



Fossil Fool Bulletin

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

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FFB 3:37 • 13 OCTOBER 2020

Many hurdles for Santos in conditional approval

By Coonabarabaran Residents against CSG

Like the song says, "Don't dream it's over..." so watch this space because opposition to the Pilliga gasfield is as strong as ever. The campaign to stop coal seam gas in the Pilliga Forest (and as we know in the farmlands beyond) has a long, long way to run yet.

Despite overwhelming scientific, economic and social evidence against the Narrabri Gas Project (NGP), the "Independent" Planning Commission succumbed to intense political pressure and approved it. However, the commissioners did have a sting in their tail placing 134 consent conditions on Santos, which will pose some complex problems for the company to resolve before any drilling or production can take place. These will prove to be major hurdles.

Santos must find a suitable reuse for the vast tonnes of salt waste or identify specific sites able to take & seal it in landfill. In 10 years they have not been able to do this.

They must produce a new ground-water model of higher confidence. If the new model proves bigger water impacts, they can't proceed.

Until either of the proposed pipelines are developed Santos can't proceed.

- Ongoing greenhouse gas emissions must be reported, and offsets made if too high;
- The power plant at Leewood site was not approved which will add cost to already expensive gas to extract;
- The 'man camp' was not approved;
- There are many management plans to be prepared and approved on Water, Cultural Heritage, Bushfire and Bio-

diversity management – these take time and money;

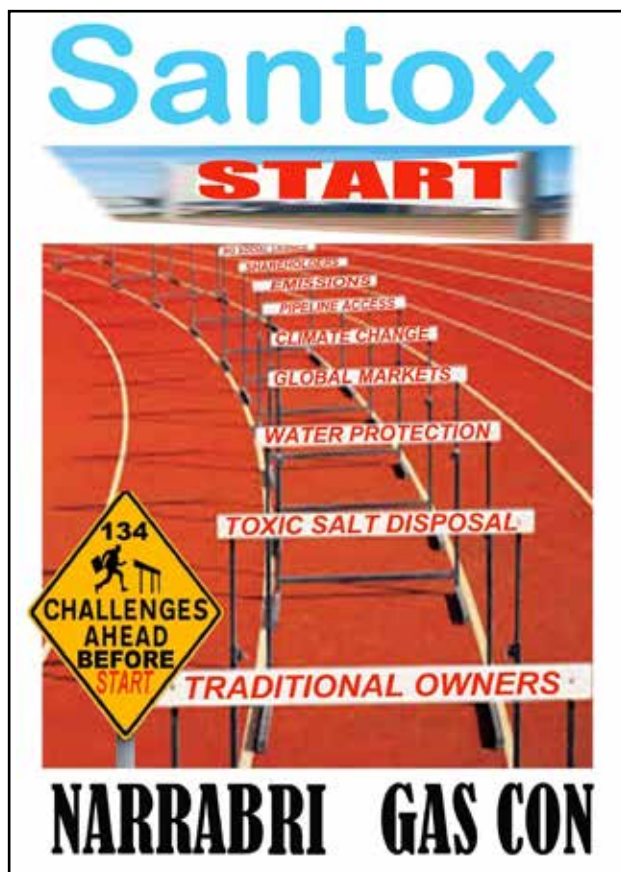
- Unusually, advisory groups must be set up on Water, Cultural Heritage and Greenhouse gases.

Time is the enemy to progress for Santos because the economics become less and less profitable over time. It was interesting to note that their share price dropped when NGP was approved. Santos shareholders must see it as a risk. Completion of any pipeline is uncertain as hundreds of landholders, who must give access, are strongly opposed.

Community opposition remains immense at local and state levels. Literally thousands of individuals and groups will remain engaged in the campaign. They are committed and ready to monitor the compliance to conditions and, if necessary, take action if Santos or the government agencies are falling short in their responsibilities.

The Traditional Owners are staunch in their opposition and have a strong independent group that are organized and ready to campaign to protect the very special heritage of the Pilliga.

Approval does not mean the NGP will go ahead. The Shenhua coalmine was approved five years ago but not one tonne of coal has yet gone off Water-



Graphic by Rosie Lee. Knitting Nannas, Facebook

mark Mountain. There is much hope that this Santos project will never get to production. Despite what the IPC says, it is obvious that the gas project is not in the public interest but only in the monetary interest of a small minority.

If you want to stand with us and help then stay tuned – Coonabarabaran Residents against CSG (CRAG) is still here and committed to stopping CSG because to return to that great song, if we keep going – "We know they won't win!"



• P2: Legislation needed, rather than words

• P2: Zombie licences raised from the dead

P3: Whitehaven's bad reputation set aside

Legislation needed, rather than words

Lock the Gate Alliance is calling on Federal Agriculture Minister David Littleproud to put his money where his mouth is after he was reported saying farmers should be able to lock their gates to gas companies.

Littleproud's comments come after his NSW counterpart Adam Marshall also called on gas companies that hold zombie petroleum licences across large swathes of land in north west NSW to "voluntarily" hand back their permits.

Lock the Gate Alliance NSW spokesperson Georgina Woods said both politicians' comments were hollow without legislative change and political action.

Power imbalance in favour of gas

"The power imbalance in favour of gas companies is one of the very reasons Lock the Gate Alliance was formed more than a decade ago," she said.

"This fundamental problem has not been fixed and politicians that support landholders' legal right to refuse gas companies entry onto their properties need to turn that support into legal protections.

"The damage of coal seam gas of course goes well beyond property boundaries because it threatens underground aquifers that are relied on by people far from the actual gas wells.

Pipelines destroy farmland

"Gasfields also require pipelines which themselves inevitably destroy farmland on their way to cities and export hubs on the coast. Unconventional gasfields industrialise once rural communities.

"For example, Santos' coal seam gasfield in the Pilliga forest is a threat to groundwater as well as farmland stretching out in a large area because

of the various pipeline proposals mooted to bring the gas to market.

"David Littleproud and Adam Marshall are ministers in government. If they really support the communities in north west NSW and elsewhere that are threatened with coal seam gas, they must speak to their colleagues and make legislative changes to give farmers and Traditional Owners the right to refuse entry to gas companies and to protect groundwater from this industry.

"Landholders, farmers, and rural communities have been fighting the unconventional gas industry for more than a decade now. Despite an almost total lack of action from governments, landholders have shown they can defeat this insidious industry.

"It's time governments stepped in, so landholders and communities felt better supported by the politicians who claim to represent them."

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Zombie exploration licences raised from the dead

North west NSW farmers say their worst fears are being realised as gas companies announce plans to raise so-called "zombie-PELs" from the dead in response to the Independent Planning Commission's decision to greenlight the Santos Narrabri gasfield.

The day after the IPC published its decision on the Narrabri gasfield, Comet Ridge, a joint partner with Santos that owns zombie licences PEL 6, PEL 427, and PEL 428, released a statement to the ASX welcoming the approval and announcing it "anticipates a return to exploration and approval" of two of its three dormant licences in the north west.

Zombie PELs are petroleum licences that have expired, but have not been formally extinguished by the NSW Government. There are 12 of these licences that stretch across 56,000km² between the Queensland border, Dubbo, Moree, the Warrumbungles, and the Upper Hunter.

National Party members voted to have these licences extinguished last year, yet the NSW Government failed to act, meaning the licences can be re-activated.

The move by gas companies also comes after the Morrison Government labelled the entire Gunnedah Basin as a target for its plans to sink taxpayer money into propping up five polluting gasfields across the country.

Putting land, water, communities at risk

"It's what we feared would happen if the Narrabri gasfield was approved, and it's shattering news to hear these gas companies and the Morrison Government are so eager to put our land, water and communities at risk," said Mulalley farmer Margaret Fleck, whose property is included in PEL 12, owned by Santos' joint venture partner Carbon Minerals.

Carbon Minerals itself released a statement earlier this year flagging investment in its zombie PELs in the north west.

"A huge area of land across north west NSW is now at serious risk of being transformed into industrial gasfields, as we have seen in the Surat Basin in Queensland," Ms Fleck said.

"This means we could face the same problems as farmers further north - drained and contaminated groundwater, huge areas of land cleared and

pockmarked with unconventional gas wells, and the need for companies to dump mammoth amounts of toxic CSG waste."

Lock the Gate Alliance NSW spokesperson Georgina Woods said the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government should have stamped out these licences long ago, just like it had done with CSG licences closer to the coast.

CSG threat hanging over their heads

"These companies have sat on these licences for years, creating uncertainty for farmers and communities who just want to get on with their lives without the threat of destructive CSG hanging over their heads," she said.

"Many of these companies have failed to comply with NSW law by simply sitting on these licences and doing nothing with them for so many years, so the government has every opportunity to cancel them and give farming communities some certainty.

"Local members representing these farming communities should listen to the concerns of their constituents and ensure the government permanently slays these zombie licences."

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Whitehaven's bad record set aside

Werris Creek Mine. Photo: Whitehaven



Correspondence from Environment Minister Sussan Ley's Department has indicated Whitehaven Coal's full sordid history of environmental crimes may not be taken into account during the federal assessment of its Vickery coal mine because Whitehaven created a subsidiary company called Vickery Coal.

In a letter sent to Lock the Gate Alliance, Minister Ley's Department says Vickery Coal's history will be taken into account, but does not make the same commitment for its parent Whitehaven.

That's despite the fact Vickery Coal is a wholly owned subsidiary of the company, and the fact Whitehaven only changed Vickery Coal to the proponent of the project two years ago, part way through the assessment process.

The alarming revelation comes as Whitehaven was once again fined this week for environmental breaches – this time at its Werris Creek coal mine near Quirindi for allowing an uncontrolled release of water from a sediment dam during heavy rains.

Fined 10 times in eight years

This latest penalty means during the last eight years, Whitehaven or its subsidiaries have been fined on more than 10 occasions at its north west NSW coal mines and have been prosecuted three times, including two prosecutions that are currently. These fines and other enforcement outcomes amount to more than \$100,000.

"It's clear that Whitehaven has engaged in a pattern of behaviour across all of its mining operations flagrantly disregarding environmental laws and conditions," said Lock the Gate Alliance NSW coordinator Georgina Woods.

"A multitude of fines, which amount to slight slaps on the wrist for White-

haven, have done nothing to change this company's abhorrent behaviour. The company is also now being prosecuted by two different government agencies for serious environmental crimes.

"If this was an average Australian citizen who had committed these crimes, they would be looking at jail time – they certainly wouldn't be given a free pass to build another polluting coal mine.

"The Minister must not make herself selectively blind to this history because of corporate trickery and name-switching."

Mockery of federal law

Boggabri local Sally Hunter said, "Sussan Ley's Department seems to be at risk of falling for Whitehaven's attempt to have its vast criminal history ignored. That simply does not pass the pub test.

"If a name change allows them to avoid proper scrutiny, then it makes a mockery of our federal law which is intended to stop repeat offenders and environmental vandals like Whitehaven from being allowed to create more havoc with new operations.

"We are calling on Minister Ley to do what is right by the farmers and communities of the north west and consider the full gamut of Whitehaven's atrocious crimes when assessing Vickery.

"By anyone's standard, this should amount to a rejection of this destructive, water draining coal mine proposal."

• **The full list of Whitehaven's prosecutions:**

<https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/lockthegate/pages/6968/attachments/original/1602125901/201008-Whitehaven-Non-Compliance-List.pdf>

Clean energy jobs make Qld a leader

A new report from the Climate Council has revealed Queensland has the natural resources to become a world leader in renewable energy, as well as in industries such as clean manufacturing, minerals processing and renewable hydrogen – bringing with it tens of thousands of jobs.

The report **Leaders and Leg-ends: Thousands of Clean Jobs for Queenslanders** finds that accelerating the development of Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) will give Queensland a global competitive advantage in energy-intensive industries, create jobs for Queenslanders, and new export opportunities.

"There are so many reasons to be optimistic about Queensland's economic future as it rebuilds from COVID-19," said the Climate Council's CEO Amanda McKenzie.

"The growth of renewable energy generation in the state is bringing down power prices, and cutting greenhouse gas emissions, which will help protect Queensland's natural tourism assets, like the Great Barrier Reef," said McKenzie.

"Recent commitments from State and Federal governments to progress the Copperstring 2.0 project demonstrate that the time is right for Queensland to just get on with it and unlock new opportunities in both renewables and clean manufacturing.

"The Queensland Government can seize this moment to create jobs that get people back to work now, and turn Queensland into a clean industry superpower. Generations of Queenslanders could work in these clean industries.

"Regional cities like Townsville, Gladstone and Mackay have the skilled workforce, close proximity to excellent renewable resources, and established industrial infrastructure that makes them ideal to develop clean industries," said McKenzie.

• **The report can be downloaded at:**

<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/leaders-legends-thousands-clean-jobs-queenslanders/#MR>

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<https://www.desmogblog.com/>

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<https://www.boilingcold.com.au/>

COALWIRE

CoalWire is a weekly bulletin of coal-related news published by Global Energy Monitor:

globalenergymonitor.org

In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 8,595 words of news for your convenience.

[Click on the links or copy and paste to browser to view original articles.](#) (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.themorningbulletin.com.au/news/anti-adani-protester-charged-after-allegedly-block/4114923/>

Anti-Adani protester charged after allegedly blocking road

Kristen Booth, *The Bulletin*, 08/10/2020

A 47-year-old man has been charged after allegedly chaining himself to a cattle grid to block the road leading to Adani's Carmichael rail corridor.

A Queensland Police Service spokeswoman said the New South Wales man, who Frontline Action on Coal earlier identified as Ben Winch, was charged with obstructing the roadway and contravening a direction of police.

The protest action took place about 5am October 8, when the man allegedly joined a group of activists who blocked Stratford Rd to prevent vehicles from entering the nearby construction site.

Video footage provided by activists shows an upset worker confronting the activists and Frontline Action on Coal claimed the worker "got out and threw a punch" at a photographer.

The group has also denied the rock-throwing allegations.

Police could not confirm if any act of violence was involved.

According to Adani, protesters allegedly threw rocks and kicked the doors of cars and utes belonging to workers at Adani's Carmichael rail corridor.

Adani Australia took to Facebook to reveal "full-time activist Scott Daines and his friends from Frontline Action on Coal" were at the site since before sunrise.

"It is unacceptable that anti-coal activists are harassing our people and attempting to damage their personal vehicles as they are travelling to work."

"This is another example of the Stop Adani movement and Front Line Action on Coal engaging in anti-social behaviour and dangerous behaviour."

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/budget-s-coal-grant-disrupts-market-and-deters-energy-investments-industry-says-20201007-p562vp.html>

Budget's coal grant 'disrupts market' and deters energy investments, industry says

Mike Foley, *SMH*, 07/10/2020

Market intervention has emerged as a key concern for the energy sector after the federal government flagged a grant up to \$8.7



Ben Winch locked himself to a cattle grid on October 8, stopping work on Adani's Carmichael rail line for five hours. He has been charged and released, but Frontline Action Against Coal says, "The struggle to protect our water from destructive coal projects goes on! Find out how to join us and take direct action to stop Adani:"

<https://www.galileerising.com/head-to-the-frontline/>

million to upgrade a 40-year-old coal-fired power plant.

Industry experts and insiders said there was no need to use public money to extend the life of Delta Electricity's Vales Point coal plant in NSW because the market operator does not forecast a shortfall in supply and other coal generators have made similar investments without grants.

They also warned that private investors could be discouraged from investing in new energy generation due to the government's intervention to support the 1320-megawatt power station in NSW's Hunter region, which will wind down capacity towards its planned closure in 2029.

The government has threatened to build its own gas-fired power plant by 2023 if private power companies did not commit by April next year to replace the "dispatchable" energy that will be lost when the 1680-megawatt Liddell coal plant is shut down.

Grattan Institute energy director Tony Wood said other coal generators have made similar investments with their own money, and questioned why Delta wouldn't do the same if it were commercially viable.

"Clearly, yes this will disrupt the investment decisions of other power generators," he said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-12/future-of-wa-energy-system-half-coal-power-plants-shut-by-2025/12750068>

Renewable energy to replace coal in WA's biggest power grid as solar hollows market, report predicts

Daniel Mercer, *ABC*, 12/10/2020

More than half of Western Australia's remaining coal-fired electricity capacity could be phased out within five years, according to a landmark report which charts the extraordinary rise of renewable energy.

Energy Minister Bill Johnston has released a 20-year blueprint for WA's biggest electricity system, which has been grappling with one of the highest rates of solar uptake in the world.

The blueprint, known as the whole-of-system plan, finds that between 520MW and 890MW of the state's coal-fired power capacity faces economic closure by 2025 as demand for renewable energy hollows out the market.

While the Government has already announced it will shutter Muja C's two units in 2022 and 2024, removing 392MW from the system, the report flags extra capacity may need to exit.

The report also predicts no major transmission lines would need to be built in the next two decades, that most new power plants would be renewable sources — such as wind — and that those new projects would be built south of Perth.

<https://www.afr.com/world/asia/china-orders-some-steelmakers-to-stop-buying-australian-coal-traders-20201013-p564hs>

China orders steelmakers to stop buying Australian coal, say traders

Michael Smith, AFR, 13/10/2020

China has told some of its state-owned steelmakers and power plants to stop importing Australian coal, in the latest sign Beijing is using economic retaliation to pressure the Morrison government.

Coal traders in China confirmed reports on industry websites that some buyers had been told to stop purchasing coal from Australia, although it was unclear how damaging those instructions would be as some power generators had already hit their import quota in July.

"I believe this is a political sanction against Australia," one analyst, who did not want to be named because of the politically-sensitive nature of the ban, said.

S&P Global Platts and Argus Media first reported news of a coal ban this week,

sending shares in some Australian exporters down. Whitehaven Coal stock dropped 5.7% on Monday.

China has placed restrictions on Australian beef and barley, and ordered an anti-dumping investigation into Australian wine, this year following the Morrison government's call in April for an investigation into the origins of coronavirus.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.armidaleexpress.com.au/story/6962095/lets-get-rid-of-them-marshall-opposes-csg-in-electorate/>

Agriculture Minister Adam Marshall calls for Santos, Comet Ridge to relinquish petroleum exploration licences in Moree Plains Shire

Sophie Harris, Armidale Express, 09/10/2020

Agriculture Minister Adam Marshall has called for 'zombie' Petroleum Exploration Licences (PELs) in the Moree Plains Shire to be relinquished, saying there's no need for them now that the Narrabri Gas Project has been approved.

Last week, a day after the Narrabri Gas Project was granted conditional approval by the Independent Planning Commission, gas company Comet Ridge signalled its intent to resume gas exploration across the Moree Plains Shire.

Santos and Comet Ridge have applied to renew the three PELs they jointly own, which cover parts of the Moree Plains Shire.

Marshall has written to the CEOs of both Santos and Comet Ridge, "imploring" them to relinquish those PELs which he says are now redundant.

"These three PELs have sat dormant across the landscape of Moree Plains Shire for more than a decade now," he said.

"Now is the time to remove that uncertainty and those companies, in light of the approval for the Narrabri Gas Project, should voluntarily relinquish those PELs

because they are redundant. "They're called zombie PELs for a reason because there's been no activity in them for the last decade," he said.

<https://www.farmonline.com.au/story/6961582/farmers-should-have-right-to-lock-the-gate-to-gas-ag-minister/>

Farmers should have the right to lock the gate to gas: Ag minister

Jamieson Murphy, Farm Online, 12/10/2020

Farmers should have the right to say no to gas wells on their land the federal Ag Minister says, however gas opponents have called on the politician to put some action behind his words.

Federal Agriculture Minister David Littleproud said he supported the gas industry "with conditions", such strict regulations and scientific backing the development won't harm the environment.

He also called for farmers to have the right to block gas developments on their land. Currently under state planning laws, resource companies that are refused access can take farmers to court, where the odds are often in the companies' favour.

Although a state government issue, a landholder rights are expected to become a big issue in the near future, with Santos' 850-well gasfield near Narrabri getting approval last month.

The federal Nationals have been pushing for a "gas-lead" recovery to help the nation out of its pandemic-induced recession, despite organisations such the National Farmers' Federation and the NSW Farmers warning against it.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Georgia Woods said Littleproud should put his money where his mouth is.

"Just saying things doesn't help," Woods said.

"David Littleproud has influence and an opportunity to help farmers, by talking to the Prime Minister and the Energy Minister about the push to cover farming communities in gasfields."

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/gas-in-the-mix-for-years-says-agl/news-story/0283d84991c-c8611d5684eeefa3e291c2>

Gas in the mix for years, says AGL

Perry Williams, Aus, 12/10/2020

AGL Energy has defended the case for its planned Crib Point LNG import terminal on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, arguing the fossil fuel will need to remain in the state's generation mix even as it transitions to renewables.

On the opening day of a public inquiry assessing the facility, AGL's Christopher Townshend QC said users would require gas for many years to come despite a shift to clean energy.

More than 4000 submissions have been received to the inquiry including the views of federal Health Minister Greg Hunt, who



A Chinese coal import terminal. Photo: Shutterstock

said there was overwhelming community opposition to the terminal, arguing it was the wrong location for a large industrial facility.

Opponents of the project have pointed to competing sources of supply, including Santos's Narrabri coal-seam gas project in NSW that just won planning approval, along with a raft of rival LNG import plants including the Andrew Forrest-backed Port Kembla project.

AGL in February said it has underestimated the challenge of developing Australia's first gas import plant, with the project delayed partly due to mounting environmental opposition from communities on the Mornington Peninsula.

<https://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/gladstone-continues-to-ride-natural-gas-wave/4117703/>

Gladstone continues to ride natural gas wave

Darryn Nufer, Gladstone Observer, 13/10/2020

Queensland Government data shows LNG exports accounted for almost 20% of the State's total exports – and rose by 3% to \$16 billion over the past 12 months. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, LNG exports increased compared with last year providing support to the local economy.

Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association chief executive Andrew McConville said, "The oil and gas industry has been a powerhouse for Queensland during a particularly tough time and it will continue to be a pillar of the economy for decades to come.

"Today, nearly 30% of Australia's LNG production is located in the State and this underpins high paying jobs and economic growth in regional areas such as Gladstone, Toowoomba, Roma, Chinchilla and Dalby."

Between 2011-2018, Queensland's industry accounted for almost \$50 billion in direct spending via business purchases, community and government payments and the sector spent \$23.6 billion in regional areas.

These figures showed the industry directly employed 4,600 people (yearly average).

APPEA recently launched its Queensland Election Policy Statement 2020 outlining around 20 key reforms to promote the responsible development of Queensland's oil and gas resources, improve investment certainty, support economic recovery and reduce regulatory burdens across the state.

"There's real potential for regulatory reform in Queensland to reduce costs, increase productivity and support and attract further investment in energy supply," McConville said.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/imf-act-now-or-face-climate-catastrophe/news-story/6df256837451505fe0e2a2ea7bce60b0>

IMF: act now or face climate catastrophe

Adam Creighton, Aus, 08/10/2020

The International Monetary Fund has slammed "grossly insufficient" policies to combat climate change, predicting a climate "catastrophe" where global temperatures rise 5C unless governments impose steadily rising taxes on carbon dioxide emissions.

Releasing part of its periodic economic update overnight, the IMF said fossil fuels, such as coal and gas, were "massively under-priced" and "radical" increases in low-carbon energy sources were necessary to keep the global temperature increase since pre-industrial age to 2C.

"Sizeable and rapid reductions in carbon emissions are needed for this goal to be met; specifically, net carbon emissions need to decline to zero by mid-century," the IMF said, suggesting greater spending on "green stimulus" could help economies recover from the coronavirus pandemic. "Each successive decade since the 1980s has been warmer than the previous one, the past five years were the warmest ever reported, and 2019 was likely the second-warmest year on record," it added.

The IMF said effective prices on CO2 emissions would need to rise to \$US40 a tonne by 2030 and as much as \$US150 a tonne by 2050 to achieve the 2050 goal, alongside a "green fiscal stimulus" to supercharge investment in renewable energy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/12/net-zero-emissions-target-for-australia-could-launch-63bn-investment-boom>

Net zero emissions target for Australia could launch \$63bn investment boom

Lisa Cox, Guardian, 12/10/2020

Australia could unlock an investment boom of \$63bn over the next five years if it aligns its climate policies with a target of net zero emissions by 2050, according to new economic modelling.

The analysis, by the Investor Group on Climate Change (IGCC), finds the investment opportunity created by an orderly transition to a net zero emissions economy would reach hundreds of billions of dollars by 2050 across sectors including renewable energy, manufacturing, carbon sequestration and transport.

However, if the country keeps to its current targets and climate policies, investment worth \$43bn would be lost over the next five years, growing to \$250bn by 2050.

The Investor Group on Climate Change represents investors in Australia and New Zealand who are focused on the effect of the climate crisis on the financial value of investments.

Among its membership are institutional

investors with funds under management worth more than \$2 trillion.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-12/logan-city-aims-to-use-poo-power-human-waste-to-energy/12748782>

Logan City turning human waste into energy in move to go carbon neutral within two years

Baz Ruddick, ABC, 12/10/2020

Queensland's Logan City is the first local government area in Australia to turn human waste into energy after trialling a state-of-the-art gasification plant at the Loganholme Waste Water Treatment plant.

The \$17 million plant takes biosolids, a substance made from the treatment of sewage, and generates electricity.

It also creates an inert substance called biochar that can be used for agricultural purposes.

The council believes the process will save Logan ratepayers \$500,000 a year in the running costs of its wastewater operation.

It will help meet a goal for council operations to be carbon neutral by 2022 via renewable energy and the delivery of carbon offsets.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-12/new-hydro-power-project-to-be-fast-tracked-in-northern-nsw/12753306>

NSW pumped hydro project fast-tracked to help replace ageing coal-fired power stations

Kerrin Thomas & Melissa Martin, ABC, 12/10/2020

A pumped hydro project planned for northern NSW is being fast-tracked by the State Government, with hopes it will be completed ahead of upcoming coal-fired power station closures.

The billion-dollar Oven Mountain pumped hydro project is expected to generate 600MW of hydro power during periods of peak demand.

It has been declared as Critical State Significant Infrastructure by the NSW Government.

Energy and Environment Minister Matt Kean said it would be an important replacement for ageing coal-fired power stations.

Kean said in the next 15 years four coal-fired power stations would come to the end of their lives.

"They need to be replaced if we're going to see prices not skyrocket, and the lights stay on," he said.

"We know that in 2028, we have the Vales Point power station due to come to the end of its life, we need to see this project completed well before then."

While the facility's construction is being fast-tracked, the proposal will still have to go through "appropriate environmental assessments".

Community consultation is expected to start soon.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://inql.com.au/business/2020/10/08/miners-civil-war-a-mystery-but-attack-on-greens-to-go-ahead/>

Miners' civil war a mystery – but attack on Greens to go ahead

In Queensland, 08/10/2020

The walkout by Origin and BHP from the membership of the Queensland Resources Council has left its chief executive Ian Macfarlane confused, but unyielding in his attack on the Greens.

And he broadened his attack by warning that a Labor government that relied on the Greens to hold power would increase mining royalties. Labor has talked down any prospect of a deal with the Greens.

Macfarlane, a former Minister in the Howard Government, said the "Vote Greens Last" campaign was strategised by the board in February and had several precedents. It was also just Part A of the QRC election campaign.

"There is a Part B, but I can't talk to you about that," Macfarlane said.

It follows the dramatic decision by BHP and Origin to suspend their membership of the QRC. South32 has also expressed its concern about the campaign and it is understood that Anglo is similarly concerned. BHP, South 32 and Anglo are all on the 14-person board of the QRC, as is APLNG which is part owned by Origin.

"We would expect under a Labor-Green coalition that they would increase royalties because the Greens are saying they want to increase them four-fold.

"Obviously environmental legislation and green tape will increase, the Lake Eyre Basin will be locked away and the Greens will attempt to wind back the Galilee approvals."

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/news-federal-budget/2020/10/11/federal-budget-energy-renewables/>

'Really lost the plot': Budget's clean energy policies fail to generate a buzz

Killian Plastow, New Daily, 12/10/2020

A leading economist has slammed the federal government's decision to support the

ailing fossil fuel industry over a burgeoning renewable energy market as "gesture politics".

The 2020 federal budget offers only "trivial" support for the renewable energy sector, according to Australian Laureate Fellow in Economics at the University of Queensland, John Quiggin.

Meanwhile, the ailing fossil fuel industry will benefit from large-scale government spending as part of Prime Minister Scott Morrison's 'gas-fired' recovery plans.

The strategy is "out of step" with the rest of the world and risks Australia being isolated by key trade partners, Professor Quiggin said.

The federal government will spend \$52.9 million over the next four years on its controversial gas-fired recovery plan plan, including:

- \$28.3 million over three years establishing strategic plans to accelerate gas developments in "priority geological basins";
- \$13.7 million over four years to continue the CSIRO's Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance (GISERA);
- \$10.9 million in 2020-21 to implement a sequenced plan to reset the east coast gas market.

On the renewable side of the energy sector, the government set aside \$5 million to invest in electric vehicle manufacturing.

A further \$1.9 billion (to be spent over the next 12 years) was earmarked to fund the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and Clean Energy Finance Corporation, and to invest in low emissions technology across the National Energy Market.

That's roughly \$158 million a year, to be shared across the two organisations and related projects.

"It's effectively only trivial federal policy support for renewable energy," Professor Quiggin said.

"What we see is something that treats clean energy as a domestic political issue, which is about symbolism rather than substance."

Professor Quiggin noted an undisclosed sum of money, likely \$11 million, was set aside to upgrade Delta Electricity's Vales Point Power Station in New South Wales.

Delta Electricity's chairperson Trevor St

Baker is a long-time Liberal Party donor, he added.

"It's a terrible waste of \$11 million, but we're talking absolute peanuts in terms of any kind of policy impact," he said.

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/politics/state-election-new-acland-coal-mine-hot-topic-in-clermont/news-story/490fa1293fd6fcc4e5a613752ebb1459>

Clermont has again become a battleground between the Left and Right with a tongue-in-cheek 'tribute' to the Bob Brown rally pushing to start the New Acland Coal Mine.

Caitlan Charles, Townsville Bulletin, 12/10/2020

LNP Senator Matt Canavan organised the event in recreation of Mr Brown's 2019 convoy that aimed to stop the Adani Carmichael Mine from going ahead.

Burdekin LNP MP Dale Last slammed his rival, Labor's Mike Brunner, for refusing to attend the event at the Grand Hotel in Clermont.

Dale Last was one of 120 at the event, including Clive Palmer, which focused on supporting the New Acland Coal Mine in the Darling Downs.

Brunner said it was "absolute rubbish" to suggest he, or his party, were not supportive of the mining industry.

He said that Labor had approved 16 coal mines in its time in government, a statistic that proved its support for the industry.

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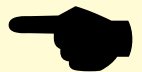
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