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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 3:38 • 10 NOVEMBER 2020

Qld enviro department encourages Santos to increase flaring pollution



Flare smoke drifts over Curtis Island and the city of Gladstone from the Santos liquid natural gas (LNG) export plant. Photo: Gladstone Observer

New documents obtained under Right to Information laws reveal the Queensland Government encouraged Santos to update its Gladstone GLNG plant Environmental Authority so the company could increase pollution.

The recommendation from the state's environment department came after Santos was fined for a flaring incident at the facility last year where black smoke was visible for longer than the permitted five minutes in a two hour period.

The new application to amend the company's EA, if approved, would

allow the GLNG plant to emit black smoke for up to 90 minutes at a time during "maintenance".

Similar conditions are already in place at the neighbouring QCLNG facility, despite objections from Gladstone community groups.

Santos fined \$13,000 for smoke violation

In its Compliance Report to Santos in relation to the \$13,000 fine for violating its original EA, the department officer states:

• Continued p2

Fossil Fool publishes catch-up edition

FFB has caught up on a month's worth of fossil fuel news, after taking time out to attend to a pressing legal matter.

Just like your Knitting Nannas, the **Fossil Fool** is always watching. This edition's news summary hasn't missed any major developments!

FFB crushed nearly 33,000 words down to 13,000 for subscribers to skim through and focus on items of interest. Don't feel obliged to read everything: the aim is to save time and direct you to your individual interests.

If clicking the link doesn't get you to the original story, a copy and paste into your browser usually does the trick.

FFB also has on record the full text of every news story, and is happy to supply if requested.

It's been an amazing month, with an election in **Queensland** subject to a pro-mining, anti-Greens campaign from the **QRC** (p15-16). Labor was re-elected.

The **US election** was of intense interest. **Joe Biden**, with progressive climate policy plans, overtook the incumbent **Trump** – although nearly a quarter million American deaths from Covid-19 and Trump's generally gross behaviour were probably more prominent in voters' minds (see Fossil Politics p13-18).

Adani's name change has many laughing and a clever social media move from activists (p6-7).

Enjoy! We're back on track for next week.



• **P2: Climate of the Nation 2020**

• **P3: Beyond coal in the Hunter Valley**

• **P4: Methane now measured from space**

Santos encouraged to increase pollution

• Continued from p1

"I further advised (redacted) that the department would like to have further discussions with Santos in regard to ways forward to prevent reoccurrences of such events/alleged offences. (Redacted) suggested that an EA amendment process is likely desirable to Santos and I stated that the department is of the same opinion. A meeting will be held... in the coming weeks to discuss an EA amendment." (Compliance Report, P 14)

Santos has subsequently applied to amend its EA so its GLNG plant can now (P15):

- Release visible black smoke into the air via "flaring" for a continuous 90 minute period during "maintenance activity".
- Cause "an environmental nuisance at any sensitive or commercial place" through the releasing of dust and particulate matter if it occurs due to an emergency, or is authorised by its environmental authority or the EP Act.

The GLNG and QCLNG plants near Gladstone are already able to flare black smoke continuously at night because under their EA conditions, doing so doesn't count as impeding visual amenity.

Gladstone Conservation Council co-ordinator Anna Hitchcock said it was disgraceful that a government department charged with protect-

ing the environment and the state's people from harm would actively encourage companies to increase pollution.

"The Queensland Government has encouraged Santos to water down its Environment Authority simply to make it more convenient for Santos to pollute our air," she said.

Gasco's lied about smokeless flares

"When the gas plants were built, the companies promised the community smokeless flares. This was clearly a lie.

"The government doesn't even monitor these LNG plants for EA violations – it is solely up to members of the public and community groups like ours to report violations. If approved, it will become harder to prove Santos has produced black smoke for longer than a continuous 90 minute period because we are simply taking photos with our phones to do the government's job for it.

"This is not just a case of giant gas companies getting what they want – it's a case of a government actively making polluting easier at the expense of the public's health."

The Gladstone Conservation Council will make a submission opposing the changes to Santos' EA, just as it did when QCLNG applied to relax its EA two years ago.

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Climate of the Nation 2020

In the wake of the devastating Black Summer bushfires, an overwhelming majority of Australians (82%) say they are concerned about climate change resulting in more bushfires, according to a new benchmark report released by the Australia Institute's Climate & Energy Program.

The annual Climate of the Nation benchmark report has tracked Australian attitudes on climate change for over a decade, since 2007.

The 2020 Climate of the Nation report finds that:

- After the devastating Black Summer bushfires, eight in ten Australians (82%) are concerned that climate change will result in more bushfires, up from 76% in 2019
- Vast majority of Australians (83%) want coal-fired power stations to be phased out
- Only 12% of Australians prefer investment in gas to power Australia's economic recovery, while the majority of Australians (59%) prefer investment in renewables as a pathway for economic recovery
- Australians overestimate gas industry employment by a factor of 40x, believing, on average, that 8.2% of the workforce is in fossil gas mining when the reality is it represents just 0.2% of the Australian workforce

● Seven in ten Australians (71%) want Australia to be a global leader in finding solutions to climate change, a jump of 9 percentage points from 2019

● More than two in three Australians (68%) believe Australia should have a national target for net-zero emissions by 2050, including majority support across Coalition voters (59%), Labor voters (81%), Greens voters (90%), Other voters (65%).

"There is one clear message most Australians want more renewables and less fossil fuels. That means phase out coal fired power stations, bypass a gas-fired transition and plug into renewables to power their future," said Richie Merzian, Climate & Energy Director at the Australia Institute.

• Download the report at tai.org.au

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Guess who was flattened in the Qld election? Cartoon: Mark Knight, Herald Sun



ALL QUEENSLAND ELECTIONS... BEAUTIFUL... ONE DAY...

Hunter Jobs Alliance looks to a future beyond coal

A new alliance of union and environment groups in the Hunter officially formed this week with the aim of ending the failed “jobs versus environment” dynamic that they say is holding the region back.

The Hunter Jobs Alliance is an initiative of 13 local and state-wide unions and environmental advocacy groups in the region.

The Alliance has been spearheaded by the NSW Branch of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, working in partnership with Labor Environment Action Network and state and regional environmental groups.

NSW Secretary of the AMWU, Cory Wright said, “Our union has thought long and hard about how we might intervene effectively in the fractured politics of energy that are short-changing workers, regional communities and future generations.

“We have taken the unlikely step of building a coalition with other trade unions, community and environmental groups to start the long process of advocating for industry and regional investment and the first thing we’ll be pushing for is a local statutory authority that can assist the region in this process.”

The Hunter Jobs Alliance believes the Hunter region needs three key things:

- A public process to involve the public and stakeholders in planning for and adjusting to changes in the thermal coal market. This process must be upfront with people about the challenges we’re facing and give the region control over major decisions about new industry and structural adjustment.
- Public investment in new industry and support for workers and communities: businesses must contribute and participate, but large-scale public investment is necessary for scale, certainty, transparency and to ensure the public interest is paramount.
- Tangible and immediate actions: there are opportunities now that can begin investment, create jobs and build confidence in the region’s future, such as the transformation of Tomago aluminium to renewable energy, maintaining its keystone role in Hunter industry and energy stability.

The transformation this region needs to undertake will occur at multiple



The Newcastle-based Hunter Jobs Alliance spokespeople: L to R Georgina Woods, Cory Wright, Justin Page and Tim Lang. Photo: Lock the Gate

scales, involving people and stakeholders transparently and making workers, communities and the environment the first priorities.

Snapshot of projects

Tomago transformed:

Tomago aluminium smelter produces 25% of Australia’s aluminium, a product that will be increasingly sought-after in low-carbon industry. Switching Tomago to renewable energy and giving it a formal role in energy stability can decarbonise this keystone industry and create wider opportunities. It needs a region-specific approach that prioritises workers, community and the environment.

Housing and school retrofit:

Public investment in retrofitting 264,000 homes in the Hunter with heat and energy efficiency technology and with solar and batteries over five years would employ 10,000 people per year and can begin immediately. Schools also need fitting out with solar and climate adaptation strategies to keep kids cool

Fly ash reuse:

Currently, 150 million tonnes of fly ash is gathering in dumps next to the Hunter’s four power stations where it is a source of pollution. Incentives to reuse this material will reduce greenhouse and heavy metal pollution and could lead to new manufacturing of building products in the region.

Next steps

The members of the Hunter Jobs Alliance will be consulting their members and supporters over the next month.

The list of priority projects will be refined and engagement with government and business will begin, advocating for a local statutory authority to oversee investment and public involvement in the process.

A summit will be held on 26 March inviting community, government and business stakeholders from across the region to work together to establish common ground about what the region needs to secure its future as thermal coal markets decline.

Groups participating in the Hunter Jobs Alliance are: Australian Manufacturing Workers Unions NSW Branch, Electrical Trades Union NSW & ACT Branch (ETU), United Workers’ Union; The Australian, Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union NSW & ACT Services Branch (ASU), Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU); Teachers Federation NSW Branch, Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch, The New South Wales Nurses and Midwives Association (NSWNMA), Labor Environment Action Network, Lock the Gate Alliance, Hunter Community Environment Centre, The Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales.

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

Satellite measures methane from space

GHGSat has launched PULSE, a digital map showing methane (CH₄) concentrations in Earth's atmosphere, worldwide. The free-to-use online resource combines data from GHGSat's own satellites, the only ones able to measure methane in high-resolution, with information from other sources such as the European Space Agency's Sentinel-5P spacecraft.

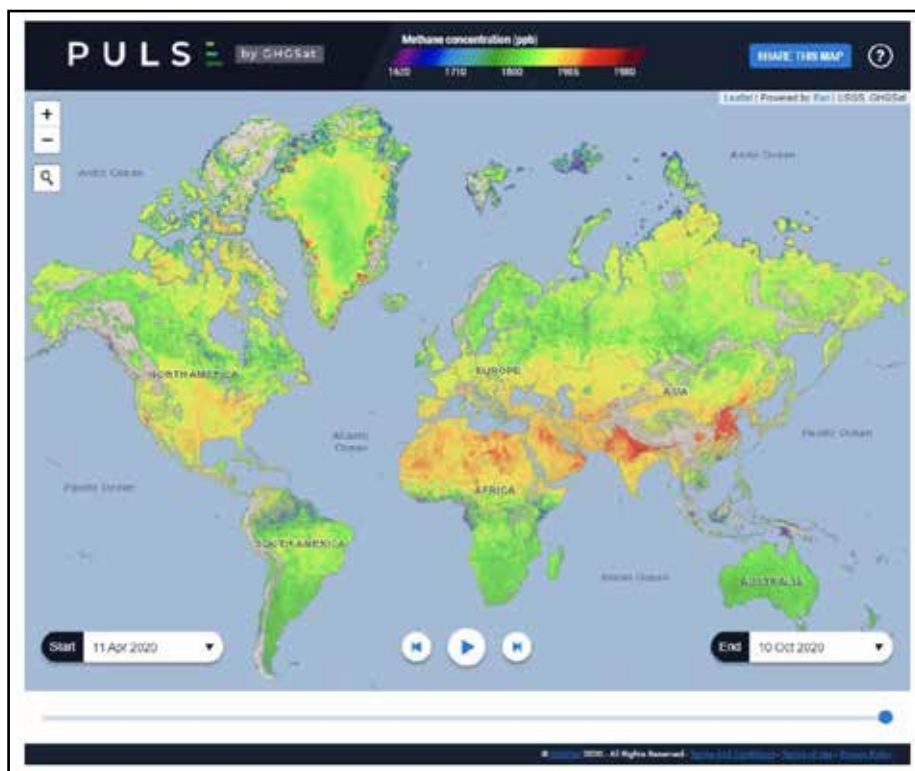
PULSE shows monthly methane concentrations averages, updated weekly, on a grid averaging 2km x 2km over land. A slider function lets users explore how gas levels change over time, with the facility to track back, up to six months.

The new map is intended to raise awareness of this potent greenhouse gas by showing spatial and temporal patterns of methane, around the world. For example, the map shows how concentrations of CH₄ grow in Greenland, Finland and Russia during the Arctic summer; how the Dolomite Mountains traps the gas in Italy's Po Valley and how levels remain consistently high throughout the year over the Permian Basin, the epicentre of US oil and gas production.

Carbon dioxide's role in climate change is well documented but methane has, until recently, escaped the same scrutiny. Concentrations of CH₄ in the atmosphere are increasing. Invisible to the naked eye, it has a global warming potential around 84 times greater than CO₂, over 20 years, and accounts for about a quarter of all man-made global warming.

This new resource shows concentrations that result from both the emission (release) and transport (movement in the atmosphere due to winds and chemical processes) of methane. Methane is produced by natural processes, such as the decay of vegetation in wetlands but a significant proportion (c. 60%) is attributable to human activity, with energy production, agriculture and waste management (landfills and dumpsites) all being major sources.

PULSE is not designed to identify specific methane emitters. However, to support industry and governments to reduce emissions, GHGSat offers a range of commercial services including hotspot detection, predictive analysis and 25m resolution imagery to identify sources.



Stephane Germain, CEO, GHGSat said: "PULSE represents the new state of the art when it comes to visualizing methane. Our day job is to monitor emissions for industry and governments around the world, using a growing fleet of satellite and aircraft sensors, and supported by powerful, proprietary analytics. We have drawn on all these capabilities in the design of PULSE, which will become an ever more important resource for all.

Advanced version being developed

"This first iteration of PULSE is only the beginning. We are already pushing ahead with an advanced version that will map, not just concentrations, but also emissions – globally, on the same grid and with an even higher frequency. This matters, because concentrations tell us how much gas there already is in the atmosphere: emissions reveal the rate at which methane is being added. Knowing this allows for the continuous quantification of gas emissions inventories, at any geographic scale (local, province, state or national)."

The interactive map is one of several initiatives by GHGSat to make data openly available. The company recently announced that 5% of its data from its second satellite, GHGSat-C1 "Iris" is being made available to the scientific community through an 'Announcement of Opportunity' with

the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Canadian Space Agency. GHGSat data is also being assessed for inclusion in the ESA Third Party Mission programme which sponsors the cost of access to satellite data for research and earth observation purposes, enabling the scientific community to develop applications.

The *AFR* reports: "Other organisations are also working to root out unknown emissions leaks. The Environmental Defence Fund, Harvard University and the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory are developing MethaneSat, a project to measure human-made emissions by satellite and supply that data to the public. NASA is designing a stationary satellite called GeoCarb to collect 10 million daily observations of the concentrations of carbon gases across the Americas.

"As expected, areas with high levels of oil and gas drilling activity – from West Texas and New Mexico to the Caspian Sea and parts of the Persian Gulf – show higher levels of methane, probably caused by leaks and flaring. But there are also high methane levels in parts of northern Canada and Siberia with little to no industrial activity. It's also unclear what's causing red zones to emerge across the Sahara desert."

• See the mapping here:

<https://www.ghgsat.com/pulse/>

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



New Acland gets another tick from govt

The Queensland Government has quietly handed out one of the final approvals for the New Acland coal mine stage 3 expansion that would nullify meagre protections originally intended to protect the state's very best farming country.

The New Acland coal mine has already dug up and destroyed land classed as "priority agricultural area" and "strategic cropping land" under the Regional Planning Interests Act (RPIA) – legislation introduced in 2014 that was intended to protect the state's best farmland from coal and gas extraction. The stage 3 expansion, if approved, would destroy even more of this prime agricultural land.

Despite this, three months ago the Queensland Treasury Department (encompassing the Planning Department) quietly waved through a Regional Interest Development Approval (RIDA), which gave New Acland the right to mine the land that is mapped as a Priority Agricultural Area under the Darling Downs Regional Plan – areas where farming was meant to be priority land use.

The decision was quietly posted on a government website with no notification to the many landholders and other groups that had made submissions on the original application in January 2020.

Lock the Gate Alliance has previously revealed that while only 11% of Queensland is mapped as priority areas under the RPIA, 37% of that area is under threat from or has already been destroyed by existing coal and unconventional gas projects.

Oakey Coal Action Alliance president and alpaca farmer Aileen Harrison said the decision to approve the RIDA over the area was disgraceful at a time when she and others were challenging the project in the High Court of Australia.

"The soils New Acland now has approval to rip up and destroy are among the top 1.5% in the state," she said.

"The legislation that is meant to protect this top-quality country has clearly failed and must be urgently reformed by the reinstated Palaszczuk Government."



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In the news this week

This month Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 32,900 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.theguardian.com/business/2020/oct/28/private-investigator-hired-by-adani-secretly-photographed-activists-family>

Private investigator hired by Adani secretly photographed activist's daughter on way to school

Ben Smees, Guardian, 28/10/2020

A private investigator working for Adani took covert photographs of an environmental activist walking his nine-year-old daughter to primary school, court documents have revealed.

The affidavit of the investigator – who was instructed by lawyers representing Adani in its civil case against activist Ben Pennings – also revealed he surveilled Pennings' wife, trawled her Facebook page and followed her to work.

Documents detailing the surveillance of Pennings and his family were tendered to the Queensland supreme court in a recent "Anton Piller" case, in which Adani had sought permission to conduct an unannounced search of the activist's family home.

The Queensland supreme court and court of appeal both rejected the move, saying the search could result in "humiliation and family distress".

An email from the law firm representing Adani against Pennings, Dowd and Co, instructed a private investigator, Garry Andrew Sweet, to conduct surveillance for "the consideration of vulnerable persons ... at the time of execution of any search warrant".

"Please can you undertake surveillance at the ... address to confirm, if possible, who is at the address, including information as to Ben Pennings, his spouse and children, namely their names and ages if possible."

Sweet's affidavit also says he told a colleague that his investigation of Pennings was "one of our Adani jobs".

Adani would not confirm whether it has ordered the surveillance of other people, or for what purpose.

The surveillance of Pennings' family occurred in May.

Pennings' wife, Rachel, said it was "creepy and unsettling not knowing if Adani will follow me and my child again, whether they will try to raid our home again".

"I've never ever been to a Stop Adani protest but they still decided to intimidate me. It's not right and it shouldn't be legal."

Pennings said: "This is Adani all over. This is what Labor and the LNP actively support. Politicians would go berserk if



The Adani brand has become so toxic in Australia the company has changed its name to Bravus Mining & Resources. While that may sound brave, Latin scholars say the word also translates to "cut-throat" or "a villain". Activists were quick to create a spoof Bravus page on Facebook (see over page).

anyone followed the partner and kids of a mining executive. Adani takes photographs of my daughter walking to primary school but unless anything changes this election Labor and the LNP will still allow them to operate in Queensland.

"Queensland Labor has had plenty of opportunity to stand up against Adani's intimidation of scientists and concerned citizens. It's absolutely appalling they've given Adani a royalty holiday instead."

The mining company building the controversial Carmichael coalmine is suing Pennings, from the group Galilee Blockade, for conspiracy, intimidation and breach of confidence.

Adani alleges Pennings "orchestrated a sustained campaign" against the Carmichael project, in which he solicited confidential information about the construction process and used it to harass contractors.

<https://www.insurancebusinessmag.com/au/news/breaking-news/climate-campaigners-continue-battle-against-insuring-adani-coal-mine-237499.aspx>

Climate campaigners continue battle against insuring Adani coal mine

Roxanne Libatique, Insurance Business Australia, 29/10/2020

Climate campaigners from the Stop Adani campaign and Pacific Climate Warriors continue to call on Lloyd's of London and its members to rule out insurance for Adani's Carmichael coal mine. This time, the campaigners hosted an online rally in which over 2,000 people RSVP'd.

During the online rally, the participants took part in a series of social and digital

actions asking Lloyd's of London and its members to stop providing coverage for the Carmichael coal mine.

The campaigners' efforts these past few weeks did not go to waste as two Lloyd's managing agents, Cincinnati and Newline, ruled out insurance for the coal mine when questioned by the Stop Adani campaign.

<https://www.themorningbulletin.com.au/news/stop-adani-protesters-gather-in-rockhampton/4131449/>

Stop Adani protesters gather in Rockhampton

Timothy Cox, Morning Bulletin, 02/11/2020

A cohort of Stop Adani protesters gathered outside Queensland LNP Senator Matt Canavan's office this morning hoping to voice their opposition to the mine.

The 13 Queenslanders travelled from Bundaberg and the Gold Coast, moving through Rockhampton and continuing on to the mine site.

"We had a stop over in Rockhampton and saw Senator Canavan's office in town and paid a visit," Kate Baldry, one of the protesters, said.

"We left a message voicing our concerns."

"Queensland needs to plan for the inevitable transition away from coal or risk being left behind."

"Senator Matt Canavan continues to back a dying industry with false promises of jobs."

<https://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/news/townsville/adani-changes-its-name-to-bravus-mining-resources-in-australia/news-story/4a7961b84cb2575729795ca0d7d92361>

Adani changes its name to Bravus Mining & Resources in Australia

Townsville Bulletin, 05/11/2020

Stop Adani organisers will be forced to scrap placards and rethink protests after the controversial mining company changed its name yesterday.

Adani will now be known as Bravus Mining & Resources in Australia.

Chief executive David Boshoff said the change was to mark the 10-year anniversary of the company's operations in Australia.

"With the project well underway, it was time to give Adani its own Australian brand," he said.

When asked if the move was about helping silence criticism from anti-Adani protesters Boshoff said no.

He said Bravus was Latin for brave and courageous, a description that suited the company.

• *The AFR, publishing the same story, noted: 'Other definitions on the Internet described [Bravus] as meaning "cut-throat" or "a villain" – not great for a company that has been targeted by environmentalists for its behaviour both in Australia and India.'*

<https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/townsville/activists-create-fake-profile-for-adanis-rebranded-company-bravus-mining-and-resources/news-story/9efb844b25da16c25f7b693a5b4231f9>

Activists create fake profile for Adani's rebranded company, Bravus Mining and Resources

Caitlan Charles, Townsville Bulletin, 08/11/2020

Activists who hijacked the Bravus name on social media in the latest attack against mining company Adani have been reported for impersonation.

The international company announced last week its Australian arm would launch under the new name Bravus Resources and Mining, sparking criticism from anti-mining activists.

Protesters marched through the streets of Townsville with a giant poo on Friday, with Frontline Action on Coal spokeswoman Kate Baldry saying they were calling out the name change as "we don't think you can polish a turd".

A Facebook page cropped up on Thursday under the name Bravus Mining and Resources. It said it was the "official Bravus Mining account" and that it was a mining company that had "nothing to do with Adani and is working hard to wreck the climate".

In one post, the activists wrote: Adani Australia is launching Bravus Mining. We've made a significant investment in building our coal mine, but 10 years on we haven't dug a single lump of coal, we're in shitloads

of debt and our insurers are dropping like flies. Hopefully a new name will sort it out!"

A Bravus Mining and Resources spokeswoman said the company's new Facebook was @bravusresources.

"Activists attempting to use our name and brand to establish alternative social media pages on our behalf are being reported to Facebook for impersonation," she said.

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://australianminingnews.com/whitehaven-to-delay-key-projects-amid-coal-slump/>

Whitehaven to delay key projects amid coal slump

Australian Mining News, 15/10/2020

Whitehaven Coal has paused three key development projects, including the Narrabri and Vickery extension projects in New South Wales and the Winchester South metallurgical coal project in Queensland.

As stated in Whitehaven's September quarterly report, the subdued coal markets have forced the company to be cautious in allocating its capital to expansion.

Whitehaven doesn't expect to make a final investment decision on these projects, on which the company's production will be underpinned for the next 10 years.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/coal-miners-dive-as-china-cuts-imports/news-story/95e0941d-d1cbf49b0eeb06fb60f9f4c2>

Coal miners dive as China cuts imports

Nick Evans, Perry Williams & Paul Garvey, Aus, 13/10/2020

Australian coal miners could be forced to sell "distressed" cargoes at a discount as China looks to restrict imports of both

thermal and coking coal, according to consulting major Wood Mackenzie, as shares in Australian miners tumbled on the prospect of fresh import bans.

China's reported crackdown on Australian coal comes amid ongoing trade tensions between Canberra and Beijing, and follows Chinese authorities slapping tariffs on Australian barley earlier this year.

Shares in Australian coal exporters took a significant hit on Tuesday, with Coronado Global Resources, New Hope Corp and Stanmore Coal all down more than 6%.

WoodMac analyst Rory Simington said the latest round of restrictions were likely to hit Australian coking coal as well as energy coal exporters.

<https://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/6975881/coal-ash-piling-up-at-a-rate-of-seven-tonnes-a-minute/>

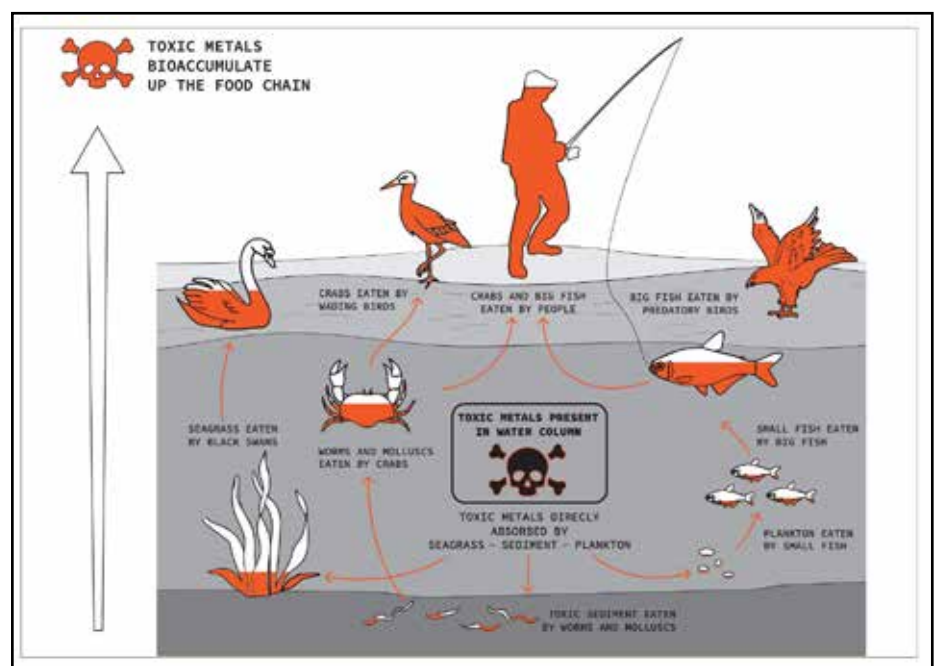
New report finds coal ash management strategies are failing to stop pollution spreading

Matthew Kelly, Maitland Mercury, 20/10/2020

Existing coal ash management and reuse practices are failing to prevent the contamination of ecosystems in Lake Macquarie and across the Hunter, a new report has found.

Out of the Ashes II, produced by the Hunter Community Environment Centre, also estimated 100 tonnes of heavy metals leach into NSW waterways every year from the combined 216 million tonnes of accumulated coal ash waste in Lake Macquarie (101 million tonnes), the Central Hunter Valley (84 million tonnes), Central Tablelands (28 million tonnes) and Wollongong (3 million tonnes).

Coal ash, a byproduct of burning coal at power plants, represents 18% of all waste



How toxic metals from coal ash waste accumulate in the environment – a diagram from the recently released 'Out of the Ashes II' report.

produced in Australia. In NSW there is 200 million tonnes of ash is stored in unlined waste dams.

Ash waste is growing by 3.8 million tonnes a year in NSW, the equivalent of seven tonnes of ash waste dumped per minute.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-21/russell-vale-coal-mine-expansion-no-risk-to-sydney-water/12785696>

Wollongong Coal says Russell Vale mine expansion 'no risk' to Sydney's drinking water, but locals are wary

Ainslie Drewitt-Smith, ABC, 21/10/2020

A New South Wales coal mining company that wants to expand a mothballed operation beneath Sydney's drinking water catchment says it has "engineered out" any risk to the environment.

Wollongong Coal is seeking approval from the State Government to extract 3.7 million tonnes of coal over five years from its Russell Vale mine.

During a two-day public hearing of the Independent Planning Commission (IPC), chief executive Warwick Lidbury said the company would use a bord-and-pillar mining method to mitigate subsidence.

"It excludes longwall mining and has engineered out the risk associated with mining under the water catchment, as well as the noise generated, air quality, and the visual impacts on the pit top area.

"The extraction plan will ensure no cracking of the strata, no additional loss of water from the catchment, no adverse effects of the water quality on the surface, no adverse effects on the upland swamps, no effects that will increase bushfire risk and no effects on any Aboriginal sites."

The colliery has been in care and maintenance since 2015 and its owners are \$1 billion in debt.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has now recommended the IPC approve the project after what it described as an "exhaustive process".

More than 80 parties, including residents, community organisations and businesses, made presentations to the commission on Monday and Tuesday, with fewer than a quarter in favour of the proposal.

Opposition to the project included concerns for water loss from Sydney's drinking supply and climate change, as well as truck movements, noise pollution, and the impact on air quality.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Nic Clyde used his presentation to refute claims the bord-and-pillar technique would remove the risk to the water catchment.

"[The project] will cause the loss of about 10 million litres a year to surface waters, which adds up to 50 million litres of water over the five years," he said.

The IPC will make a determination on the Russell Vale Expansion Project in the coming months.

<https://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/6980369/mine-subsidence-concerns-overruled-can-be-worked-out-after-approval/>

Wollongong Coal mine subsidence concerns overruled, can be worked out "after approval"

Ben Langford, Illawarra Mercury, 22/10/2020

Expert advice that potentially unstable old pillars had been ignored in Wollongong Coal's Russell Vale mine expansion was overruled by a NSW government agency, which said these risks could be assessed after the mine was working.

The extent of weak or "marginally stable" pillars from earlier mining was not known, meaning subsidence could not be fully assessed, NSW Resources Regulator principal subsidence inspector Dr Gang Li told the Independent Planning Commission.

"Without a reasonable understanding of this key risk factor, we are in the dark in making decisions in relation to Russell Vale colliery's proposed revised underground expansion project," Dr Li told the IPC on October 13.

This concern was later "clarified" by the Regulator's executive director Anthony Keon, who said in a letter to the IPC that these concerns could be worked out after the mine was approved.

Gavin Workman, from the group Illawarra Residents for Responsible Mining, said it was an "outrage" to suggest approving the mine then working out subsidence concerns afterwards.

"Wollongong Coal still hasn't met its obligations for its previous approvals at Russell Vale," he said.

"It is an outrage that NSW Planning's solution is to approve this expansion and then get Wollongong Coal to inspect all the 'marginally stable pillars' in the Bulli seam to see whether they are strong enough to hold the whole place up.

"It is totally inappropriate that we should risk our drinking water by letting a mining company self-assess the likelihood of major damage after it has been given approval to mine."

<https://www.afr.com/companies/mining/vaile-tells-big-banks-to-back-coal-if-they-want-government-guarantees-20201021-p56716>

Vaile tells big banks to back coal if they want government guarantees

Peter Ker, AFR, 22/10/2020

Whitehaven Coal chairman and former deputy prime minister Mark Vaile ramped up political pressure on the big banks, saying the government guarantees created by the "four pillars policy" meant they had a moral obligation to support the nation's biggest industries, including coal.

Asian banks now provide close to half of Whitehaven's \$1 billion revolving debt facility, up from about 20% six years ago, and Vaile said the greater reliance on Japanese and Chinese banks was partly driven

by the tighter coal lending policies adopted by Australian banks.

While two of the big four banks still lend to Whitehaven, Vaile said the declining support for coal was frustrating in a year when miners were told by the government to keep digging through pandemic lockdowns because they were an essential industry.

"There is a taxpayer guarantee underpinning the activity of those banks and that was highlighted during the GFC.

"There ought to be an unwritten, but semi-moral obligation by the major banks in Australia to support those major Australian industries.

Despite the increasing reliance on Chinese banks, Whitehaven's lending syndicate still includes National Australia Bank and Westpac, both of which announced new coal lending policies in 2017.

The comments come as Whitehaven shareholders will be asked to vote on a shareholder resolution on Thursday which, if supported, would compel Whitehaven to set a date by which it will cease mining coal.

Vaile and the Whitehaven board opposed the resolution.

The creator of the resolution, Julien Vincent from Friends of the Earth subsidiary Market Forces, noted that pressure on lenders was coming from regulators like the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, as much as it was from activist groups.

"As finance sector regulators have repeatedly warned, climate change poses system-wide risks to the economy. Forcing banks to lend to pure-play coal mining companies whose business models are consistent with climate catastrophe is deeply immoral, and another departure from the free-market economy that Vaile once pretended to support," he said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-26/queensland-community-opposes-liberty-mutual-mine-baralaba-south/12795120>

Community opposes Baralaba South Mine plans to build on flood plain and prime agricultural land

Inga Stunzer & Rachel McGhee, ABC, 26/10/2020

A rural town in Queensland's coal country is fighting the development of a US-owned mine it says will destroy thousands of hectares of prime agricultural land and pollute a major river system.

US insurance giant Liberty Mutual plans to build a coal mine 8 kilometres south of Baralaba, about 120km south-west of Rockhampton, and 500 metres from the Dawson River.

The mining lease for the mine covers a 2,214-hectare stretch of land on a major flood plain, of which half is on what the Queensland Government has zoned as strategic cropping land.

At full production, the Baralaba South Mine

project would mine up to 6 million tonnes per year of run-of-mine coal to produce up to 3.5Mt/yr of pulverised coal injection and thermal coal product for up to 40 years.

Landowners in the area say this will be catastrophic come the next major flooding event, despite the mine's plan to build levee banks.

The Baralaba community has a population of about 300 people, mostly farmers and miners who are employed at numerous mines in the region.

A recent survey conducted by community group Save the Dawson found 97% of residents were against the South Baralaba coal project.

Local grazier and group spokesperson Brett Coombe said the survey received 297 responses, which included all the landholders within 20 to 40km of Baralaba.

He said more than 99% supported the protection of prime agricultural land.

Coombe said three towns — Baralaba, Woorabinda and Duarina — all drew their water supply from the Baralaba weir, and would be impacted by potential contamination.

There were also concerns that a levee bank would not hold during a flood.

"In the last flood, the mine wall [at North Baralaba Mine] busted and we had contamination to the water supply, and I guess that can happen again," he said.

<https://www.themorningbulletin.com.au/news/oldest-operating-mine-in-qld-achieves-rehabilitati/4130696/7c-spt=1604548440ja9c818cd0b233c2ddd5cfc131f33cec0>

Oldest operating mine in Qld achieves rehabilitation

Morning Bulletin, 02/11/2020

The Collinsville open cut operation has achieved government sign-off for its progressive rehabilitation of mined land.

Collinsville was notified that 99 hectares of rehabilitation over a previous mining area known as Belmore had successfully met all criteria the Environment Department needed for certification.

It is the fifth Glencore mine to get this tick of approval, following certification of rehabilitation at Glencore's Newlands (2017) and Rolleston (2018 and 2019) mines in Queensland, along with Westside (2020) and Ulan (2020) in NSW.

The Belmore site was mined using open cut methods between 2000 and 2003.

The working pit was completely backfilled following the end of mining and rehabilitation of the area was completed 2003-2004.

Since 2007, Belmore has been used for grazing cattle by a private landholder from a neighbouring property while rehabilitation monitoring of the area continued.

<https://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/6995546/south32s-longwall-plans-at-dendrobium-wins-over-nsw-government/>

South32's plans to extend longwall mining at Dendrobium mine has won the support of the state government

Glen Humphries, Illawarra Mercury, 02/11/2020

South32's plans to extend longwall mining at Dendrobium mine has won the support of the state government.

The Planning, Industry and Environment Department released its findings on Monday, which recommended the project to mine 21 longwall panels under the water catchment.

This is not the final hurdle; South32 still needs to gain the approval of the Independent Planning Commission before it can begin mining at Kembla Heights.

South32 is looking to expand mining into two new areas, located adjacent to Avon and Cordeaux dams, which it said would allow for the extraction of an additional 78 million tonnes and extend the mine's life until 2048.

Conditions include monitoring of waterways, repairing any damage caused and not exceeding the subsidence impacts as stated in South32's environmental impact statement.

South32 has also offered to pay \$103 million to compensate for the loss of water caused by "the fractured surface post-mining".

However, despite recommending the expansion, the assessment report admitted the impact of subsidence "would be significant" in some areas.

"Anticipated subsidence impacts include fracturing of streambeds and diversion of surface water underground; losses from the reservoirs due to increased permeability in the solid rock mass separating them from longwall voids; and impacts on surface water quality, including an increase mobilisation of metals such as iron," it stated.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/13/airborne-radioactivity-increases-downwind-of-fracking-study-finds>

Airborne radioactivity increases downwind of fracking, study finds

Damian Carrington, Guardian, 14/10/2020

The radioactivity of airborne particles increases significantly downwind of fracking sites in the US, a study has found.

The Harvard scientists said this could damage the health of people living in nearby communities and that further research was needed to understand how to stop the release of the radioactive elements from under the ground.

The radioactivity rose by 40% compared with the background level in the most affected sites. The increase will be higher for people living closer than 20km to

the fracking sites, which was the closest distance that could be assessed with the available data.

The scientists used data collected from 157 radiation-monitoring stations across the US between 2001 and 2017. The stations were built during the cold war when nuclear war was a threat. They compared data with the position and production records of 120,000 fracking wells.

Petros Koutrakis at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health in Boston, who led the study, said: "If you asked me to go and live downwind [of fracking sites], I would not go. People should not go crazy, but I think it's a significant risk that needs to be addressed."

The new research, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, examined the increases in the radioactivity of airborne particles when there were operational fracking wells within 20km upwind of a location. With 100 wells upwind the average rise in radioactivity was 7%, but some places had nearly 600 wells upwind.

The team took into account other factors, including weather and sunspot activity. Cosmic rays produced by sunspots increase the levels of particle radioactivity.

The researchers found that fracking resulted in a far bigger increase in particle radioactivity than conventional oil and gas operations. This is because the initial source of the radioactivity is a uranium isotope in the rocks. Tapping a conventional oil and gas reservoir barely disturbs the rock. But in the shale formations targeted by frackers the oil and gas is trapped within the rock, which is blasted apart with high-pressure water and releases the uranium.

The uranium isotope decays to the gas radon, which itself decays to ultrafine radioactive particles containing polonium and lead. These are thought to become attached to particles already in the air and are then carried by the wind.

"The polonium isotopes are the ones which are very toxic," said Koutrakis. The element was used as a poison to kill the former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko in London in 2006. Koutrakis said previous studies have shown that increases in particle radioactivity of the scale seen in his work can have harmful effects on people.

<https://www.theland.com.au/story/6964944/narrabri-gas-miners-want-in/>

Farmers say renewed interest in expired mining leases is bad news

Daniel Pedersen, The Land, 14/10/2020

Two mining companies with expired petroleum exploration licences are trying to reactivate them on the back of the Narrabri Gas Project being approved.

That the companies want to reactivate the expired PELs in northern NSW is no surprise to Mullaley cattle farmer Margaret Fleck.

She said opponents of the Narrabri Gas Project - proposed by Santos and approved by the Independent Planning Commission on September 30 - expected it.

"We all told the IPC's hearing into the Narrabri Gas Project the Santos project was a Trojan horse, we told them this would happen, and it has," she said on Monday.

Two companies, Comet Ridge and Carbon Minerals, are looking to reactivate expired PELs.

Santos is acknowledged as "operator" of [Carbon Minerals] PELs and holds the remaining 65pc stake.

Seeking to reactivate the expired PELs seems at odds with Santos's public insistence the Narrabri project is "contained".

In July last year the Boggabri branch of the National Party moved at the party's state conference that all PELs be extinguished as they expired.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/economics/gas-fired-recovery-plan-a-boon-for-jemenas-pipeline-ambitions/news-story/c8e4128623266c9ddd320e16d95d09d6>

Gas-fired recovery plan a boon for Jemena's pipeline ambitions

Ticky Fullerton, Aus, 18/10/2020

September 15 was a good day for Frank Tudor. It was the day that the federal government publicly landed on gas as the transition fuel for the nation.

Tudor runs Jemena, an energy giant with \$11bn in assets: in Victoria, an electricity network of over 350,000 homes and in NSW, the largest gas distribution network. But it is pipeline infrastructure where the quietly ambitious Chinese and Singaporean-backed operator sees opportunity.

Politics could play well for Jemena. For some time, Australia's dominant gas pipeline business, the listed APA, has been in the crosshairs of the regulator over price and transparency. While the government is prepared to build pipelines in its gas-fired recovery, it wants business to step up. The privately owned Jemena is making inroads into the gas infrastructure market and that can only be good for competition. And yes, even when backed by a Chinese state-owned entity.

Frank Tudor's vision for the south is a bidirectional pipeline from Melbourne to Sydney and up to the Hunter Valley — gas flowing both ways and supplied by LNG import terminals. To the north, he sees Jemena's existing Northern Gas Pipeline delivering the vast potential of the Beetaloo basin in the Northern Territory to Queensland, fed by lateral branches to smaller fields, right down to the government's chosen east coast gas hub of Wallumbilla.

Tudor's eyes are on the Andrew Forrest-backed import terminal AIE, at Port Kembla, midway along his pipeline. "As we think about bringing in the gas from the Port Kembla terminal, we would need to make our pipeline bidirectional, if you like

a manifold. We would need to connect the terminal to the pipeline. We would need to invest in compression and seek to pump gas into Sydney also to pump nearly an equal amount gas back into Victoria.

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/origin-energy-faces-heat-over-northern-territory-gas-drilling-plans-20201020-p566vn.html>

Origin Energy faces heat over Northern Territory gas drilling plans

Nick Toscano, SMH, 21/10/2020

Origin Energy's plans to drill for gas in the Northern Territory's Beetaloo Basin have come under scrutiny, with shareholders raising concerns about global warming and some Indigenous groups warning the project threatens sacred water systems.

The proposal to conduct hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" dominated Origin's investor meeting on Tuesday. Investors quizzed Origin's management on how opening up one of the largest gas basins in the country aligned with the goal of the Paris accord to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees.

Other shareholders and proxy holders also queried the rationale behind pursuing the costly and controversial Beetaloo project given the commercial, environmental, social and brand risks it carries, which could "destroy shareholder value".

Origin also faced objections to its Beetaloo gas plans from traditional owners in the Beetaloo basin region who say they were not consulted and had never given their consent to the drilling, which resumed last month.

Aunty Naomi Wilfred, an Alawa elder from Hodson River, south-east of Katherine, said her people had not been contacted by Origin to discuss the drilling and fracking plans.

"We want to stop this fracking because our water is life," she said. "Water is important to us and we would like to see someone to come across to make us satisfied, sit down and talk with us."

However, the meeting heard conflicting views about who were the traditional owners of the land on which Origin is drilling. Origin assured investors that native-title holders supported the ongoing exploration activity.

"While I have an enormous amount of empathy for your concern you actually didn't represent the traditional owners of the land on which we drill," Cairns said.

Origin Energy gained approvals for gas exploration, including test fracking, from traditional owners through the Northern Land Council.

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/santos-closes-in-on-project-to-trap-carbon-dioxide-underground-20201023-p5681j.html>

Santos closes in on project to trap carbon dioxide underground

Nick Toscano, SMH, 26/10/2020

Energy giant Santos is confident it will be able to give the go-ahead for one of the world's cheapest carbon capture and storage projects in South Australia as the Morrison government indicates work is progressing to have the technology approved for federal carbon credits.

Santos last week completed the final field trial for the Moomba carbon capture and storage (CCS) project, injecting 100 tonnes of carbon dioxide into a depleted gas reservoir in the Cooper Basin, clearing the last major hurdle on the company's end before signing off on an investment decision.

CCS technology - which traps carbon dioxide produced by heavy-emitting factories or fossil fuel-burning power plants before they are emitted into the atmosphere and buries them - has been a divisive area of climate policy, but is being targeted as a top priority for the federal government's emissions reduction roadmap.

Santos managing director Kevin Gallagher said it was now waiting for the Clean Energy Regulator to finalise the methodology for CCS to qualify for federal carbon credits, which would be needed for the project to stack up economically.

Federal Energy and Emissions Reduction Minister Angus Taylor welcomed last week's milestone for Santos's Moomba project and said work on the CCS methodology was "progressing rapidly". Once earned, carbon credits can be sold to third parties that are seeking to offset their carbon emissions.

Critics say CCS, a nascent technology, is economically unproven and is diverting taxpayer funds away from investments in renewable energy.

"Carbon capture and storage is unicorn technology that has already had millions of dollars of public money poured into it," Greens leader Adam Bandt said last month. The Greens also argued CCS was being embraced by big emitters as a distraction from stopping emissions in the first place.

The Moomba project, if it proceeds, would be the second biggest in the country after Chevron's Gorgon project in Western Australia. Moomba would initially have capacity to stash 1.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, and possibly as much as 20 million tonnes.

Carbon capture and storage is in its infancy, across the world and just 20 projects are in commercial use. However, the technology is being increasingly funded by governments and energy companies as part of their decarbonisation initiatives, alongside electrification plans.

<https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/new-caution-about-introducing-a-domestic-gas-reserve-policy-20201026-p56817>

New caution about introducing a domestic gas reserve policy

Phillip Coorey, AFR, 27/10/2020

A government discussion paper into plans for an east coast domestic gas reserve cautions against deterring foreign investment in new gas fields, especially in the COVID-19 climate which has already seen a sharp drop in international demand and price.

At the same time, the paper canvasses a shortfall of gas in the medium term, once the world emerges from the pandemic.

The issues paper, released by Energy and Resources Minister Keith Pitt, allows one month for industry and other stakeholder feedback before the government decides on the final design of any such reserve.

The paper confirms any reserve would apply to prospective gas developments only, either a new field or an expansion of a current project.

<https://www.northqueenslandregister.com.au/story/6987456/cheap-urea-options-promised-as-new-age-sa-gas-player-moves-to-fert/>

Leigh Creek gas to drive discount agricultural urea project

Andrew Marshall, Nth Qld Register, 28/10/2020

A new gas extraction process in South Australia is promising to almost eliminate the nation's dependence on imported urea, and supply the nitrogen fertiliser at a highly competitive price.

Leigh Creek Energy plans to make fertiliser after commercialising hydrogen production using gas drawn from under a disused coal field about 250 kilometres north of Port Augusta.

The company has spent more than \$100 million developing and proving it can extract about 200m kilograms of hydrogen annually from residue coal deposits at least 800 metres underground, converting the resource into electricity and as much as 2m tonnes of urea.

Assuming SA government approval by December, it expects to start project development work with a small team early next year and have up to 1500 construction workers on site by 2022.

The aim is for commercial fertiliser production in 2024, employing up to 2,000 on site.

Alternate uses for the extracted gas include fuel for hydrogen-powered vehicles or natural gas for heating, but Leigh Creek is putting its money on fertiliser.

It also believes its modern in-situ gasification (ISG) extraction process will deliver hydrogen at about half the \$2 a kilogram price the federal government's national hydrogen strategy is aiming to achieve from its commercial production push.

The company has also begun initial talks

with domestic fertiliser distributors to handle its bulk output.

A railway line, built to service the previous coal mine, will be used to take product direct to port or to domestic distribution points.

To extract the gas it needs to make urea Leigh Creek Energy will use ISG technology, more commonly found in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South Africa.

• **FFB note: ISG is a re-brand of the Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) technology which was being used by Linc Energy when the company polluted thousands of acres of land – Queensland's biggest pollution event. The technology is banned in Qld, and pollution court cases continue. Leigh Creek Energy has employed people associated with Linc Energy's disaster.**

<https://www.westerntimes.com.au/news/st-george-residents-concerns-over-surat-fracking/41299757c-spt=1604548428|59c6a4207447835e00b5f82a07ae9f6>

St George resident's concerns over Surat fracking

Lachlan Berlin, Western Times, 31/10/2020

A St George local has raised concerns about a new hydraulic fracturing development that has recently started in the town of Surat.

Leanne Brummell had some poignant words about Armour Energy's Kincora Gas Acceleration Project, with three wells that commenced drilling on October 30.

Ms Brummell believes when any gas company in the world undertakes fracking activities, it leaves environmental damage that needs to be cleaned up.

"Wherever fracking occurs, there are examples of the industry causing earthquakes, water contamination, the draining of aquifers, and pollution caused by the disintegration of infrastructure over time," she said.

"There are already serious and deeply concerning examples of this happening on the Western Downs, and the industry only began its rapid industrialisation of the landscape in earnest about a decade ago.

Lock the Gate is concerned about the department's continued use the term 'conventional' in its correspondence with residents.

The Kincora project also received \$6 million in Federal Government funding in 2018 under the Gas Acceleration Program.

"Fracking for tight gas is universally recognised as an unconventional extraction method, and for the department to argue otherwise is a denial of reality," Lock the Gate spokeswoman Ellie Smith said.

"For the department to say fracking is occurring, but that the gas field isn't unconventional in the same letter to residents... is further proof that the Queensland Government has lost control of the fracking industry, as the state's Audit Office found earlier this year.

<https://www.boilingcold.com.au/chevron-to-restart-gorgon-lng-train-after-500m-production-loss>

Chevron to restart Gorgon LNG train after \$500M production loss

Peter Milne, Boiling Cold, 01/11/2020

Chevron has repaired faulty welds on a Gorgon LNG train after a six-month shutdown that caused an unplanned \$545 million production loss and will now check two more trains.

Chevron chief financial officer Pierre Breber said repairs of faulty welds on propane-filled heat exchangers, or kettles, on Train 2 were complete and had passed non-destructive and pressure testing.

Chevron found thousands of cracks were in eight propane kettles during a routine maintenance shutdown of Train 2 that started in May.

Trains 1 and 3 that operate either side of the Train 2 maintenance workers have propane kettles of the same design and manufacture, leading to concerns about the safety of the workers.

Near completed weld repairs were stopped in late August as the procedure used was incorrect. Workers had to grind out all the work they had done before repairing the welds to the correct procedure.

Shutdowns, and possible repairs, of Trains 1 and 3 will incur further losses to Chevron and its principal Gorgon partners Shell and ExxonMobil.

<https://www.boilingcold.com.au/triangle-energy-battles-for-life-after-bp-kwinana-stops-refining/>

Triangle Energy battles for life after BP Kwinana stops refining

Peter Milne, Boiling Cold, 06/11/2020

It is apt but unfortunate that trouble comes in threes for Triangle Energy.

Rob Towner, chief executive of the ASX-listed producer of oil offshore Dongara, started 2020 shipping about a thousand barrels of oil a day to BP's Kwinana refinery and Brent crude was worth a healthy \$US67 a barrel.

By March, the oil price was \$US15 thanks to COVID-19.

In June pumps in two of the five wells on the Cliff Head platform failed, slashing production.

BP completed the trifecta in October with the shock news that refining at Kwinana would wind up by April 2021.

"It would have been nice to have a bit of notice," Towner said of BP's decision to cease refining at Kwinana in six months.

A BP spokesperson told Boiling Cold that the company had made the decision last Thursday and informed all employees and stakeholders as soon as possible after that.

Triangle's plight is attracting uncomfortable comparisons with Northern Oil and Gas Australia, that went into liquidation in February.

NOGA has left the Federal Government with the responsibility to decommission the Northern Endeavour oil vessel and its subsea wells in the Timor Sea that could cost more than \$300 million.

Both companies relied on a single asset with ageing facilities near the end of field life but differed in what threatened revenue.

When asked about the cost to decommission Cliff Head if production past April is not viable, Towner said: "I really don't want to address that."

The provision for restoration of the Cliff Head platform, wells and the onshore Arrowsmith processing plant is \$37 million.

The fact that another decommissioning liability could drop onto Australian taxpayers should cause the logic of single-asset companies being awarded petroleum licenses to be questioned.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/22/morrison-government-ignored-climate-change-authority-advice-on-covid-recovery>

Morrison government 'ignored' Climate Change Authority's advice on Covid recovery

Adam Morton, Guardian, 22/10/2020

The Morrison government has been accused of ignoring advice from one of its agencies that it should use the economic response to Covid-19 to "set Australia up to prosper for generations to come" by directing stimulus spending to measures that also addressed the climate crisis.

A Climate Change Authority report submitted to the government in July says the stimulus package offered a "once-in-a-lifetime" chance to jump-start a recovery and deal with climate change by preparing for inevitable impacts and positioning Australia to take advantage of its abundant clean energy resources.

"It's a win-win-win opportunity for economic recovery, resilience and prosperity in a low-emissions world," the report says.

A Senate estimates hearing on Tuesday night was told the report was discussed with the office of the emissions reduction minister, Angus Taylor, and officials from Treasury and the industry department, which has responsibility for climate change policy.

In response to questions from Labor, the authority's chair, Wendy Craik, said she did not know if Taylor had read it and he had not officially responded to it.

The authority posted the report on its website without fanfare and it received little to no media coverage. It was submitted as governments across the globe were being urged to tackle the climate crisis alongside the pandemic.

The Morrison government has emphasised the need for a gas-led recovery from recession,

and announced \$52.9m to develop plans to increase gas supply and transportation infrastructure.

Labor's climate spokesman, Mark Butler, accused the government of refusing to engage with the authority's report.

He said backing renewable energy projects and developing clean energy manufacturing would create tens of thousands of jobs, stimulate regional economies and lead to cheaper power prices while tackling climate change.

"To ignore a Covid-19 recovery plan which highlights the massive potential of renewable energy and renewables-related industry is exactly the type of ideological bias that has undermined progress under the Liberals," Butler said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/22/australian-company-directors-call-for-more-infrastructure-spending-and-a-green-new-deal>

Australian company directors call for more infrastructure spending and a Green New Deal

Paul Karp, Guardian, 22/10/2020

Company directors want a more radical policy reset to recover from the Covid-19 recession including bigger investments in infrastructure, reforms of industrial relations and a Green New Deal.

The Australian Institute of Company Directors' sentiment index, released on Thursday, found that climate and energy policy remain the two most important short-term priorities for company directors.

With three-quarters (76%) of directors calling for large-scale public investment in renewable energy and greening the economy, the results suggest the corporate community is increasingly at odds with the Morrison government approach of a gas-led recovery without significant renewable investments.

In the short term, directors would like the federal government to focus on climate change (45%) and energy (43%), followed by tax reform (34%), infrastructure (32%) and productivity growth (30%). In the long term, climate and energy also top the list.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/south-australia-records-100pc-solar-in-world-first-20201021-p567al>

South Australia records 100% solar in world first

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 22/10/2020

Australia's solar power boom sent records tumbling across three states for low demand for grid-based power in the September quarter, including one hour in South Australia where solar power fuelled the entirety of the state's electricity needs.

The Australian Energy Market Operator reported that South Australia recorded a first for any major jurisdiction globally between midday and 1pm on Sunday October 11 when it was wholly run on solar power. Rooftop solar panels contributed

77% of the total, providing 992 megawatts, while large-scale solar provided 313MW.

Low prices together with reduced daytime demand are likely to be ramping up financial pressure on less flexible baseload coal power stations, according to analysts.

Wholesale gas prices were also down, by almost 50% compared with the September quarter of 2019, reaching their lowest level for the third quarter for five years. The benchmark gas supply hub price fell to \$3.85 a gigajoule, although contract prices for guaranteed supply remain much higher.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/28/industrial-emissions-set-to-rise-for-another-decade-despite-coalitions-pledge-to-cut-carbon-pollution>

Industrial emissions set to rise for another decade despite Coalition's pledge to cut carbon pollution

Adam Morton, Guardian, 28/10/2020

Australia's skyrocketing industrial greenhouse gas emissions are projected to increase by 77% between 2005 and 2030, the period over which the Coalition has promised to cut national carbon pollution.

RepuTex, an energy and climate change analyst firm, examined government data and found total emissions from the 200 largest industrial emitters – including mines, oil and gas production, manufacturers and waste facilities – was forecast to keep rising for at least another decade.

It blames most of the expected increase on the growth of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry, which uses large amounts of energy to extract and compress gas before it is exported, and the government's resistance to using its "safeguard mechanism" policy to limit industrial emissions as it was intended.

RepuTex's executive director, Hugh Grossman, said emissions from energy generation were falling as more renewable energy came into the system, but Australia would miss its 2030 climate target submitted under the Paris agreement unless it dealt with other parts of the economy.

"Industry emissions are the elephant in the room for Australian policymakers. While we are seeing rapid decarbonisation in the electricity sector, those gains are being eroded," Grossman said.

RepuTex found the government's existing policies, including the recently announced low-emissions technology statement, would not be enough to drive a transition to net zero emissions by 2050, as scientists have recommended.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/net-zero-goals-cloud-76b-of-exports-20201029-p569mk>

Net-zero goals cloud \$76b of exports

Angela Macdonald-Smith & Elouise Fowler, AFR, 30/10/2020

Australia's fossil fuel exporters have been put on notice of waning appetite for their product from some of their biggest cus-

tomers in Asia as South Korea's adoption of a net-zero emissions target increased the share of markets committed to decarbonisation to over 70%.

Between them, South Korea, Japan and China – who now all are targeting net-zero emissions by 2050 or 2060 – accounted for \$75.6 billion of Australia's total \$103 billion of exports of coal and gas last year.

Their goal to reach carbon neutrality suggests sharply reduced use of coal and potentially more limited demand for gas, with remaining emissions to be cancelled out using offsets or prevented using carbon capture and storage (CCS).

Korea is Australia's third-biggest buyer of thermal coal and a major LNG customer, with long-term contracts with Santos's \$US18.5 billion GLNG venture in Gladstone and the North West Shelf venture.

But hydrocarbons account for over 80% of primary energy in both Korea and Japan, making the net-zero goals "hugely aspirational and daunting," Wood Mackenzie's head of transition for Asia-Pacific Prakash Sharma said.

He said South Korea's plans to phase out nuclear and shut down coal-fired power plants longer-term mean that its deep decarbonisation will rely on faster adoption of new technologies, with LNG likely to play a crucial role.

The net-zero targets won't destroy demand for Australia's coal and gas exports overnight, said Kobad Bhavnagri, global head of decarbonisation at researcher BloombergNEF, describing the impact as "death by a thousand cuts, from now until 2050". He said demand destruction should become perceptible in the next few years, as proposed new fossil power stations are cancelled and old plants begin closing, with decommissioning picking up pace in five to 10 years and becoming a flood by the 2030s.

The commitments by Australia's major exporters effectively place an expiry date on our thermal coal industry, according to a report to be released on Friday by a new Australian think tank founded by former Liberal Party advisors and backed by former senior minister Christopher Pyne.

"Australia's three biggest export customers, China, Japan and South Korea, which collectively take 96% of our iron ore and two-thirds of our coal, have all committed to net-zero. If we don't act soon to join them, we risk being left in the dust," Steven Hamilton, chief economist of the Blueprint Institute, said.

"The writing is on the wall for Australia's thermal coal, both in our energy and exports. But even metallurgical coal, used in steel making, may see a threat to its viability in the decades ahead with advancements in green hydrogen," he said.

The report calls for Australia to commit to net-zero emissions and urges the government to ditch its use of the controversial Kyoto carry-over credits and seriously set out about meeting the Paris commitments.

<https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/national/territory-could-gain-5000-jobs-in-renewable-revolution/news-story/bd5b43074e68912961556c254a10ac77>

The NT could gain 5,000 jobs in renewable energy revolution, according to Deloitte report

Thomas Morgan, NT News, 02/11/2020

The Northern Territory will be among the worst affected Australian jurisdictions if climate change isn't tackled over the coming decades.

A major report by Deloitte Economics released today has warned that the Territory could lose jobs and economic growth if climate change runs unchecked, with mining among the worst hit sectors.

Australians overall face losing 880,000 jobs, and \$3.4 trillion of economic growth, by 2070, with hotter average temperatures even threatening the Boxing Day Test.

On the other hand, the country could add \$680bn and 250,000 new jobs to Australia's economy if it embraces a so-called "new growth pathway".

A New Choice: Australia's Climate for Growth has warned that inaction will lead to greater economic losses for the NT, with tourism particularly affected.

"Queensland, Western Australia and Northern Territory have the largest losses due to a changing climate," the report said.

"These states are the first to take a hit as both a consequence of their industry base and their geography – and their losses are compounding over time."

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/6970598/legislation-to-extinguish-zombie-pels-introduced-to-nsw-parliament/>

Independent NSW MLC Justin Field introduces legislation to extinguish 'zombie' PELs

Northern Daily Leader, 15/10/2020

A bill will be introduced to NSW Parliament to extinguish 'zombie' Petroleum Exploration Licences (PELs), following the North West's concerns of a return to widespread Coal Seam Gas exploration in the region.

On Thursday, Independent NSW MLC Justin Field gave notice of legislation to extinguish the 12 zombie PELs, which cover more than 55,000 square kilometres between the Upper Hunter and Queensland border, including the Moree Plains Shire.

The bill follows the conditional approval of the Santos Narrabri Gas Project and the public announcements by licence holders that they intend to pursue the renewal of expired licences and recommence exploration across the region. Field said he hoped the bill would give certainty to communities who have been living for years under the threat of a return of coal seam gas exploration, including on some of the most productive agricultural land in NSW.

Last week NSW Agriculture Minister Adam

Marshall called for companies to relinquish the zombie PELs that cover the Moree Plains.

Field called on Marshall and the rest of the National Party to get behind this legislation.

Lock the Gate Alliance NSW has welcomed Field's bill.

<https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/national/federal-plan-for-nt-gas-gathers-pace-as-angus-taylor-flies-to-beetaloo/news-story/538d9ed36cb068ae70e9f8a74f6a43d77b-tr=84129974663de9fd6eb518ae70f672bb>

Federal plan for NT gas gathers pace as Angus Taylor flies to Beetaloo

Gary Shipway, NT News, 15/10/2020

The federal government is following through on its pledge for the Territory's Beetaloo Basin to have first priority in its \$28.3m Strategic Basin Plans for a gas-led recovery of the nation's economy.

Energy and Emissions Reduction Minister Angus Taylor has flown into Darwin and will visit Empire Energy's test drilling program at its Carpentaria-1 site in the Beetaloo Basin tomorrow.

Empire Energy Group is reporting significant results from its first exploration well.

"The Beetaloo Basin is a world-class resource that has the potential to drive significant development in the Top End to create local jobs and help Australia remain a world leader in gas," Taylor said.

While visiting the NT, Taylor also held talks with Northern Territory Minister Renewables and Energy Minister Eva Lawler MLA, to discuss a joint federal and Territory energy and emissions reduction agreement.

<https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/coalition-s-pointless-machismo-on-china-hurts-coal-exports-11m20201019-p566bk>

Coalition's 'pointless machismo' on China hurts coal exports: CFMEU

Phillip Coorey, AFR, 20/10/2020

One of the nation's peak mining unions has urged the Coalition to pull into line its backbenchers who are mounting "undiplomatic, reckless and sometimes bizarre" attacks on China, saying their "pointless machismo" posed a grave threat to coal exports.

Tony Maher, the general president of the CFMEU's Mining and Energy Division, has written to Resources Minister Keith Pitt warning that thousands of coal miners could lose their jobs before Christmas.

"The threat to Australian coal jobs from the reckless undermining of our trade relationship with China is immediate and dire," he writes. "Your government, which has claimed to champion Australia's coal industry, will have done more damage to it than any other Australian government in history."

Maher's letter came a day after the federal Labor opposition sharpened its criticism of

the government's approach to China, telling The Australian Financial Review it lacked a plan to turn around the deteriorating trade relationship and calling on Scott Morrison to rein in backbenchers «McCarthyist» comments about China.

Maher singles out in his letter Tasmanian senator Eric Abetz, who "has refused to apologise after bizarrely demanding three Chinese-Australians publicly condemn 'the Chinese Communist Party dictatorship'"

He also mentions Queensland George Christensen, who is both a coal advocate and a China critic.

"Some of those Coalition MPs who represent coal regions and claim to support coal jobs, like Mackay-based MP George Christensen, are the most vocal in their attacks on China," he writes.

"I noted over the weekend your predecessor Senator Matthew Canavan is suggesting that China's rejection of our coal is positive because it will encourage the construction of new coal plants in Australia.

"I know I don't need to explain to you the stupidity of this argument. No number of new Australia coal plants could come remotely close to replacing the \$15 billion annual demand for Australia coal that China creates."

Maher stresses he is not asking the government to "adopt a supine position in relation to China" but that the sensitivity of the relationship means public comment should be confined to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Trade Minister.

<https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/south-australia/sa-mining-and-energy-strategy-to-open-up-north-and-create-28000-jobs/news-story/e11995d21b4b062a2b94f9e36a18ec7>

SA mining and energy strategy to open up north and create 28,000 jobs

Chris Russell, Advertiser, 19/10/2020

More than 28,000 jobs would be created in South Australia under a strategy to more than double mining and energy export revenue, the State Government forecasts.

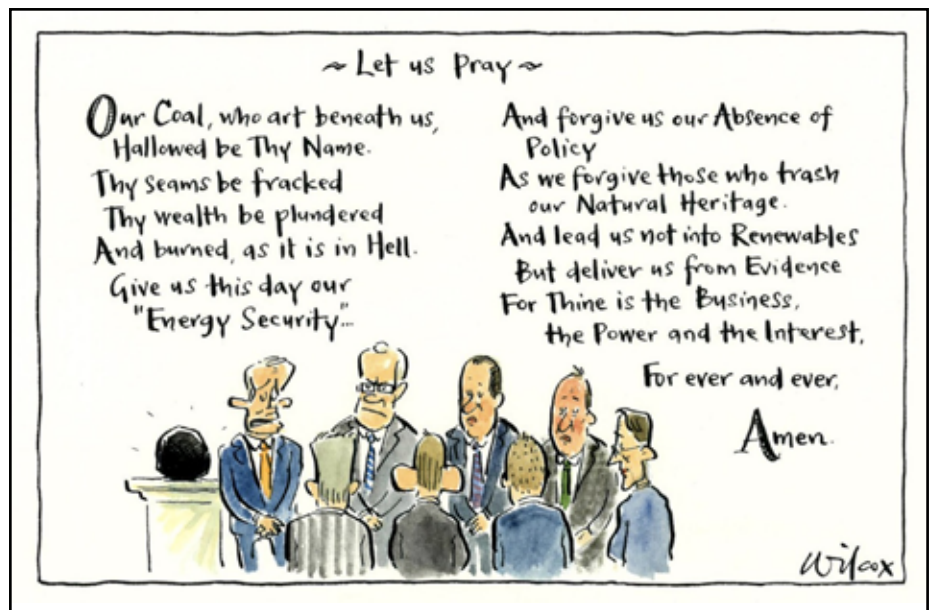
The strategy sets four key targets for the sector as one of nine areas the government will focus on for economic growth to accelerate out of the pandemic-induced recession.

The Government is allocating \$5.6 million to help create the building blocks to underpin private investment – including making water available for road building and mineral processing, Energy and Mining Minister Dan van Holst Pellekaan said.

"Power, water, processing, freight – they're what miners need beyond the obvious need of a mineral or petroleum resource," he said.

"Electricity is not hard now. Water is the biggest challenge."

One of the four targets is to achieve 100% net renewable energy generation for the state by 2030.



Cartoonist Cathy Wilcox analyses Australia's climate policy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/20/putins-blacklisted-oligarch-ally-to-cash-in-from-morrison-government-gas-led-recovery>

Putin's blacklisted oligarch ally to cash in on Morrison government's gas-led recovery

Ben Butler, Guardian, 20/10/2020

A Faberge egg-collecting Russian oligarch who the US has hit with financial sanctions is set to benefit from the Morrison government's gas-led recovery, it can be revealed.

And a mysterious company registered in secrecy-haven Delaware is also in line to reap dividends if one of the key gas basins the government has earmarked for quick development can be successfully fracked.

Viktor Vekselberg, who was sanctioned in 2018 over a number of matters including Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and Delaware company Longview Petroleum, the ultimate owners of which are not clear, hold substantial stakes in Falcon Oil & Gas, which is involved in developing a fracking project in the Northern Territory's Beetaloo basin.

Falcon is one of several overseas companies identified as standing to benefit from any gas boom by activist groups Publish What You Pay and the Tax Justice Network, which in a new report raised concerns about opaque ownership structures and the use of tax and secrecy jurisdictions in the sector as a whole.

The company, which is registered in Canada but run from Ireland, owns a little under a fifth of a Beetaloo basin exploration project, the rest of which is owned by the company charged with developing it – Australian energy group Origin Energy.

Last year, a South African commission of inquiry investigating bribery and fraud in the country's government heard allegations from one individual that Falcon offered a South African company a facilities management contract in return for help

getting the country's prime minister to loosen fracking laws.

Falcon's chief executive, Philip O'Quigley denied the allegations and the South African inquiry has not made any findings against Falcon.

In its report released this week, Publish What You Pay and the Tax Justice Network raised concerns about the structures of Falcon and other companies in the gas sector and said the Morrison government should rule out using taxpayers' money to effectively subsidise operators that have unclear ownership or are registered in tax havens.

"The government must introduce a public list of the people who ultimately own and financially benefit from companies," the director of Publish What You Pay, Clancy Moore, said.

"Unfortunately, the recent open government partnership, led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, seems to have slammed the door shut on a beneficial ownership register in Australia."

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/coal-plant-grant-funded-before-key-report-finalised-or-published-20201020-p566z0.html>

Coal plant grant funded before key report finalised or published

Mike Foley, SMH, 20/10/2020

A \$3.6 million grant for a study into a coal-fired power station project was granted before a key report into the future demand of the energy grid was finalised or published.

Delivering on a commitment made ahead of the May 2019 election, federal Energy Minister Angus Taylor announced in February this year up to \$4 million had been set aside for a study into the feasibility of a 1 gigawatt «high efficiency, low emissions» coal plant in north Queensland.

Officials from the federal Industry, Science, Energy and Resources Department said on Tuesday that the need for the pre-feasibility study was identified by a study into the energy needs of north and central Queensland, which was handed to the government in December.

Head of the energy division Rachel Parry told a Budget Estimates hearing that “stage one” of the report, by energy consultancy Oakley Greenwood, “is currently with the department for evaluation and finalisation”.

NSW Senator Jenny McAllister said that the “government has made substantial financial commitments on the back of a report that is not yet finished”.

Parry said project proponent Shine Energy was invited to apply for an ad-hoc grant for a feasibility study in February, and the minister approved funding in June. An initial payment of \$770,000 was made in August.

<https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/national/matt-kean-student-climate-strike-activists-meet-in-ministers-office/news-story/413334515c23183a878baab31e294fe0>

Matt Kean: Student climate strike activists meet in minister's office

Clarissa Bye & Matthew Benns, Daily Telegraph, 21/10/2020

NSW Energy and Environment Minister Matt Kean has “endorsed” student climate activist demands for NSW to pull out of gas and instead back projects “transitioning the economy to 100% renewable energy by 2030”, directly contradicting his own government’s gas policies.

Photographs of Kean posing with School Strike 4 Climate children holding up placards saying “Fund Our Future Not Gas” in his NSW Parliamentary offices have emerged in activist newsletters.

It puts him at odds with Premier Gladys Berejiklian’s backing of gas projects like Narrabri.

• Article goes on to strongly promote the Santos Narrabri gasfield, a project favoured by the Murdoch media.

<https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/national/freedom-of-information-government-refuses-to-release-report-into-renewable-energy-target/news-story/cb353ae91e3d440bbaec3eb4d1d1db7>

Government refuses to release report into renewable energy target despite Freedom of Information application

Matt Cunningham, NT News, 22/10/2020

The Northern Territory government has refused to release a report outlining how it can achieve its 50% renewable energy target and what it will cost.

The government paid Sydney economists HoustonKemp \$218,768 to prepare the report – delivered last April – on “Achieving the Northern Territory Renewable Energy Target”.

The NT News applied for a copy of the report through Freedom of Information laws but, when it was released, 116 of the

report’s 118 pages had been completely redacted.

The Department of Chief Minister approved the release of just two pages from the report – the front and back covers.

In refusing access to the other 116 pages, Acting Manager of Governance Kelly Garrett said the information was exempt “because it was brought into existence for submission to and consideration by an executive body (in this instance, cabinet), and was considered by the executive body”.

Despite the reason for the redactions, Chief Minister Michael Gunner appeared unfamiliar with the report when the NT News asked him about it at a press conference last week.

<https://amp.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/25/queensland-election-why-the-resources-councils-jobs-figures-dont-pass-the-laugh-test>

Queensland election: why the resources council's jobs figures don't pass 'the laugh test'

Graham Readfern, Guardian, 25/10/2020

In a radio advert, the script is unambiguous: “The resources sector employs 372,000 Queenslanders.”

Queensland’s mining lobby, the Queensland Resources Council (QRC), is running the adverts as part of a campaign to encourage voters to back candidates that will “protect your job” and support its industry.

Except the jobs claims, according to official data, are massively inflated, and the method used to make them, are questionable.

“It’s a bogus number,” says Prof John Quiggin, an economist at the University of Queensland.

ACCORDING TO THE QUEENSLAND RESOURCES COUNCIL

There are more mining jobs in the electorate of McConnell than there are registered voters.

46,750
QRC estimated jobs claim

35,013
voters in McConnell

That's right, according to the Queensland Resources Council 46,750 people in the Brisbane electorate of McConnell owe their jobs to the Minerals and Energy Sector.

Even though the Queensland Electoral Commission says there are only 35,013 (2017) voters in the electorate.

FAKE NEWS HARMS DEMOCRACY

THE QRC HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF USING ECONOMIC MODELLING TO EXAGGERATE THE NUMBER OF JOBS THEIR MEMBERS CREATE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT.

ADANI'S OWN ECONOMIC EXPERT, DR JEROME FAHRER WHEN ASKED IN COURT IF THE QRC'S PREFERRED FORM OF ECONOMIC MODELLING: "has a tendency, known to economists for a very very long time to overstate benefits especially employment benefits."

RESPONDED: "Yes."

THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS WAS SO CONCERNED ABOUT THE MISUSE OF 'MULTIPLIERS' OF THE TYPE USED BY THE QRC THAT IT STOPPED PUBLISHING THEM, STATING: "Their inherent shortcomings make them inappropriate for economic impact analysis. These shortcomings mean that (input-output) multipliers are likely to significantly overstate the impacts of projects or events."

MORE THAN 5 MILLION PEOPLE LIVE IN QUEENSLAND AND WHILE 64,700 WORK IN MINING, 97 PERCENT OF QUEENSLAND WORKERS DON'T.

VISIT > tai.org.au

The Australia Institute
Research that matters.

Authorised by E. Bennett, The Australia Institute, 1 Franklin St Manuka ACT 2604.



Queensland Resources Council, headed by former Coalition mining minister Ian Macfarlane, ran these ads in the Murdoch media during the Queensland election campaign.

Queensland's powerful mining lobby, which rejected the criticisms, is running two election campaigns as it tries to gain political support for a "resource industry recovery agenda" that asks for almost \$1bn in government investment.

According to latest Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force figures, only 66,000 Queenslanders work in mining compared with 79,000 in agriculture, forestry and fishing; 50,000 in arts and recreation; and 160,000 in manufacturing.

The Queensland government's health department employs about 90,000 people.

QRC's own commissioned research that underpins its jobs claims says its members directly employ 36,644 full-time workers. So how does the council get from 36,644 full-time workers to the massive 372,000 jobs being claimed in its political advertising?

"Easy," says Richard Denniss, the chief economist at progressive thinktank the Australia Institute. "You multiply a small number by a big number."

The QRC's report that underpins its jobs claims says "Input-Output" modelling and then multipliers are used to capture how spending flows into other parts of the economy. The report says the approach is "solid" and an "appropriate tool".

Denniss says one example of the questionable jobs claims can be found in the inner-city Brisbane electorate of McConnell, where QRC says it has 1,000 full-time employees.

After the modelling and multipliers, QRC claims the "total economic contribution to McConnell" includes 46,750 full-time jobs in the electorate.

But the Electoral Commission of Queensland says McConnell has just 39,212 enrolled voters.

"This is why this stuff is silly," Denniss says.

Quiggin says Australia's Bureau of Statistics has warned against using the modelling approach because, the ABS says, it has "inherent shortcomings" that make

it "inappropriate for economic impact analysis".

"It doesn't pass the laugh test and has been thoroughly repudiated by the ABS," he said, adding it was able to make an industry appear as large as a modeller wanted.

"This estimate is the biggest stretch I have ever seen," he said, adding if it was applied across all sectors it would imply the Queensland economy employs around 10 million people. Australia's total workforce is 12.5m.

Denniss is a long-time critic of the method and has publicly criticised the mining industry for using the approach.

"These multipliers have no role in any sensible debate about employment," he says. "The consequences of using them are to generate silly number."

He said if every industry in Queensland used the same modelling to make claims about employment, the total number of jobs would be several times higher than the state's entire labour force.

The QRC's members include some of the biggest mining and resources companies in Australia and the world, such as Rio Tinto, Shell, Peabody, Origin and Glencore.

QRC is led by former federal resources and industry minister Ian Macfarlane, who spent 14 years as a minister under John Howard and later Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull.

QRC is running radio adverts, digital banners and has hired a billboard "to reach voters in targeted Queensland seats."

On Facebook, QRC has spent about \$8,000 advertising the campaign that has been seen about 800,000 times on people's Facebook pages.

The campaign is the second major Queensland election effort launched by the QRC, which is also urging Queenslanders to "put Greens last" on their ballot paper.

The QRC's "resource industry recovery agenda" is asking for about \$964m of government backing, including \$14.8m for a high-voltage transmission line to connect a minerals province that would also "unlock some of Queensland's most prospective renewable energy generation sites."

The QRC also wants \$500m for pipeline infrastructure, \$50m for road bottlenecks and \$100m over four years to help them search for more resources.

<https://www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/story/6986923/rally-for-new-acland-jobs/>

New Acland Stage 3 rally calls for mine to be approved

Ben Harden, Qld Country Life, 27/10/2020

Darling Downs residents turned out in droves to support the expansion of the New Acland coal mine at the weekend.

About 400 people who turned up to the rally called for the state government to immediately approve the stage three

expansion which would secure 500 jobs in the region.

LNP Senator Matt Canavan joined a 'coal jobs convoy' from central Queensland in support of the southern miners.

He demanded the state government approve the New Acland mine, which has been tied up in legal proceedings for a decade.

Natural Resources Minister Dr Anthony Lynham said the government was awaiting the outcome of High Court proceedings before finalising the remaining approvals.

But Darling Downs farmers have criticised coal mining company New Hope as the battle over the expansion reached the High Court in early October.

They argue the expansion would destroy prime agricultural land and drain groundwater.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/28/unions-urge-alp-to-accept-need-for-gas-and-back-blue-collar-workers-or-face-losing-next-election>

Unions urge ALP to accept need for gas and back blue collar workers or face losing next election

Katharine Murphy & Adam Morton, Guardian, 28/10/2020

Union officials have given Labor MPs a message that gas will be needed in the transition to renewable energy, and have urged them to defend blue collar workers in traditional industries or face losing another election.

The leadership of the Australian Workers Union and the construction and mining union attended a briefing organised this week by Labor's country caucus, which is run by the shadow resources minister Joel Fitzgibbon.

With parliament's resumption, senior officials Tony Maher and Daniel Walton addressed between 30 and 40 Labor MPs, including Fitzgibbon and other front-benchers, but not Butler or the party leader, Anthony Albanese.

The two warned MPs not to position themselves as opposed to blue collar workers or anti-jobs in traditional industries, and urged attendees to defend blue collar workers while plotting a path to jobs that would be created during the transition to low emissions energy.

Fitzgibbon has been campaigning internally for Labor to wind back the level of ambition for its medium-term emissions reduction target.

He wants the ALP to adopt the same 2030 target as the Coalition, and recently said he could quit the shadow cabinet if the leadership takes a position he can't defend. Butler has publicly opposed the move to decrease policy ambition.

Albanese on Wednesday told reporters Labor would hasten slowly to resolve that issue. With his senior colleagues openly at odds, Albanese told reporters Labor would

delay the final decision on a 2030 target until after the next international climate change meeting, which is in Glasgow at the end of next year.

<https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/albanese-forced-colleagues-to-reach-peace-deal-on-gas-20201029-p569mi>

Albanese forced colleagues to reach peace deal on gas

Phillip Coorey, AFR, 29/10/2020

A frustrated Labor leader Anthony Albanese forced his squabbling shadow ministers to thrash out an agreed form of words that recognised the importance of gas to the economy and a transitioning energy sector, in a bid to end a damaging split, it has been revealed.

Sources told The Australian Financial Review that the shadow cabinet approved a document earlier this month after Albanese told energy and climate spokesman Mark Butler and resources spokesman Joel Fitzgibbon to sort it out.

Albanese wanted the agreed position to reflect what was essentially the government's view – that there was a role for both gas and renewables in the energy sector, with the former acting as a transition fuel. As well, gas was important for manufacturing and other purposes.

The statement, yet to be approved by the caucus, is unequivocal in its support for a role for gas.

The revelation of the gas peace deal followed reports that 32 Labor MPs almost half the lower house caucus, attended a briefing in Tuesday by the CFMEU and the Australian Workers Union.

The unions urged Labor MPs to tone down attacks on coal and gas, warning that the fuel sources would be needed for years to come and the party was continuing to lose blue-collar voters by not recognising their role.

Despite the peace deal, Butler took issue with Scott Morrison's gas-led recovery, which places a heavy reliance on gas as a transition fuel towards clean energy.

<https://www.afr.com/work-and-careers/workplace/cfmeu-leaderless-as-resignation-fuels-dysfunction-20201105-p56bhd>

CFMEU leaderless as resignation fuels dysfunction

David Marin-Guzman, AFR, 06/11/2020

The Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union risks falling into a leaderless vacuum for the near future as the resignation of its national secretary sees the powerful mining division reconsider its future with the national union.

CFMEU national secretary Michael O'Connor stepped aside on Thursday after declaring the union was "totally dysfunctional" and elements had "failed the test of political maturity", which would have entailed compromising and working together.

Union sources said the resignation of the respected leader threatens to reduce the union's political campaigning power, create a more aggressive relationship with Labor and cement control of the union in the hands of its most powerful official, John Setka.

O'Connor, who is the brother of Labor employment spokesman Brendan O'Connor, was viewed by crossbenchers and business groups as a powerful and influential representative for the CFMEU in Canberra and a positive face for the militant union.

However, he has faced more than a year of pressure from the construction division to quit after failing to publicly defend Setka when the latter was convicted for harassing his wife.

CFMEU construction division secretary Dave Noonan was expected to act as an interim replacement for the top role.

In a letter circulated on Thursday, CFMEU mining division president Tony Maher said the meeting was invalid as construction officials Jade Ingham and Nigel Davies had not formally nominated for their national positions and so could not form part of the majority vote needed to hold the meeting.

"Accordingly, the mining and energy division will not be in attendance and we will determine our future involvement next Monday," he wrote.

The mining division, the second most powerful division after construction, has been essentially operating independently of the rest of the union since the Setka fallout and is expected to reconsider any future involvement with the national arm.

<https://inql.com.au/news/2020/11/09/australia-in-focus-as-biden-looks-for-a-new-approach-to-climate-change/>

Australia in focus as Biden looks for a new approach to climate change

Daniel McCulloch, In Queensland, 09/11/2020

Australia's climate change targets are back in the spotlight after Joe Biden won the US presidential election.

Biden has promised to recommit to the Paris Agreement and pursue a net-zero carbon emissions target by 2050.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has refused to set such a timeline, leaving Australia increasingly exposed among its major trading partners.

"Australia will always set its policies based on Australia's national interests," Morrison told reporters in Canberra on Monday.

"The United States will make their decisions based on their interests and their capabilities and how their economy is structured, and we'll do the same."

Trade Minister Simon Birmingham deflected a series of questions about the president-elect setting a net-zero target.

Senator Birmingham focused instead on the US rejoining the Paris Agreement, which Australia has signed on to.

Labor frontbencher Penny Wong is keen to focus on the widening chasm on carbon neutrality, with Australia the odd one out.

"It's a great moment for America and a great moment for the world to see a new administration elected with a very substantial climate agenda – one that really does isolate Scott Morrison," Wong told the ABC.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/fitzgibbon-warns-labor-colleagues-over-biden-inspired-climate-push-20201108-p56cna.html>

Fitzgibbon warns Labor colleagues over Biden-inspired climate push

Rob Harris, SMH, 09/11/2020

Veteran Labor frontbencher Joel Fitzgibbon is urging his colleagues to resist using Donald Trump's defeat in the United States presidential election to push for more ambitious climate change targets.

The long-time regional MP, who has been highly critical of the left flank of the party's membership since last year's election loss, [said] that it would be electoral suicide to push for deeper cuts in carbon emissions.

Federal Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese said Australia was now "isolated on climate change" with the election of Biden and it engaged in "a whole lot of rhetoric but no real action".

But Fitzgibbon said a new campaign from within the party for deeper cuts sooner would be "just a recipe for another election loss".

Privately the resources and agriculture spokesman, who represents the NSW election of Hunter, has raised with his colleagues his fear the ALP is in permanent opposition.

Federal Labor has been embroiled in a public battle between Fitzgibbon, Albanese, and energy spokesman Mark Butler over Labor's climate language, in particular towards gas, which last month triggered a process whereby the ALP agreed to support new gas projects, subject to environmental approvals and reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

Fitzgibbon has consistently warned the party it will lose blue-collar workers and fail to regain seats in regional areas, including north Queensland, unless it changes its message on climate change.

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/technology/science/meet-australias-new-chief-scientist-dr-cathy-foley/news-story/53354b36f79751766cd54d29771a9>

Meet Australia's new chief scientist Dr Cathy Foley

Jade Gailberger, Daily Telegraph, 09/11/2020

Physicist Cathy Foley has been announced as Australia's next chief scientist.

Dr Foley is the CSIRO's chief scientist and has worked there for 36 years.

She will take over from Dr Alan Finkel, who finishes his term in December. Scott Morrison visited the CSIRO on Monday to

congratulate Dr Foley, who he says has the background needed as Australia recovers from coronavirus.

“Climate change is something that has to be dealt with, and it’s not something that is just a single solution,” Dr Foley said.

“Our current chief scientist has identified gas as a transition to being able to deal with the future, and I guess my role is to see how to build on that to be able to make sure we’ve got what is needed into the long term.”

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-09/nsw-governor-ment-32-billion-renewable-energy-plan-announced/12862276>

NSW Government’s \$32 billion renewable energy plan announced

Danuta Kozaki, ABC, 09/11/2020

Households and industry are being promised cheaper and cleaner power, with the State Government announcing the start of a massive funding package ahead of next week’s Budget.

NSW Energy Minister Matt Kean said the plan would drive investment in private infrastructure worth \$32 billion in renewable energy over the next decade.

It will generate 6,300 construction jobs and 2,800 ongoing jobs, along with \$1.5 billion in lease payments for landowners, especially in regional NSW for wind and solar farms.

Kean said the new infrastructure will put NSW in the top 10 for the lowest industrial electricity prices in the OECD.

“Our priority is to keep the lights on and get power prices down, with the Road-map forecast to save NSW households an average of \$130 and small businesses an average of \$430 on their electricity bills each year,” Kean said.

Kean said the transition away from coal-fired power will start with a series of grants worth \$50 million dollars in the Budget on November 17.

Pumped hydro projects are set to take over the state’s baseload power capacity as four out of NSW’s five coal-fired power plants are phased out over the next 15 years.

The Opposition’s Energy spokesman Adam Searle has given the party’s initial support, but he said they were yet to see the details of the legislation.

The Nature Conservation Council’s Chief Executive Chris Gambian commended the plan, describing it as “serious action on climate change in a way that will also create jobs and bring down power prices”.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/kean-may-have-found-a-path-through-the-energy-gridlock-20201108-p56cme.html>

Kean may have found a path through the energy gridlock

Nick O’Malley, SMH, 09/11/2020

Energy policy has long been a cause of misery for Australia’s politicians.

Between powerful resources and energy companies, unions, consumers and a community increasingly furious at the failure to tackle climate change, it is a car crash of competing vested interests.

The development and maintenance of the infrastructure needed to generate, store and move the power a modern economy demands the deployment of eye-watering piles of cash.

For all these reasons, energy policy provides endless opportunities for wedge politics within and between parties.

NSW Energy Minister Matt Kean had little choice but to wade into these potentially treacherous waters in announcing his new energy road map, as these documents are called these days.

The key to the announcement is an explanation of the marketplace the government will establish to attract investment.

To ensure enough generating capacity is built in the zones the government will create a Consumer Trustee, which will hold reverse auctions to award what it calls “Long Term Energy Services Agreements” to power generators.

These 20-year contracts will give the generators the option of relying on a backstop floor price to ensure their viability should prices fall too low in particular years.

Government modelling suggests that bringing this certainty to the market will attract more entrants and drive down prices.

Similar models are in place in the UK, Ireland and Finland, among other nations, and they have proved particularly useful in fostering renewable energy.

The road map also includes a grants program to assist would-be investors

with feasibility studies for pumped hydro projects to act as batteries, storing new renewable power for dispatch when, as the government puts it, the wind isn’t blowing and the sun is not shining.

Kean insists that his only interest in designing the plan was to ensure stable power generation and drive down prices.

That may be so, but should it work the plan will also reduce NSW electricity emissions by 50% between now and 2040.

It is worth noting that amid a sometimes bitter rivalry between NSW Coalition partners, Kean secured the support of his Nationals colleagues, who are doubtlessly most supportive of the jobs boom in some of their crucial seats.

But he has gone even further, securing support from the Labor Opposition prior to the policy’s release. Should he pull it off, Kean will have also laid out a road map for the rest of the nation’s politicians.

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