159aa0>

Adani mine: Labor MPs in emergency meeting with Premier

Sarah Vogler, Courier-Mail, 16/05/2019

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk will hold an emergency meeting with regional MPs this afternoon [Thursday], amid unrest within her Government's ranks over its handling of the Adani coal mine

Labor strategists have been throwing their hands up in frustration at the inability of their state colleagues to keep a lid on the Adani saga as they attempt to win seats across the state such as Dawson, Capricornia and Flynn, and to hold to the ultra-marginal seat of Herbert. ...

The MPs are understood to have described being abused by constituents, including while working at pre-polling booths on behalf of their federal candidates.

Their families are understood to have also been coping abuse. ...

They want the Government to come up with a strategy to stop Adani overshadowing the state election in less than 18 months' time, potentially costing them their seats.

A spokesman for the Premier said the meeting was not about Adani and the project would not be discussed. ...



<https://www.smh.com.au/national/queensland/research-casts-doubt-on-adani-management-plan-for-endangered-bird>

Research casts doubt on Adani management plan for endangered bird

Stuart Layt, SMH, 17/05/2019

No current management plan for the black-throated finch will be effective because there is not enough known about the birds to make accurate predictions about their behaviour, a new report argues.

The finch has been at the centre of controversy in recent months because its largest remaining viable habitat is the site of the proposed Adani coal mine in Queensland's Galilee Basin. ...

A James Cook University-led review of the available scientific data on the finch found there just was not enough information available for anyone to develop a viable management plan.

JCU PhD student Juan Mula-Laguna, who led the study, said that was because the bird's numbers had already

dwindled significantly, which made studying it difficult. "Because it's so rare already and also quite small and hard to find we found some of the data is too restricted to be useful," he said. ...

April Reside supervised Mr Mula-Laguna review, and is on the recovery team for the black-throated finch.

Dr Reside said the Adani management plan for the bird was worthless because it was based on faulty data.

"In their plan they claim they're going to take the best habitat for black-throated finches we know about and improve it, and they claim they have 90 per cent certainty they can do that," she said.

"That claim is absolutely, irrefutably false, because there is no certainty about how we'll improve the land, and their plan for doing that was fundamentally flawed anyway." ...

The research has been published in the journal *Emu - Austral Ornithology*.

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/sustainability/worse-than-expected-waterNSW-calls-for-mining-curbs-in-sydney-s-catchment>

'Worse than expected': WaterNSW calls for mining curbs in Sydney's catchment

Peter Hannam, SMH, 14/05/2019

NSW's top water agency has called for curbs on two big coal mines in Sydney's catchment, saying millions of litres of water are being lost daily and that environmental impacts are likely breaching approval conditions.

In a submission to an independent expert panel, WaterNSW said "there is now strong evidence that the environmental consequences in the Special Areas are greater than predicted when the mining was proposed and approved".

Among the recommendations, WaterNSW called for restrictions on future mining at South32's Dendrobium and Peabody Coal's Metropolitan underground mines.

It also called for extra monitoring and analysis to be paid for by miners, and for estimates to be made on how much water was being lost to reservoirs through cracks - caused by subsidence after the coal is extracted - reaching the surface.

WaterNSW noted mining-related surface water losses at Dendrobium alone were as much as 1.28 billion litres a year. ...

Planning Minister Rob Stokes said, "We are committed to protecting our precious water resources right across NSW and will give detailed consideration to the recommendations of the panel once its final report is complete in August."

Labor's energy spokesman, Adam Searle, said the Berejiklian government "needs to urgently disclose to the community how it intends to respond" to the submissions and reassure the public "there is no risk to the supply of drinking water". ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-15/olive-downs-mine-approval-queensland-environmental-groups/1114706>

Pembroke Resources Olive Downs mine approval may impact koala habitat the size of Sydney Harbour

Isobel Roe & Talissa Siganto, ABC, 15/05/2019

A new Queensland coal mine, about the same size as Adani's controversial project, did not draw opposition from environmentalists during the approval process, despite the possibility an expansive koala habitat the size of Sydney Harbour may be cleared.

Australian-based Pembroke Resources had its Bowen Basin mine approved by the state's independent coordinator-general on Tuesday and will start construction next year if the Federal Government gives it the go-ahead.

About 55 square kilometres of koala habitat will be cleared, with the coordinator-general recommending a significant offset to protect the vulnerable species.

The mine site, considered one of Australia's biggest, also includes 11 highly significant wetlands.

During the state's required public consultation process, not one environmental group made a submission.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) said it was spread too thin and had decided to target thermal coal projects. ...

Environmental group Lock The Gate Alliance campaigner, Carmel Flint, said the mine was not as problematic as Adani's project, which is slated for the virgin Galilee Basin. ...

The mine would create 13 open-cut pits over the course of the project.

Although 10 would be completely backfilled, three final voids would be left, covering around 10 per cent of the project site.

The coordinator-general's report said Pembroke Resources estimated it would cost \$3 billion to backfill the final voids to ground level, making the project economically unviable.

Lock the Gate campaigner Rick Humphries said: "When you have large unrehabilitated voids left at the end of a mine's life on flood plains the chances of flooding are very high risk".

"Those pit lakes that form, which are very contaminated and highly saline, get this flush of toxic material out into the rivers." ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/approval-provokes-adani-outburst/news-story/58db88cec9b3836c1cc9b45de5f38360>

Approval provokes Adani outburst

Perry Williams, The Australian, 15/05/2019

Queensland's coal wars have erupted after Adani warned the owner of a newly approved mine that it may still face lengthy delays before it can begin construction, reflecting its own frustrations with the Queensland government on its long-stalled Carmichael project.

The state's independent Coordinator-General yesterday approved one of the nation's biggest coalmines, the \$1 billion Olive Downs project, with its owner Pembroke Resources hopeful it can start construction later this year, with first production by the end of 2020.

However, Adani said given it received a similar sign-off from the state five years ago for its Galilee Basin mine and is still waiting for final sign-off, Pembroke should prepare for further hitches before it could proceed.

"Our advice to the Olive Downs team is 'don't get too excited and don't start popping the champagne corks yet, there is a long and twisting road of secondary approvals ahead' as the Premier has made it clear that the 'Adani standard' of late-notice reviews, and dragging out bureaucratic processes will be the new norm under her government," Adani said.

The extraordinary outburst reflected the deteriorating relationship between the Indian-owned miner and Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-15/queensland-mining-reputational-crisis-due-to-coal-survey-finds/11112234>

Queensland mining's reputation is in the pits due to coal, according to industry survey

Stephen Long, ABC, 15/05/2019

Secret research shows that the reputation of the mining industry is "nearing crisis" in Queensland, with a "decline in positive sentiment" and a "bulge in distrust", even among people who support the industry.

The study, carried out by market research company Ipsos for the Queensland Resources Council (QRC), found that "perceptions of the resources sector in Queensland are almost entirely based on strong negative perceptions of open-cut coal mining".

"[The industry's] wealth is strongly associated with self-interest, power and influence," the report read.

"The profits that the resources sector generates are considered short-term and benefiting the few at the expense of the 'rest of the country' and 'at the cost of our futures' ...

The results of the confidential research challenge the political wisdom that the electorate is divided between "coal-loving Queenslanders" and voters in southern states who want stronger action on climate change. ...

The findings of the study, billed as a "reputation deep dive", include:

- Only finance and aged care – industries whose conduct sparked royal commissions – have a more negative reputation than mining
- Tourism and agriculture are viewed more favourably, but mining is seen as a threat to their existence
- Renewable energy and sustainability are "top of mind" and seen as "a future we should all be embracing"
- The resources industry is "focused on continuing to mine rather than invest resources and money into progression of renewables"
- "The Government is not seen as taking a leadership role" on climate change policy
- The resources industry is "aligned with government in continuing reliance on coal power stations"
- The resources industry is seen as "unsustainable" and "its strong association with coal and traditional energy leaves it vulnerable to attack"

Without prompting, nearly one in five people said the resources industry "damages the environment" – almost as many as those who said it "supports the economy" or "creates jobs".

The research – and its leaking – comes amid divisions in the resources sector over the strenuous advocacy for coal mining by industry lobby groups, including the Minerals Council of Australia and the QRC. ...

The findings have been seized upon by advocates who want to shift away from fossil fuels.

"What stands out to me is that the QRC has done a great job of turning an entire sector into a conversation about coal," said Julien Vincent from Market Forces, a shareholder activist group that encourages divestment from fossil fuel interests.

"Unfortunately for them, Queenslanders clearly understand that coal is a polluting energy source that creates environmental damage and we need to move away from it."

Richard Dennis, the chief economist at The Australia Institute, said the mining lobby was trashing the reputation of the entire industry by aggressively promoting new coal mines and opposing action to combat climate change. ...

QRC chief executive Ian Macfarlane said in a press release that the latest research conducted by an independent research agency "reinforced the need for the sector to better explain its everyday importance, relevance and world-class environmental standards to all Queenslanders. ...

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihī/388521/maori-disappointed-ancestral-land-up-for-tender-for-oil-and-gas-drilling-in-taranaki>

Māori disappointed ancestral land up for tender for oil and gas drilling in Taranaki

Leigh-Marama McLachlan, Radio NZ, 05/05/2019

Iwi [Māori people] in Taranaki are upset the government has put their ancestral land up for oil and gas drilling.

The latest block offer, announced this week, covers 2200 square kilometres of land around Mt Taranaki.

Ngāti Ruanui chief executive Debbie Ngarewa-Packer said it stirred a feeling of anxiety they know too well.

"The whole community is caught up on what happens if they come. What happens if they are irresponsible around our wāhi tapu [sacred sites]?"



Oil and gas blocks up for tender in Taranaki, NZ.

Map: NZ Petroleum and Minerals

“What happens if they ruin our whenua [lands] and then go off when they have found nothing and dug holes everywhere? ...

Former Green Party candidate for Te Tai Hauāuru, Jack McDonald, is gutted with the offer, which covers his own tribal lands.

“It is a slap in the face that this so-called progressive government, which is meant to be taking a new approach to climate change and a new approach to Māori-Crown relations, would actually continue with this approach.”

The government aims to reduce New Zealand’s emissions to net zero by 2050. ...

<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/anti-csg-activists-say-santos-must-be-stopped>

Anti-CSG activists say Santos must be stopped

Marie Flood & Pip Hinman, *GreenLeft Weekly*, 10/05/2019

About 60 anti-coal seam gas campaigners gathered outside NSW parliament on May 7 to greet newly-elected MPs with a clear message: stop Santos’ Narabri Gas Project in the state’s north west.

The action was organised by Stop CSG Sydney and the Knitting Nannas and Friends.

Protesters received a positive response from some MPs, including the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party (SFF), the NSW Greens and an independent. ...

Actor Michael Caton, who has extensive knowledge of the Great Artesian Basin, also lent his support.

Raymond “Bubbly” Weatherall, a Gamilaraay man from the Gunu Gunu and the Biridja clans, said that communities working together had effectively put the industry on hold in NSW, and that would be needed to save the Pilliga from Santos’ efforts to convert it into a huge industrial gas field.

Weatherall called on MPs to listen to communities and support demands to protect water and land, and called on rally goers to continue united actions.

An impromptu choir, led by Patrick Hart and the Sydney Knitting Nannas, highlighted the risks of CSG, and called for a transition to renewable energy and an end to fossil-fuel energy.

The Sydney Nannas delivered a letter to the NSW planning minister Rob Stokes later that day, calling on him to demand the Department of Planning not pass the Santos Project assessment on to the Independent Planning Commission until Santos had responded to government requests for further information. ...

• *Marie Flood and Pip Hinman are active in Stop CSG Sydney.*

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-13/great-australian-bight-protesters-take-to-sea-in-norway/11106800>

Great Australian Bight oil-drilling opponents take protest to sea off Norway capital Oslo

Gabriella Marchant, *ABC*, 13/05/2019

More than 100 activists have braved the chilly waters off Oslo in a paddle-out protest against oil drilling proposed for the Great Australian Bight.

Norwegian oil company Equinor wants to search for oil off the coast of South Australia by the end of 2020, but needs approval from the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) to begin.

Local Norwegians joined an Australian delegation of Indigenous and environmental activists who had flown in to protest ahead of Equinor’s annual general meeting in Oslo on Wednesday.

Organiser Peter Dawson told the ABC it was the largest paddle-out demonstration ever held in Norway, even though the water was only 8 degrees Celsius.

“It was incredibly moving and heartening to see Norwegians not only paddling side by side with Australians, but

chanting ‘fight for the Bight’ as loud as they possibly could,” the Wiradjuri man said. ...

The Norwegian Government has a 67 per cent majority stake in Equinor.

“Norwegians are concerned that their state-owned oil company is planning to drill in a pristine marine wilderness area in Australia despite the obvious risks and the widespread community opposition,” Mr Dawson said. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/uschina-tariff-war-a-boon-for-gas-producers/news-story/db352aad6fff34071d945a8c423f7d8c>

US-China tariff war a boon for gas producers

Perry Williams, *The Australian*, 15/05/2019

Australian LNG producers may boost the value of their \$17 billion trade relationship with China following Beijing’s retaliatory move to raise tariffs on gas imports from the US, consultancy Wood Mackenzie says.

Gas exporters may win higher long-term contract prices with Beijing likely to snub deals with the US given heightened trade tensions and the ongoing tit-for-tat battle between the two economic superpowers. ...

Any hit to US projects would propel Woodside’s efforts to sell volumes from its Pluto and Scarborough projects in Western Australia and strengthen the economics of a Papua New Guinea LNG expansion, in which Santos and Oil Search have interests. ...

The move strengthens the hand of Australian LNG suppliers with China taking about a third of the nation’s gas exports, valued at almost \$17bn this year. ...

<https://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/validity-international-fracking-tribunal-debated/3728203/>

Validity of international fracking tribunal debated

Brooke Duncan, *The Chronicle*, 15/05/2019

The results of an international environmental report into fracking has been hotly debated between a Chinchilla activist and a gas industry group.

Chinchilla resident Shay Dougall has spent years of her life fighting the unconventional gas industry, and claims the findings from the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal on Human Rights, Fracking and Climate Change as a major win for her cause. ...

The tribunal handed down their report, calling for a worldwide ban on

fracking and claiming the unconventional oil and gas extraction industry had “violated the rights of humans and nature”.

However, the validity of the tribunal’s findings has been called into question by industry group Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association.

An APPEA spokesman said the tribunal was “not a credible forum, rather a front for biased activism against resource development.”

“There is no judicial merit and it mocks the accepted legal and scientific approach to these matters,” the spokesman said.

“Its process did not allow industry representation or credible, independent scientific evidence.

“Numerous scientific inquiries in Australia have and continue to find that the onshore natural gas industry, including hydraulic fracturing, is a safe and sustainable practice ...

Fracking has been hotly debated for decades, and Mrs Dougall believes the results of the tribunal, which claim, “the materials, and infrastructure of fracking inherently and necessarily violate human rights” is validation for her fight.

“Out of 17 government inquiries that have been held on this issue, that continuously failed to acknowledge the human rights aspect,” Mrs Dougall said.

“We’ve been justified, this is a real issue that must be addressed by the government when it addresses the economics.”

The timing of the report is uncanny, coming just months after the Queensland Government passed the Human Rights Bill.

Mrs Dougall said with the new Act, the tribunal report is a tool for landholders to use when negotiating with resource companies for compensation, because it acknowledges impacts currently not considered in those discussions.

Meanwhile, Mrs Dougall and others are investigating how the tribunal’s report could be used in a legal capacity.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-16/seismic-testing-fishing-impact-fears-in-bass-strait/11120274>

Oil company’s seismic testing approval creates waves in Tasmanian fishing industry

Alexandra Humphries, ABC, 16/05/2019

Tasmania’s fishing industry is “astounded” seismic testing has been given the green light by a national petroleum authority in Bass Strait as part of exploration plans by an oil and gas company.

Approval has been given to 3D Oil to use seismic testing when it explores for oil and gas reserves later this year in the Otway Basin, 18 kilometres west of King Island.

The approval was given this week by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA). ...

Researchers from the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) and Curtin University found in 2017 that noise from seismic airguns used for marine oil and gas exploration significantly increased mortality in scallops and zooplankton.

John Hammond, a longtime fisherman and chairman of the Tasmanian Scallop Association, said seismic testing would be “very destructive”.

After negotiations with 3D Oil, the company had changed some of its testing boundaries to help protect crab fisheries, but cray fishing was expected to be impacted.

“We’re a little piddly fishing industry you could say, facing the petrochemical giants,” he said.

“We’ve got no hope of stopping it.

“We do know that this is a very destructive process, and we can just hope for the best result we can get out of it by negotiating with them.”

Mr Hammond said the industry has pushed for the testing to be delayed until after rock lobsters have finished spawning, in about November.

Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council chief executive Julian Harrington said he was astounded that the proposal had been approved by NOPSEMA. ...

Tasmanian Greens Senator Nick McKim said there should be a moratorium on seismic testing until the impact is better known.

“Ultimately this is bad for our fisheries, it’s bad for our marine ecosystem, and we should not be prospecting for fossil fuels and mining for fossil fuels

in the middle of a climate emergency,” he said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/17/great-australian-bight-parties-soften-stance-as-voters-protest-over-drilling>

Great Australian Bight: parties soften stance as voters protest over drilling

Lisa Cox, The Guardian, 17/05/2019

A last-ditch effort to win votes in key seats in South Australia and Victoria has prompted both major parties to make changes to their policies on oil drilling in the Great Australian Bight.

The resources minister Matt Canavan – who has previously said offshore oil exploration should be a national priority – said on Thursday a re-elected Coalition government would commission an independent audit of the oil regulator’s consideration of exploration in the Bight.

Canavan and the environment minister Melissa Price said in a statement they recognised “the Great Australian Bight and the surrounding region are important to local communities, and the fishing and tourism industries” ...

Labor meanwhile updated its proposal to conduct an independent scientific study of the impacts of an oil spill in the Bight to add that such a study would be completed before the regulator, Nopsema, made a decision on any project. ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-17/gas-exports-blamed-for-electricity-price-rises-job-losses/11121120>

Gas exports blamed for soaring electricity prices and job losses

Daniel Ziffer, ABC, 17/05/2019

Australians are reeling from electricity prices that have soared more than 130 per cent since 2015. Among the reasons for the rocket-rise: profiteering by wholesalers and the so-called ‘gold-plating’ of the electricity distribution network. But the real culprit? Gas.

“It’s the gas price that determines electricity price on the east coast, but neither [political] party wants to own up to that because they’ve both been culpable in allowing this situation to develop,” MacroBusiness economist David Llewellyn-Smith said. ...

Australia is now exporting so much gas there is not enough available at a reasonable cost to create electricity domestically or for it to be used by industry. That is causing huge problems for anyone who pays a power bill, as well as local manufacturers.

“Since 2014, 2015 all the price rises we’ve seen in both gas and electricity have resulted from this crazy situation where we’re exporting gas,” Mr Llewellyn-Smith said.

“Gas sets the marginal cost of electricity in the east coast power market. ... If the gas price goes up, your power price goes up.” ...

Exacerbating the problem, locked-in contracts to ship gas to Asia have meant scant supply here and steep price rises for companies such as petrochemical manufacturer Qenos. ...

The gas shortage is a long way past being a theoretical problem. Qenos has let go of 15 per cent of its workforce in just the past year-and-a-half. ...

The gas shortage is not an issue in Western Australia. Its state government reserved 15 per cent of the output from its new gas projects for domestic use.

It is now wooing companies on the eastern seaboard to set up their manufacturing bases in the west. ...

The situation has become so dire there are now proposals for LNG import terminals in both NSW and Victoria. If they are built, a mind-boggling situation might occur.

Gas drilled offshore in the Bass Strait or onshore in Queensland would be refined and piped to Gladstone. There it would be frozen to -162 degrees Celsius, transforming it from a gas to a liquid for export.

Loaded on to a ship, it would exit Australian through the Great Barrier Reef and travel to Japan, where it would be taken onshore and turned back into gas.

Then it would be frozen again, shipped back to the new import terminals in Australia, turned back into a gas and re-inserted back into the national gas grid. Gas from WA and the USA may also use the import terminals.

“It’s absolutely insane,” Mr Llewellyn-Smith said, exasperated by the situation. ..

Like the others, Qenos boss Mr Bell has been warning about the issue for a decade, to no avail.

“Well it seems crazy a country like Australia, with so much hydrocarbon, is in a situation where we’ve got boats going out of Gladstone loaded up with LNG and they’re passing boats coming into Australia loaded up with LNG to meet our domestic market requirements,” he said.



The PNG LNG site north of Port Moresby. Photo: Supplied

<https://www.afr.com/business/energy/gas/santos-to-pay-270m-for-stake-in-png-gas-20190516-p51nwn>

Santos to pay \$270m for stake in PNG gas

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 16/05/2019

A long-awaited, \$270 million deal for Santos to buy into the P’nyang gas field in Papua New Guinea has put another brick in place for a proposed \$US14 billion expansion of LNG, which however remains under threat due to political machinations in the country.

Santos, an existing partner in the producing PNG LNG venture, has been seeking for several years to also take a stake in the 4.4 trillion cubic feet field that will underpin the construction of a third production unit at the plant north of Port Moresby.

It is buying its 14.3 per cent interest in the PRL3 permit containing the field from the three existing partners – ExxonMobil, Oil Search and JX Nippon’s Merlin Petroleum – with Exxon to sell the biggest chunk. The price implies a value for the whole asset of \$US1.3 billion.

However the sale remains conditional on a decision by all the PNG LNG partners to proceed with engineering and design work on their expansion, a decision that has been thrown into doubt - or at least put at risk of delay - by political uncertainty in PNG...

<https://www.michaelwest.com.au/gas-deal-a-massive-transfer-of-wealth-from-gas-customers-to-china-and-singapore/>

Gas deal: “a massive transfer of wealth from gas customers to China and Singapore”

Michael West, michaelwest.com, 13/05/2019

I went along to attend a public hearing at the Australian Energy Markets Commission (AEMC) in Castlereagh

St Sydney last week and was stopped from going up in the lift by an AEMC executive manning the lobby. ...

What is at stake here that a government body is barring a journalist from attending public hearings?

The Commission is pushing ahead with its approval of a gas pipeline in Northern Australia via a transaction which would not only force gas prices even higher but open up three new huge tracts of land for gas fracking: these are the Betaloo Basin in NT and the Galilee and North Bowen basins in Queensland.

As the national body which sets the rules for energy markets in this country, the AEMC is, more than any other single institution, responsible for the rampant rise in energy prices – both gas and electricity – which will ensure a record number of families and pensioners shiver through winter this year. ...

Upstairs at the hearing a few minutes after yours truly had been blocked, proceedings kicked off with Bruce Robertson, a gas analyst, fronting Chairman John Price and his three commissioners. ...

“What the AEMC is presiding over is a massive wealth transfer from the people of Australia, the gas consumers in Australia, to the government of Singapore and the government of China. This wealth transfer amounts to \$2.7 billion, just over that, over the life of the 15-year project, if the project is expanded to the levels that Jemena expects,” Robertson said. ...

Following Bruce Robertson, environmental lawyer David Barnden gave evidence, questioning how the AEMC could make an important public inter-



Greenpeace protesters hanging from the Sydney Harbour Bridge, calling on the PM to declare a climate emergency. Photo: Greenpeace

est decision devoid of contemplating climate change. Barnden also brought up the Tax Office investigation of Jemena. ...

Jemena's major shareholders are State Grid Corporation of China and Singapore Power. Its directors include Federal Liberal Party President and influential former premier of NSW Nick Griener. ...

NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.echo.net.au/2019/05/secord-saffin-fight-one-nation-nuclear-power/>

Secord and Saffin fight One Nation over nuclear power

Echonet Daily, 16/05/2019

NSW State Labor parliamentarians Walt Secord and Janelle Saffin have vowed to work together to fight One Nation senator Mark Latham's legislation to set up a nuclear power industry in NSW.

The Uranium Mining and Nuclear Facilities (Prohibitions) Repeal Bill 2019 was the first bill introduced by Mark Latham into the new State Parliament on May 7.

It reads: 'a bill for an Act to repeal the Uranium Mining and Nuclear Facilities (Prohibitions) Act 1986 and make consequential amendments to other legislation'.

In 2012, the then-O'Farrell government (Liberal/National) passed the Mining Legislation Amendment (Uranium Exploration Bill) 2012 to allow exploration for uranium in NSW. At the time, the Liberal-Nationals claimed

that it would only allow exploration and not the creation of an industry.

Secord and Saffin say that Mark Latham's bill follows a push last year by Nationals leader and Deputy Premier John Barilaro, to establish a nuclear power industry in NSW.

They also say that Mr Barilaro also completed a taxpayer-funded visit to the United States where he was drumming up interest in US investors to build nuclear reactors in NSW. At the time, 18 sites were identified as possible sites for nuclear power plants in NSW- including a 250km stretch of coast from Port Macquarie to north of Grafton.

Mr Secord, who is Shadow Minister for the North Coast and Upper House deputy Opposition leader and Ms Saffin, who is the Country Labor MP for Lismore said they would fight the bill. ...

Saffin says nuclear reactors would tarnish NSW's clean and green image, and threaten the reputation and emerging markets of many north coast primary industries.

"The NSW Coalition Government has always harboured dreams of nuclear power plants in NSW, having first proposed a site for Jervis Bay on the South Coast in the 1960s."

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.smb.com.au/environment/climate-change/protesters-scale-sydney-harbour-bridge-to-declare-climate-emergency-20190514-p51mzn.html>

Protesters scale Sydney Harbour Bridge to declare 'climate emergency'

Natassia Chrysanthos, SMH, 14/05/2019

Protesters have scaled the Sydney Harbour Bridge on Tuesday morning, with environmental group Greenpeace saying they were calling on Prime Minister Scott Morrison to "declare a climate emergency".

A NSW Police spokesman said there was an operation under way at 6am after a "number of people were detected" on the bridge.

At 7am, three people could be seen abseiling from the bridge holding small banners that read "100% renewables".

One lane of traffic on the bridge was temporarily closed, but re-opened minutes later and there were no traffic delays.

The protest was co-ordinated by environmental group Greenpeace Australia Pacific, which said the protesters were "specialist trained climbers". ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/may/14/climate-modelling-used-to-attack-labor-policies-a-complete-outlier-analysis-finds>

Climate modelling used to attack Labor policies a 'complete outlier', analysis finds

Lisa Cox, The Guardian, 14/05/2019

Modelling by BAEconomics that has been used to attack Labor's climate policies is a "complete outlier" according to an analysis of more than 20 other recent modelling exercises on the effect of higher climate targets on the economy and electricity sector.

The Australia Institute has published a review comparing the work of Brian Fisher with 19 other reports and three Treasury models that examined the potential effects of higher climate targets. ...

The analysis found none of the reports showed greater action to address climate change was "economy wrecking" and that higher targets had, at most, "a very small impact on GDP growth compared to no action". ...

The Australia Institute analysis finds that economy-wide models in other reports put the impact on GDP growth in every scenario at no more than 1.8% of GDP, but Fisher's models put lost GDP growth at levels as high as 22%. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/16/coalition-climate-policy-heavy-industry-increase-emissions-nearly-third>

Coalition's climate policy has allowed heavy industry to increase emissions by nearly a third

Adam Morton, *The Guardian*, 16/05/2019

Heavy industry companies in Australia have been given the green light to increase their greenhouse gas emissions by nearly a third without penalty under the Coalition's climate change policy.

An analysis of a scheme known as the "safeguard mechanism", part of the Coalition's Direct Action policy, found the government regulator has approved a 32% increase in how much large industrial facilities are allowed to emit each year since the policy was introduced. ...

The increases have been signed off despite the safeguard mechanism having been promised to limit emissions from big polluters to ensure they do not just cancel out cuts paid for by taxpayers through the other half of Direct Action, the emissions reduction fund.

The analysis by RepuTex, an energy and emissions research firm, found the increase in recorded emissions was set to wipe out the entire \$2.55bn committed to pollution cuts over the past five years. ...

The progressive thinktank the Australia Institute produced broadly similar results to RepuTex in a separate analysis of the safeguard mechanism, finding it does almost nothing to limit emissions.

Tom Swann, senior researcher with the institute, said LNG facilities were responsible for the largest breaches of emissions limits. Chevron's Gorgon development in the Pilbara, site of a long promised but to date unsuccessful carbon capture and storage project, and Woodside's North West Shelf project emitted 680,000 tonnes and 160,000 tonnes beyond their limits respectively. ...

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/may/10/scott-morrison-pledges-30m-to-fund-new-mining-school-in-queensland>

Scott Morrison pledges \$30m to fund new mining school in Queensland

Naaman Zhou, *The Guardian*, 10/05/2019

Scott Morrison has announced \$30m to fund a new school in Queensland to study mining.

Central Queensland University will set up a new school of mines and manufacturing at their campuses in Gladstone and Rockhampton, if the Coalition wins government on Saturday 18 May.

The university will launch new courses and degrees related to the mining industry, and will construct brand new buildings, new facilities and new equipment.

A new school of mines will be created in Rockhampton, and a new manufacturing training centre created in Gladstone, according to the plan. ...

In regional Queensland, mining meets climate change head on

Greg Brown & Richard Ferguson, *The Australian*, 11/05/2019

Campaigning in regional Queensland yesterday, Scott Morrison and Bill Shorten delivered starkly different messages; the Coalition pushing coalmining and Labor spruiking its climate change credentials. ...

Capricornia MP Michelle Landry, a vocal supporter of the Adani coalmine, is pushing for a coal-fired power station to be built in her electorate.

She said a \$2 billion coal-fired power station in Collinsville proposed by Shine Energy – on which the government is doing a \$10 million feasibility study – may need to be indemnified from changes to emissions reduction targets. ...

The Opposition Leader spent yesterday in Cairns in the LNP-held seat of Leichhardt, and promoted his climate change agenda at an aquarium. ...

"The Liberal Party will only get serious on climate change when they lose an election." ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/federal-election-2019-yougov-poll-shows-backlash-to-antiadani-convoy/news-story/>

Federal election 2019: YouGov poll shows backlash to anti-Adani convoy

Renee Viellaris, *Courier-Mail*, 14/05/2019

The Greens have been whacked by a Bob Brown backlash after Queensland voters were left repelled by their anti-Adani convoy.

An exclusive YouGov Galaxy poll reveals more than one-third of voters are now less likely to vote Green because of the blow-in protesters trying

to stop Queenslanders from getting much-needed jobs.

LNP tacticians believe the Greens have scored an own-goal for themselves and Labor, and have helped Coalition marginal seat-holders in Flynn, Capricornia and Dawson.

It is understood the flashpoint has also helped the LNP's candidate Phil Thompson in Herbert, which is held by Labor's Cathy O'Toole, who won in 2016 by just 37 votes. ...

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/federal-election-2019/labor-s-1-5b-plan-to-unlock-gas-would-create-more-emissions-than-adani-coal-mine-experts-say-20190513-p51m-wa.html>

Labor's \$1.5b plan to 'unlock' gas would create more emissions than Adani coal mine, experts say

Peter Hannam & Cole Latimer, *Brisbane Times*, 14/05/2019

Labor's \$1.5 billion plan to "unlock" Northern Territory and Queensland gas would create far more emissions in Australia than Adani's coal mine, making it much tougher for a Shorten government to meet the nation's Paris climate goals.

The proposal to help fund gas pipelines linking northern gasfields would allow pilot projects to be expanded, adding the equivalent of millions of tonnes of carbon-dioxide emissions a year. ...

Tim Forcey, a former BHP engineer and Melbourne University energy researcher, said the leakage rates from gas fields in the United States are often much higher than the 1.7 per cent estimate, and so the emissions impact may be higher still from the new fields that would follow Labor's proposed pipeline plan. ...

Mr Forcey said "the time is not far away" when the gas sector contributed more greenhouse gases in Australia than the coal industry. "There's nothing stopping the rampant development of the oil and gas industry."

The Greens have signalled they would press Labor on the issue if they held the balance of power in the Senate. ...

"Even if most of the gas is exported, fracking leaks so much toxic methane into the atmosphere that this project will be a giant taxpayer-funded carbon bomb." ...

News this week ... from previous page

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/14/the-liberal-partys-rank-opportunism-spells-danger-for-australian-energy-policy>

The Liberal party's rank opportunism spells danger for Australian energy policy

Richard Denniss, *The Guardian*, 15/05/2019

It's now 12 years (and seven prime ministers) since John Howard promised to introduce a price on carbon and – despite emissions having increased to a new high and a number of big coal fired power stations having shut down – Australia still doesn't have anything approaching a coherent climate and energy policy. ...

The Liberal party was once the party of optimistic science and economic rationalism, but in the past 15 years they have transformed themselves into a curmudgeonly group of technophobes, determined to lengthen the life of coal via the subsidies they once raged against. Their recent rants about electric cars must have sent shockwaves through the Australian business community. Not only was a major political party declaring war on the kind of technological innovation that keeps consumers spending, the Liberals were declaring war on their own policy position simply to differentiate themselves from Labor. ...

Labor's current climate policy is hardly radical and it is hardly new. In fact, Labor's climate policy is based on the Coalition's own national energy guarantee ...

But, as with their faith in electric cars, Morrison and Frydenberg now talk as if they have lost faith in the Neg they once promoted. Which presumably means that, whoever forms government this weekend, we can expect the Coalition to keep playing silly buggers with climate and energy policy.

Even if Labor wins the election on the weekend, there is no chance that they

will hold a majority of seats in the senate. This means that the Liberals will, yet again, be in a position to play a constructive or destructive role. ...

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

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/shorten-declares-climate-emergency-as-top-priority-for-labor-89384/>

Shorten declares climate "emergency" as top priority for Labor

Sophie Vorrath, *Renew Economy*, 16/05/2019

Federal Labor leader Bill Shorten has referred to climate change as an "emergency," in his final formal pitch to voters ahead of Saturday's federal election.

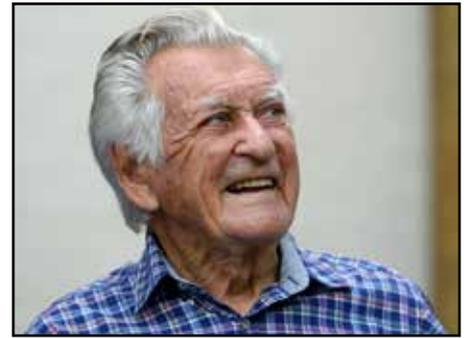
"If you vote Labor we will deliver the change that the nation deserves from day one," the Opposition Leader said in his speech at Bowman Hall in Blacktown, New South Wales, on Thursday.

"We will convene Parliament to prioritise real action on climate change... I promise that we will send a message to the world, that when it comes to climate change Australia is back in the fight!," he said. ...

"It is not the Australian way to avoid and duck the hard fights. We will take this emergency seriously, and we will not just leave it to other countries or to the next generation.

"We are up for real action on climate change now if we get elected on Saturday."

The use of that word follows the historic moment earlier this month, when a bipartisan UK Parliament passed a national declaration of an Environment and Climate Emergency. ...



<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/may/17/bob-brown-hawke-was-our-environmental-prime-minister>

Hawke was our environmental prime minister

Bob Brown, *The Guardian*, 17/05/2019

Bob Hawke was the environmental prime minister of Australia. His legacy includes Landcare and the listing of the Queensland's Daintree wet tropics, Shark Bay in Western Australia, Uluru-Kata Tjuta in the Northern Territory, the Gondwana rainforests of the New South Wales-Queensland border region and large extensions to both the Northern Territory's Kakadu and the Tasmanian wilderness world heritage areas. ...

At the 25th anniversary of the saving of the Franklin in Hobart in 2008, Hawke lambasted the Coalition's lack of concern for the heating planet:

"And as you look at the arguments and the positions of political parties today you see a complete replication of what we experienced back there in 1983. The conservatives: they never change, they never learn. What was their argument back then? You can't do this, it will cost jobs. It will cost economic growth. You can't do it, you mustn't do it."

Hawke did it and, were he prime minister in 2019, I reckon the very unpopular Adani coalmine proposal would be headed for the bin.

FFB

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