

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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Santos: 'low-carbon' claim debunked

By Anna Christie

A new report based on well data in the Pilliga challenges Santos claims that "natural gas" from the Narrabri Gas Project is a low-carbon transitional fuel.

Santos has represented to its shareholders and regulators, in order to justify the Narrabri Gas Project, that the 850-well coal seam gas project represents a low carbon transitional fuel for New South Wales. The company states in its recent 2020 Climate Change Report that "natural gas produces 50% less greenhouse gas emissions than coal when used to generate electricity".

However, a new report published by Coonabarabran-based community group North West Protection Advocacy reveals that when factoring in the previously unaccounted-for carbon dioxide emissions of the Narrabri gas project, Santos' claims are unable to be substantiated.

Claims by Santos that natural gas has 50% of the emissions intensity of coal rely on the assumption that there is no carbon dioxide (CO₂) released to the atmosphere during the production of natural gas. This is certainly not the case with gas at Narrabri.

CO₂ average 25-30%; some at 90%

The North West Protection Advocacy report "Narrabri Gas Project: Greenhouse gas claims refuted" released this week calculates, using extensive available data from wells in and around the Santos licences, that the average CO₂ content in gas across the Narrabri project is 25-30%, with some wells displaying 90% CO₂. The high CO₂ and nitrogen content is a factor which



A flare and compressor station in the Pilliga. Photo: North West Protection Advocacy

has the potential to materially increase the emissions from and the cost of production of the highly-opposed gas project.

In its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Santos states that it "assumes" Narrabri gas contains an average of 10% CO₂.

"Narrabri gas appears to have higher CO₂ than Santos has assumed, increasing the emissions factor associated with its extraction", says Dr Andrew Grogan, an international and Australian energy industry veteran with decades of expertise in the gas industry and capture and storage, who was engaged by North West Protection Advocacy to assess the well data.

"This calls into question the quality of the resource and the cost of developing it. Santos would need to extract and vent this CO₂ in order to meet

user and NSW pipeline requirements, and resulting in large greenhouse gas emissions due to the vented carbon dioxide."

Dr Grogan says, "The implications of the high CO₂ for Santos' greenhouse gas emissions and the project economics are significant. Examination of the data reveals in-ground CO₂ averaging more than twice that assumed by the company in its EIS."

1 million tonnes CO₂ annually

"For 70 petajoules of sales gas, in excess of one million tonnes per annum of carbon dioxide would be a by-product of coal seam gas production at the Narrabri Gas Project, if approved," he says.

High CO₂ levels in coal seams of Narrabri-Pilliga Forest were publicly flagged

• Continued p2

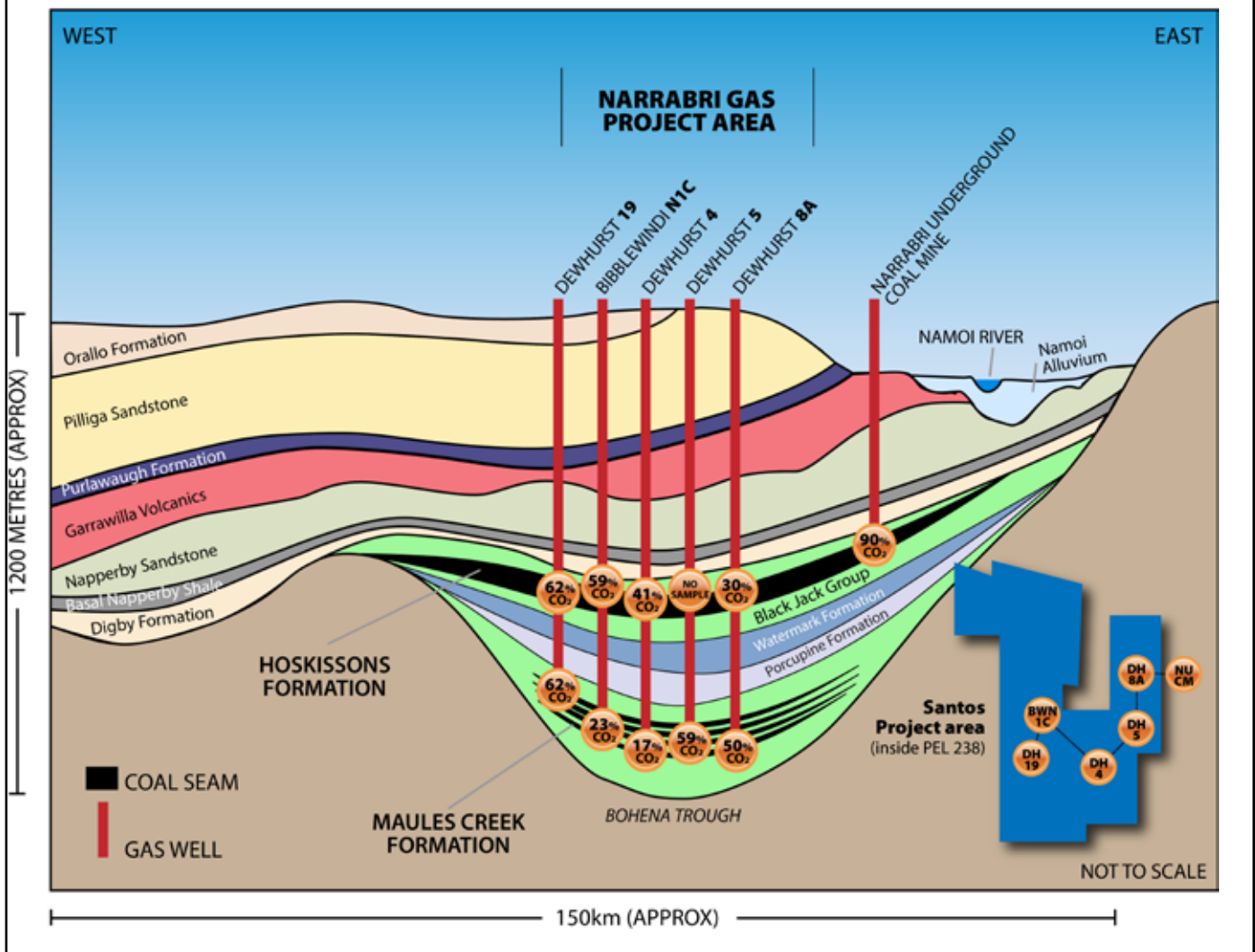
• **P3: Santos won't join a greener economy**

• **P4: Whitehaven fails to offset destruction**

• **P5: Woodside gets tick for carbon bomb gasfield**

CO₂ CONTENT IN THE COAL SEAMS THAT SANTOS ARE TARGETTING IN THE NARRABRI PROJECT

Well data spread across the project area, showing very high CO₂ in both shallow (Black Jack Group) and deeper (Maules Creek Formation) coal seams targetted by Santos for the project.



• Continued from p1

by Whitehaven Coal in 2010. Whitehaven indicated in an Environmental Impact Assessment for its Narrabri coal mine that gas from the coal seam averaged 90% CO₂ and 10% CH₄.

“The fact that Whitehaven is venting 90% CO₂ gas directly into the atmosphere from a coal seam at Narrabri Underground, and the knowledge that Santos is mining for gas in the same coal seam, was the impetus for us to analyse all publicly available Well Completion Reports with gas composition data on DIGS (geoscience.nsw), drilled and tested over a period between 1998 and 2014 from the Gunnedah Basin,” says Johanna Evans of North West Protection Advocacy.

A member of the group’s environmental informatics team, she trawled through publicly available data on Gunnedah Basin CSG wells, across 26 wellbores in PEL 238. The data shows that high CO₂ in the coal seam gas extends across much of the project

area, and not just at the perimeter of the project area, as previously stated by Santos.

Narrabri gas as dirty as coal

The conclusion, according to Dr Grogan, is that “Applying internationally accepted factors for fugitive methane emissions for gas production and taking into account the 25%-30% CO₂ content, total greenhouse gas emissions from the actual production and use for electricity generation of gas in the coal seams at Narrabri would actually approach those of coal.”

Santos states in its 2020 *Climate Change Report* that carbon capture and storage (CCS) is “critical technology to limit global temperature increases to well below 2 degrees Celsius”.

Announcing the Moomba CCS venture, Santos CEO Kevin Gallagher referred to its purpose to sequester CO₂ from the Moomba gas fields, with no reference to Narrabri.

There are no reservoirs near Narrabri that could be used to store CO₂ and no economic way to transport it to Moomba. Narrabri CO₂ would simply be vented into the atmosphere, contradicting claims that Narrabri gas is a clean transitional fuel to a low-carbon economy.

In the lead up to the Santos Annual General Meeting on April 3, 2020, shareholders might have been inclined to ask why the high CO₂ content of the gas and associated emissions at Narrabri have not been openly disclosed by the company and how this affects Santos’ portrayal of Narrabri gas being a clean transitional fuel contributing to emissions reductions.

• Readers can refer to the North West Protection Advocacy which contains all relevant gas composition data from the Narrabri-Pilliga gas wells sampled:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/a82sd53dyjqpxi/AAC-Q8ZW_CTDwhTYHpDmE7ovAa?dl=0

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Santos shows no ability to join green economy

By Market Forces

At its annual general meeting last week, one of Australia's biggest gas companies, Santos, proved it has no future in the clean, green economy we need to rapidly transition to.

At the AGM, Santos fought tooth and nail against a shareholder proposal calling on the company to align with the climate goals of the Paris Agreement.

This proposal received a record level of support for a shareholder resolution requesting Paris-alignment, with 43% of investors voting in favour.

Santos' opposition to the shareholder resolution calling for Paris-alignment demonstrates the company has no ability or willingness to transition to a business model consistent with holding global warming to 1.5°C.

The 'base case' scenario that underpins Santos' asset valuations and strategy is aligned with Australia's current emissions reduction policy, which is consistent with at least 3°C of global warming.

There is no justification for super funds continuing to invest our retirement savings in this company, whose business model relies on the failure of the Paris Agreement.

The COVID-19 health crisis forced Santos' AGM to be held online. This meant that shareholders and proxies were required to submit questions online, some of which were answered by the Santos board.

However, some questions posed by representatives of communities impacted by Santos' dirty gas operations were left unanswered by the company. It appears the company took advantage of the changed circumstances to deny shareholders and

affected community members their rights to challenge the board over Santos' impacts.

Polly Cutmore, a Gomerai Traditional Owner from Moree in NSW submitted a question asking Santos to drop its dirty Narrabri gas project, which threatens precious country and water. The company did not even acknowledge Polly's question, let alone respond to it.

Santos did take a question from health professionals over the climate impacts of the company's gas expansion plans, as well as local health impacts of its fracking operations and plans. However, further questions on this issue were ignored.

The company's auditors were also questioned over Santos' highly optimistic oil price assumptions, with shareholders concerned these inflate Santos' asset valuations, and fail to present a true and fair view of the company's financial position.

More Santos news: NT move welcomed

Territory pastoralists and Native Title holders have welcomed Santos' announcement that it will abandon its exploration and fracking program for the McArthur Basin "beyond 2020".

Speaking at the company's online annual general meeting today, chair Keith Spence cited a combination of delayed drilling activities in 2019 and the Covid-19 situation for the decision.

The announcement comes after fellow fracking companies Origin Energy and Empire Energy recently announced they would indefinitely halt drilling operations in the NT.

Call to halt hearings

Lock the Gate Alliance has renewed its calls for any public hearing associated with Santos' Narrabri coal seam gas project to be put on hold, following the latest public health restrictions put in place to respond to the coronavirus crisis.

Earlier this month, NSW Planning Minister Rob Stokes directed the Independent Planning Commission to proceed with public hearings, despite the health crisis and associated restrictions on public gatherings and unnecessary travel.

Since then, at least 1553 people have written to Mr Stokes, urgently calling on him to delay the public hearings until the health crisis has passed.

The Alliance believes the release of the Department of Planning's "assessment report" on the project is imminent which would trigger the need for public hearings to be held.

Among the groups to have sent the Minister a letter is the North West Alliance, a network of community groups in North West NSW. Mullaey farmer Margaret Fleck said it was negligent and irresponsible for Mr Stokes to direct the IPC to proceed with the hearing.

"Almost 23,000 people made submissions on this project. The public is simply not going to have a fair and just hearing of objections to this gasfield if the hearing takes place during this health crisis," she said.

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Back door for frackers

Geological surveys for gas in the northern Perth Basin are likely a back-door way for the Western Australia Government to facilitate fracking in the region, according to Lock the Gate Alliance.

The surveys would cover a massive area of land, stretching about 97,000 hectares across the shires of Irwin, Three Springs, Mingenew, and Carnamah.

Up to 1,000 hectares of vegetation would also be cleared just for the seismic work.

While the overview published on the Environmental Protection Authority's website this week references conventional gas, Lock the Gate WA coordinator Jarrad Thomas said there was little reason to believe companies would refrain from fracking if it was required to access shale or tight gas.

"Gas companies that have been exploring in the northern Perth Basin

have failed to rule out fracking," he said.

"The McGowan Government's decision to overturn the moratorium on fracking in 2018 means that there is no regulation stopping these companies if unconventional gas reserves are found.

"We know there are shale and tight gas reserves here, and that companies would need to frack to extract that gas.

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Whitehaven fails to offset destruction

Maules Creek Mine. Photo: Whitehaven Coal



Legal action has been launched against Whitehaven Coal for failing to secure the necessary biodiversity offsets for its Maules Creek coal mine.

Among the federal environmental conditions applied to the project in 2013 was that the company offset the destruction of 5,532 hectares of endangered Grassy Whitebox Woodland.

The action was brought against the company by the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) on behalf of the South East Forest Rescue.

Whitehaven had until midnight on March 31, 2020, to secure the necessary biodiversity offsets, however this didn't happen.

CEO of the EDO, David Morris, which is representing SEFR, said, "The recent Australian bushfires devastated threatened species and native habitat across the country. Protecting our unique landscapes has never been more important. That is why we are proud to represent SEFR in taking the brave step of pursuing this matter in the Federal Court."

Scott Danes, from South East Forest Rescue, which has launched the legal action said, "Whitehaven Coal has cleared almost all of the critically endangered Grassy Whitebox Woodland on the site, but more than five years after the mine began construction, the company has still not delivered its promised biodiversity offsets.

"Mining companies are not above the law. The Maules Creek coal mine has done enormous damage to biodiversity in the Leard forest.

"This is not even the first time Whitehaven has failed to meet the offset date. The date has been extended twice since the original approval."

Ros Druce, who lives on her family property at Maules Creek, said, "In the beginning, I could hear the bulldozers. It was just devastating.

Disrespectful to community

"The company's behaviour has just been totally disrespectful to the community and the environment.

"On behalf of the community, I asked Whitehaven multiple times about this at the Community Consultative Committee meetings, but the company is very rarely forthcoming with answers.

"This was part of the company's consent conditions, that these offset properties were procured in perpetuity, and it's still ongoing due to extension after extension by the Department of Planning."

David Morris of the EDO said, "SEFR is seeking declarations from the Federal Court that Whitehaven has breached, and will continue to breach, its federal approval conditions by failing to secure some 5,532 hectares of box-gum grassy woodland.

"Our client also seeks orders requiring that the biodiversity offsets are

secured and independently verified before further clearing goes ahead."

Biodiversity offsets a failure

"The use of biodiversity 'offsets' as a tool to address the impacts of mining and other developments is failing us, failing future generations and our precious plants and animals", said Morris. "It condemns forests and wildlife to 'death by a thousand cuts' because it allows clearing of sites now, on the promise of something else being secured in the future."

Whitehaven's Maules Creek coal mine is a prime example of why biodiversity offsetting doesn't work.

In 2013, Whitehaven gained approval for the mine on the condition that it obtain biodiversity offsets to compensate for clearing the iconic and critically endangered box gum grassy woodland, more formally known as White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland. Seven years on, it still has not secured those offsets, in the order of some 5,532 hectares. Meanwhile, the bulldozing has continued.

The company has now applied for its third extension of time to comply with the offsetting conditions in its federal approval.

Woodside gets tick for Scarborough carbon bomb

A statement from the Commonwealth offshore oil and gas regulator (NOPSEMA) announcing approval for Woodside's Scarborough LNG development has drawn strong criticism from conservation groups.

The Conservation Council of WA (CCWA) has vowed to continue to challenge the project which the group claims are part of the most polluting fossil fuel development in Australia's history.

The Scarborough offshore gasfield development is one part of Woodside's proposed \$50bn Burrup Hub LNG project. Analysis released by the Conservation Council and the Clean State project earlier this year revealed that the combined project would have a footprint of 6 billion tonnes (gigatonnes) of carbon pollution, equivalent to four Adani-sized coal mines or 35 new coal-fired power stations every year for 50 years.

Regulator's credibility questioned

CCWA Director Piers Verstegen said the statement from the Commonwealth oil and gas regulator NOPSEMA was extraordinary, raising significant questions and calls into question the credibility and independence of the regulator.

"This Scarborough project is part of the most polluting fossil fuel mega-project in Australia's history which would be especially damaging to the climate, and to Australia's and international efforts to cut pollution.

"The statement from NOPSEMA announcing approval for Scarborough reads more like a public relations document from Woodside.

"The statement reeks of political interference, and fundamentally calls into question NOPSEMA's credibility and independence as a regulator.

"The statement claims without evidence that LNG produced by the Scarborough project will be contributing to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. This is a public relations line straight from the oil and gas lobby which has no evidence to support it and has no place in a statement from a regulator.

"We question whether there has been any attempt to properly understand and assess the carbon pollution that would result from this development.



Woodside's Scarborough offshore gasfield would pipe gas to the Pluto LNG facility (pictured). Photo: Woodside

"The statement from NOPSEMA strongly suggests that there has been political interference in this assessment process, raising further doubts about whether the proper and appropriate legal process has been followed in making this decision.

"If approvals have been given without following the correct legal process, or relying on false or incomplete information then there is a strong likelihood that they will be challenged in the courts. This prospect makes the approval announced today highly uncertain.

"The Commonwealth approval has been issued despite significant uncertainties surrounding state approval for the Scarborough development, including for the processing of the gas that would be produced from the Scarborough field.

"The state environmental approval for the Scarborough development is currently under appeal. There are also legal questions surrounding the state approval to process Scarborough gas through the Pluto LNG processing facility and this is a matter that continues to be under active consideration by the state EPA. At a minimum, a revised Greenhouse Gas Management plan must be assessed by the EPA before any gas processing can occur.

Greenhouse gas emissions ignored

"Unbelievably, it appears that none of the state or Commonwealth assessment processes for the Scarborough gas development have considered the massive greenhouse gas emissions that

would result from processing the gas here in WA or the 'Scope 3' emissions from burning the gas overseas," said Mr Verstegen.

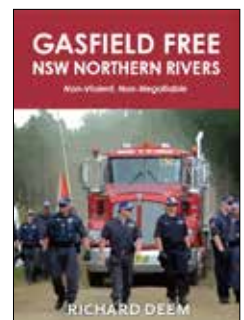
"We will continue to engage in a robust way with these assessment processes, including through the courts if necessary, to ensure that proper, independent assessments are undertaken and that the massive impacts on our climate and environment from these projects are not simply ignored.

"In the meantime, Woodside shareholders and investors should be put on notice that the Scarborough development is a highly risky proposition. The lack of disclosure and assessment of carbon pollution, combined with the major uncertainties surrounding environmental approvals make for a risky proposal from a desperate company that has no plan B."

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Inside the news

As **Coronavirus** disrupts the transport and tourism industries, **fossil fuel production** continues to expand despite worries about fly-in-fly-out workers introducing disease to camps and remote communities (p8 and 10).

The virus has delayed the trial of former NSW Labor ministers **Eddie Obeid** and **Ian Macdonald**, who allegedly conspired to enrich the Obeids with a coal mining licence (p10).

The **Great Barrier Reef** is undergoing a third **bleaching** event in as many years, but Australia's big polluters continue to exceed emissions limits with impunity (p8-9).

The amount of dangerous **fine particle pollution** emitted by the **Vales Point** coal-fired power station on the NSW Central Coast has increased by 3,000% over the past six years and 181% last year.

Environmental Justice Australia said it appeared that the extraordinary jump in PM2.5 pollution from Vales Point could be because the reported figures were wrong, or its pollution abatement systems had not been turned on or that they had failed.



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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 8,800 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.nvi.com.au/story/6710971/edos-claims-refuted-as-factually-wrong-by-mining-company/>

Environmental Defenders Office files legal action against Whitehaven Coal for allegedly failing to secure the necessary biodiversity offsets for its Maules Creek coal mine

Billy Jupp, Namoi Valley Independent, 06/04/2020

The Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) has filed for legal action against Whitehaven Coal for allegedly failing to secure the necessary biodiversity offsets for its Maules Creek coal mine.

The action is on behalf of the South East Forest Rescue (SEFR) and claims the company failed to secure biodiversity offsets for 5,532 hectares of endangered Grassy Whitebox woodland, which the EDO claims was among the federal government's conditions applied to the project in 2013.

The EDO also claims the company had until midnight on March 31 to secure the biodiversity offsets, but failed to do so.

However, a Whitehaven spokesperson refuted the claims, saying the EDO's central claim was "factually wrong".

"As the matter is now the subject of a legal proceeding Whitehaven we will not be making any further comment at this time."

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/deadly-pollutant-surged-by-3000-per-cent-at-coal-fired-power-plant-20200406-p54hld.html>

Deadly pollutant surged by 3,000% at coal-fired power plant

Nick O'Malley, SMH, 07/04/2020

The amount of dangerous fine particle pollution emitted by the Vales Point coal-fired power station on the NSW Central Coast has increased by 3,000% over the past six years and 181% last year.

Last year the Yallourn power station in Victoria increased its emissions of the same pollutant by 82% and the amount from the Gladstone power station in Queensland increased by 23%.

Vales Point is operated by Delta Electricity, whose company secretary Steve Gurney said that the fine particulate



Adani continues work on its Carmichael Mine, but has closed the camp gym in a nod to Coronavirus. Photo: Adani Australia

pollution, known as PM2.5, appeared to have increased "a little bit" last year because the station's filters needed replacing at the time testing was conducted. He did not address the 3,000% increase since 2013. Over the same period Vales Point increased the amount of power it generated by 63%.

A spokesman for EnergyAustralia, which operates the Yallourn power station, said that in 2018 power production from Yallourn was down by about 6% and most emissions that power generators are required to report on were also down. But he did not explain the 82% increase in PM2.5 emissions in the year to 2019.

Nicola Rivers, the head of research with Environmental Justice Australia, said that it appeared that the only reasons for the extraordinary jump in PM2.5 pollution from Vales Point could be that the reported figures were wrong, or its pollution abatement systems had not been turned on or that they had failed.

She said the jump in emissions from the Yallourn power station appeared to confirm Environmental Justice Australia's concerns that the station's electrostatic precipitators – equipment used to capture particulate pollution – were not functioning properly.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/santos-investors-to-turn-up-heat-on-climate-change-targets-20200331-p54fii.html>

Santos investors to turn up heat on climate change targets

Nick Toscano, SMH, 01/04/2020

Oil and gas giant Santos is facing significant investor pressure over climate change as influential shareholder advisers recommend defying the board and supporting demands for hard emissions-reduction targets.

Shareholder resolutions to force ASX-listed energy giant into setting stronger targets for its direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions and review its links to powerful lobby groups appear likely to gain considerable support at the company's annual general meeting on Friday.

The Santos board is urging investors to vote down the two resolutions at its teleconference meeting, insisting its target of cutting emissions by 5% by 2025 and its aspirational target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 were "demonstrably consistent" with the Paris climate accord goal to keep global warming below 2 degrees. It also pointed out that LNG exports were curbing global emissions by enabling

Asian economies to replace coal power and, in Australia, gas was providing the reliability needed to support the transition to more-intermittent renewable energy sources.

Dan Gocher, of the Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ACCR), which prepared the resolutions, said Santos' plan to lift gas production by 60% by 2025 was "completely inconsistent" with the positions of many of its global peers such as BHP and Royal Dutch Shell which had vowed to set targets to reduce emissions caused by end-customers of their products.

"We aren't saying gas should be turned off tomorrow, but it shouldn't be increased," he said.

The challenge comes as Santos and oil and gas giants worldwide wipe billions of dollars from their investment budgets to survive a flood of oil coming onto the market due to Saudi Arabia and Russia ramping up output at the same time as the coronavirus pandemic causes a downturn in oil demand.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/apr/04/almost-half-of-all-shareholders-at-santos-agm-back-stronger-emissions-target>

Almost half of all shareholders at Santos AGM back stronger emissions target

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

Oil and gas giant Santos faces increased pressure over its stance on climate change after nearly half its shareholders backed resolutions that it should strengthen emissions targets and review its membership of fossil fuel lobby groups.

Ethical investor group the Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility said the level of support for a shareholder-led climate resolution was unprecedented, and showed large institutional investors had "woken up to the damage a growing gas industry is wreaking on the planet".

The centre moved two resolutions. Firstly, that Santos set targets aligned to the goals of the Paris agreement for its direct emissions and the indirect "scope 3" emissions released by consumers of its products, and secondly that it review its industry association memberships. The motions received 43% and 46% support at Santos' annual general meeting, was held online on Friday due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The centre's Dan Gocher said it showed there was strong support for

fossil fuel companies to set targets to limit not just their own emissions, but those that result from their goods. He said many of Santos' peers, including BP, BHP and Royal Dutch Shell, had committed to scope 3 targets.

"These results show how much of a laggard Santos is on climate change," Gocher said.

Santos has a target of cutting emissions by more than 5% by 2025 and an aspirational goal of net zero emissions by 2050, but aims to lift gas production by 60% over the next five years.

Gocher said it was untenable for Santos' chairman, Keith Spence, to maintain his opposition to setting a target for scope 3 emissions "given the clear signal sent by his shareholders".

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/coronavirus-may-delay-approval-for-santos-narrabri-project/news-story/c24a6caa7164b40b578bd3a169a1182e>

Coronavirus may delay approval for Santos Narrabri project

Perry Williams, *Aus*, 03/04/2020

Santos says the coronavirus pandemic may delay the approvals process for its \$3.6bn Narrabri gas project and has ruled out considering an equity raising to boost its balance sheet amid volatile oil market conditions.

The South Australian energy producer said an assessment report from the NSW Department of Planning had yet to be handed to the Independent Planning Commission due to the current public health crisis and social distancing requirements.

The process for holding public hearings is also "still being settled", Santos chairman Keith Spence told the company's annual general meeting on Friday. Once the report is received, the IPC has 12 weeks to make a determination.

Still, Santos said it expects the project to win approval.

"We're confident the Narrabri project enjoys strong support in the local Narrabri community," Spence said. "We'd expect it to proceed."

Santos growth projects already delayed include the Barossa gas development, which underpins new supplies for the Darwin LNG plant.

The drilling of two exploration wells in the Northern Territory's onshore McArthur Basin, originally scheduled last year, will now be delayed beyond 2020, Spence said on Friday.

Origin Energy also delayed its giant Beetaloo Basin gas project in the NT last month.

A discovery at Santos's Tanumbirini well will also be shut due to the public health crisis and the vulnerability of remote and indigenous communities.

Still, Santos will press ahead with its Dorado oil project in West Australia, with front end engineering and design to start by June and a final investment decision to be weighed once conditions improve.

It's also proceeding with a proposed carbon capture and storage project in South Australia's Moomba.

<https://www.katherinetimes.com.au/story/6705475/surprise-plans-for-a-gas-pipeline-to-connect-beetaloo-to-darwin/>

Surprise plans for a gas pipeline to connect Beetaloo to Darwin

Chris McLennan, *Katherine Times*, 31/03/2020

Details of a pipeline to bring onshore gas from the Beetaloo Basin to Darwin were disclosed today.

For many, the proposed pipeline is the missing piece of the puzzle needed for the establishment of an onshore gas industry in the NT.

The NT Government has advertised a tender, made public by the Lock the Gate Alliance today, for a pre-feasibility study for a pipeline "corridor" from Tennant Creek to Darwin.

The 100-metre wide corridor of the pipeline is proposed to closely follow the Stuart Highway and through Katherine and Pine Creek to reach Darwin.

With this latest move the Northern Gas Pipeline could be used to send any gas extracted by fracking from the Beetaloo Basin west to Tennant Creek and through this new pipeline to Darwin for either processing or direct export.

The pipeline would transport gas and/or liquids.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/01/climate-crisis-may-have-pushed-worlds-tropical-coral-reefs-to-tipping-point-of-near-annual-bleaching>

Climate crisis may have pushed world's tropical coral reefs to tipping point of 'near-annual' bleaching

Graham Readfern, *Guardian*, 01/04/2020

Rising ocean temperatures could have pushed the world's tropical coral reefs over a tipping point where they are hit by bleaching on a "near-annual" basis,

according to the head of a US government agency program that monitors the globe's coral reefs.

Dr Mark Eakin, coordinator of Coral Reef Watch at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said there was a risk that mass bleaching seen along the length of the Great Barrier Reef in 2020 could mark the start of another global-scale bleaching event.

"What we are seeing on the Great Barrier Reef and potentially elsewhere is really being driven just by anthropogenic climate change.

Aerial surveys of 1,020 individual reefs completed across the length of the 2,300km marine park confirmed last week a third mass bleaching event in only five years.

As the planet gains heat from increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, about 90% of that extra heat is taken up by oceans. In January, a study of heat down to 2km in depth concluded that 2019 was the warmest year on record.

Associate Prof Tracy Ainsworth at the University of New South Wales said,

"We have known for 20 years that probably by about 2020, we would start to see annual bleaching."

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/apr/01/nearly-one-in-five-of-australias-big-polluters-breach-government-set-emissions-limits>

Nearly one in five of Australia's big polluters breach government-set emissions limits

Adam Morton, *Guardian*, 01/04/2020

Nearly one in five of Australia's big polluting industrial sites increased greenhouse gas emissions above government-set limits last financial year, an analysis of official data shows.

It found 38 of the 210 mines, smelters, refineries and other industrial facilities covered by the federal government's "safeguard mechanism" policy exceeded previous pollution limits based on historic or projected emissions.

Combined, they emitted about 790,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide more than they would have had they stayed within their limit set before the start of the year.

Under the rules of the safeguard mechanism, companies in breach of their limit without good reason are expected to either buy carbon credits or pay a penalty to offset those emissions.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) found about 729,000 tonnes of the emissions above previously agreed limits went unpenalised last year as companies were allowed either permanent or temporary increases.

Gavan McFadzean, ACF's climate change program manager, said not requiring industrial polluters to pay for CO2 left Australian taxpayers to "pick up the tab" through the \$2.5bn emissions reduction fund.

"This is real pollution entering the atmosphere – pollution we can't bring back, pollution that is heating the planet," he said. "Ultimately, everyone will pay for this, whether it's through losing a home to unseasonal bushfires, through food shortages as a result of worse droughts, or through not having coral reefs to appreciate."

The Carbon Market Institute, representing businesses focused on climate action, has called for the safeguard mechanism and emissions reduction fund to be reformed as part of a post-virus economic repair that also focuses on "land and climate repair".

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/01/the-fossil-fuel-industry-is-broken-will-a-cleaner-climate-be-the-result>

Will the coronavirus kill the oil industry and help save the climate?

Damian Carrington, Jillian Ambrose & Matthew Taylor, *Guardian*, 01/04/2020

The plunging demand for oil wrought by the coronavirus pandemic combined with a savage price war has left the fossil fuel industry broken and in survival mode, according to analysts.

It faces the gravest challenge in its 100-year history, they say, one that will permanently alter the industry. With some calling the scene a "hellscape", the least lurid description is "unprecedented".

A key question is whether this will permanently alter the course of the climate crisis. Many experts think it might well do so, pulling forward the date at which demand for oil and gas peaks, never to recover, and allowing the atmosphere to gradually heal.

But some take an opposing view: the fossil fuel industry will bounce back as it always has, and bargain basement oil prices will slow the much-needed transition to green energy.

Who is right depends on a heady mix of geopolitics, profit, investor sentiment, government bailouts and net zero emissions targets, campaigner

pressures and, not least, consumer behaviour – is virtual working, for instance, the new normal?

Adding fuel to the fire of the pandemic is the price war being waged by Saudi Arabia and Russia, who increased production just as the pandemic slashed demand, sending prices towards the floor. The moves are seen as an attempt to grab market share by killing the higher cost producers behind the US shale boom.



<https://www.watoday.com.au/politics/federal/report-maps-out-ways-to-reach-climate-targets-and-regenerate-economy-20200403-p54gw1.html>

Report maps out ways to reach climate targets and regenerate economy

Mike Foley & Nick O'Malley, *WA Today*, 03/04/2020

Australia still has a chance to use existing technologies to tackle climate change and maintain living standards while creating new jobs, an exhaustive new study has found, but only if individuals, businesses and government act quickly to reduce emissions from every sector of the economy.

The report by ClimateWorks, called *Decarbonisation Futures*, maps out in detail how Australia could go about achieving emissions reductions required across industry sectors to limit global warming to below 2 degrees, or to the more ambitious 1.5 degree target under the Paris climate agreement.

"If we get this right, we can meet Australia's international climate change commitments, create jobs in sustainable industries, and set ourselves up for a smoother and speedier shift to a

zero emissions economy,” said Anna Skarbek, the chief executive of Climate-Works, a policy advisory body housed in Monash University.

• **Download the report here:**

<https://www.climateworksaustralia.org/resource/decarbonisation-futures-solutions-actions-and-benchmarks-for-a-net-zero-emissions-australia/>

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.afr.com/companies/mining/the-future-of-fifo-mines-is-residential-20200403-p54grh>

The future of FIFO mines is residential

Peter Ker, AFR, 06/04/2020

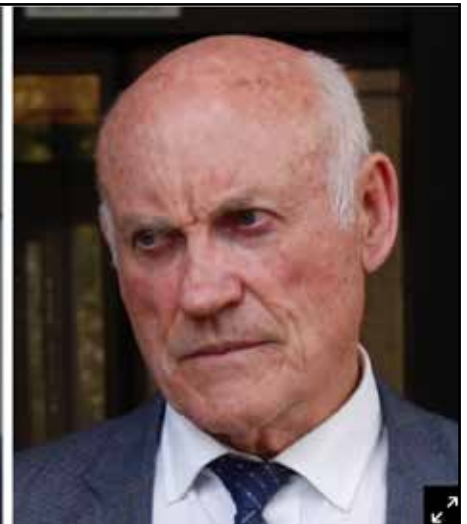
The coronavirus crisis will prompt mining and energy companies to permanently reduce their reliance on fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers in favour of those that live close to mines, says federal Resources minister Keith Pitt.

Australia’s biggest export industries, including iron ore and liquefied natural gas, rely on more than 50,000 workers who regularly fly from cities to work on remote sites. But that employment model has been thrown into chaos over the past fortnight as states limited cross-border travel to curb the spread of the virus.

The disruption forced hundreds of FIFO workers from south-eastern states to relocate their families to Western Australia and Queensland in a bid to keep their jobs, while the duration of shifts worked by FIFO workers has doubled and some cases tripled to reduce the amount of travel amid the pandemic.

Pitt said there would always be some extremely remote projects that required FIFO workers, for example offshore oil rigs. But he said many of the changes being forced by the pandemic would not necessarily be reversed once the crisis was over.

“I think post-corona there will be significant changes around availability of flights, the potential for workers to live in the areas,” he said.



Former NSW Labor ministers Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald are on trial for an alleged coal conspiracy in 2007-2009. Photos: Sydney Morning Herald

Pitt’s federal coalition colleague George Christensen has promoted the idea of a harder border along the Tropic of Capricorn which would prevent people from the southern half of Queensland, including some FIFO workers, from entering the northern half of the state.

Pitt said he understood Christensen’s desire to protect his local community but did not support the idea.

BHP and Mitsubishi (BMA) regularly fly about 1,000 FIFO workers from Brisbane and Cairns to the coking coal town of Moranbah, which is located north of the Tropic of Capricorn.

BMA asset president James Palmer said he was working to ensure those FIFO workers did not bring the virus to remote communities.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/obeid-and-macdonald-supreme-court-trial-adjourned-until-august-20200406-p54hli.html>

Obeid and Macdonald Supreme Court trial adjourned until August

Georgina Mitchell & Kate McClymont, SMH, 06/04/2020

The Supreme Court trial of former Labor ministers Ian Macdonald and Eddie Obeid has been adjourned to August after the case was delayed several times.

The pair, and Obeid’s son Moses, are facing trial by judge alone over an allegation they conspired over the granting of a coal exploration licence at Mt Penny, in the Bylong Valley near Mudgee, between September 2007 and January 2009.

Macdonald, 71, Obeid, 76, and Moses Obeid, 50, have pleaded not guilty over their involvement in an allegedly rigged government tender process that resulted in the award of the exploration licence where the Obeids own a rural property.

A NSW Supreme Court spokeswoman confirmed on Monday the trial has been adjourned to August 31.

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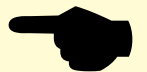
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