



# Fossil Fool Bulletin

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

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

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## Replacing Liddell with renewables cheaper and less polluting than fossil gas: Reputex



Liddell Power Station

***The cheapest and lowest emissions option to replace the Liddell coal-burning power station in the New South Wales Hunter Valley is clean energy backed up by storage, according to a new report by energy analytics firm Reputex.***

The report, commissioned by Greenpeace Australia Pacific, shows that replacing the ageing and unreliable Hunter Valley power station with renewables backed up by batteries is 17% cheaper than replacing Liddell with gas and will result in fewer emissions.

### **Affordable, reliable, cleaner**

“Renewables firmed with storage solves the so-called ‘energy trilemma’

– affordable, reliable and cleaner power. This report demonstrates that by continuing to add renewables and storage to NSW’s grid, the state will enjoy reliable power that’s cheaper and much better for the environment than gas,” senior advisor to the Climate and Energy College at Melbourne University, Simon Holmes à Court said.

“The closure of Liddell won’t be like Hazelwood. With only five months’ notice Hazelwood’s closure came as a surprise to the community, workers, government and the power sector. The closure of Liddell, on the other hand, was announced in 2015 and AEMO’s modelling shows that the market is on track to replace the lost capacity when the early 1970’s era power station retires in 2023.”

“The Federal Government’s obsession with fossil gas is undermining private sector investment in our energy system. Economics and technology have overtaken the Federal Government’s ideology.

“It needs to drop the obsession with gas, and let the market complete the clean replacement of Liddell – a transition that is creating jobs for the Hunter and securing a lower cost, reliable energy supply.”

“Business, state governments of all stripes, and Australia’s major trading partners are all ditching coal and gas for renewables and storage because the economics overwhelmingly win out.”

### **Three scenarios**

With Liddell due to shut down completely by April 2023, the report modelled three scenarios for the National Electricity Market (NEM) to replace the 2000MW power station

- **Central Case:** Current policies at time of publication i.e 2.6 GW of new renewables are added to the NEM by July 2023;

- **Market Solution:** In addition to the Central Case, the market builds an additional 1000MW of renewables;

- **Gas Solution:** In addition to the Central Case, 1000MW of new peaking gas is added to the NEM by July 2023.

Reputex’s analysis finds that the renewable-powered market solution, which would see 1000MW of new renewable capacity built to replace

• Continued p2

• **P2: IPC urged to reject Dendrobium**

• **P3: Future of Pacific rests on zero emissions**

**P3: Production gap highlighted**

## Liddell's future brighter with renewables

• Continued from p1

Liddell, offers the best value for money and makes the greatest impact on lowering Australia's emissions.

Under all three scenarios, reliability exceeds the state's Energy Security Target after the closure of Liddell.

Greenpeace Australia Pacific Head of Research and Investigations, Dr Nikola Casule said the RepuTex report builds on growing evidence that clean energy should be at the centre of federal energy policy, driven by the declining cost and increasing reliability of renewables.

### Coal, gas obsolete

"This new report shows conclusively that renewable energy is the best option for replacing Australia's coal-burning power stations. Building new gas infrastructure is an expensive, unnecessary diversion that won't reduce emissions. Replacing coal with gas is like replacing a typewriter with a fax machine – they're both obsolete technologies that no longer meet Australia's energy needs.

"In the coming years, more and more ageing and unreliable coal-burning power stations like Liddell will close as they near the end of their operating lives and become too expensive to maintain.

"The operator of Australia's grid, AEMO, has already found that we can move to a renewable-powered grid without the need for any new gas.

"With a new Renewable Energy Zone slated for the Hunter that is set to create hundreds of jobs, a renewable energy replacement for Liddell sets the region up for a bright future.

"The Federal Government needs to support the best way to secure Australia's energy supply, bring down prices and create future-proof jobs, replacing coal and gas with clean energy technology like wind and solar," said Dr Casule.

• Download the report here:

<https://act.greenpeace.org.au/Liddell-Closure-Report>



# IPC urged to reject Dendrobium mine's destructive expansion

*A coalition of groups fighting to protect the greater Sydney region's drinking water from coal mining beneath the catchment are desperately urging the Independent Planning Commission to reject South32's destructive Dendrobium expansion.*

Commissioners held a three-day hearing into the proposal last week. If approved, the longwall mining operation would drain up to an additional 5.2 million litres of water each day from Lake Cordeaux and Lake Avon.

Earlier, WaterNSW staff met with IPC Commissioners and again slammed South32's current proposal, noting, "this project was likely to have unprecedented impacts on the catchment".

### Mine presents extensive dangers

Particular concerns raised by the agency included the threat posed by the proposal to endangered ecological swamps, the sheer amount of drinking water that would be drained from the catchment, and the likelihood of extensive stream fracturing,

WaterNSW also argued South32 had not "sufficiently considered alternative mine designs that would reduce the height of fracturing" and there "are still outstanding questions about whether the groundwater model which provides the predictions of surface water losses actually provides accurate worst case predictions".

As well, the decision by South32 to proceed with a plan to conduct controversial long wall mining is at odds with a recommendation made by the former version of the IPC, the NSW Planning Assessment Commission.

It recommended against fellow catchment mining company Wollongong Coal's longwall project at nearby Russell Vale due to the risk of subsidence posed by the controversial mining method in 2016. Wollongong Coal has since pledged never to propose longwall mining inside the catchment again.

Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Nic Clyde said the loss of so much

drinking water as a result of a coal mine expansion was unacceptable.

"South32's plan to rip coal out of the ground beneath the catchment area will mean we will lose drinking water as if it's going through a sieve," he said.

"An independent umpire like the IPC must surely realise that this is not in the interests of the wider population, or the fragile swamps that sit above the Dendrobium mine.

"So much damage has already been done to these precious and unique environmental areas - Commissioners must not allow more irreparable destruction."

Protect Our Water Alliance spokesperson Rada Germanos said, "Longwall mining causes cracks and subsidence that will have a devastating impact on the water catchment.

"Subsidence can also cause problems for built infrastructure like dams, roads and buildings. South32's application means that there will be longwall mining 300 metres from Avon Reservoir and less than 700 metres from Cordeaux Reservoir."

### Coal market drying up

Illawarra Residents for Responsible Mining spokesperson Deidre Stuart said, "If the Dendrobium expansion goes ahead, most of the coal mined will be exported. Yet our main export markets are likely to dry up, because these countries have set ambitious climate targets. Global prices for both thermal and metallurgical coal are also volatile. These factors mean that mining jobs are becoming insecure and in decline.

"We are seeing more and more workers being put onto short term contracts, and an erosion of pay and conditions. Mine expansions aren't the solution to this problem.

"People in Wollongong are backing the shift to renewable energy – we could have a future with green hydrogen and green steel. Wollongong is proud of its mining heritage, but we need to secure our future."



See past editions of Fossil Fool Bulletin at

<https://knitting-nannas.org/> (under the Resources tab)

# Future of Pacific nations rests on net-zero emissions by 2040

*Australia's inadequate climate policies could see the world heat by almost four degrees by 2100 but the worst can be avoided for parts of the Pacific if Australia and other major emitters adopt a net-zero emissions by 2040 target, according to a new report by Greenpeace.*

Under current policies, the world is projected to heat by a median estimate of 2.9 degrees by 2100, with a possible range of 2.1 to 3.9 degrees Celsius, the Te Mana o Te Moana: State of the Climate in the Pacific 2020 report states.

Greenpeace's Head of Pacific, Joseph Moeono-Kolio said Pacific Island countries were already facing severe harm from climate change at the current 1.1 degrees of heating, and warned that many islands could face obliteration unless there is an immediate and steep reduction in emissions from major carbon emitters like Australia.

"Australia is the world's largest coal exporter, the 14th largest emitter in the world and the biggest carbon emitter in the Pacific region, by far. This report shows that Australia must commit to net-zero by 2040 in order to avoid more catastrophic bushfire seasons at home and more powerful cyclones in the Pacific," he said.

"Australia's pitiful emissions reduction target has been categorised as 'Insufficient' by Climate Action Tracker. This means that if all other nations adopted the same approach as Australia it would lock in between 2 and 3 degrees of heating, which would be disastrous for the Pacific, which contributes the least but is among the nations impacted the most by climate damage

"This injustice must be addressed by the world's biggest carbon emitters increasing their efforts to fix the problem they have created for the rest of the world.

"Pacific people can still protect their island homes and the cultures so intrinsically tied to them but it requires a recognition of the scale of the challenge and concerted action at the global level right now.

"As one of the major powers in the Pacific, with strategic interests in the region, it is in Australia's interest to do all it can to reduce its national emissions in line with the Paris Agree-

ment's 1.5 degrees pathway – which this report shows it has not done to date."

This would require a serious engagement with the Paris Agreement's ratchet mechanism, through the submission of increasingly stringent reduction targets that would deliver the following emissions reduction outcomes:

- Net zero emissions by 2040
- 40-60% reduction by 2025 from 2000 levels
- 60-80% reduction by 2030 from 2000 levels

"As well as increasing emissions reduction targets, the Australian Government must heed the unambiguous desire of Pacific leaders and outline clear policies on how targets will be met, including a moratorium on new coal-burning power stations and coal mines, and commitment to the Green Climate Fund," Greenpeace Australia Pacific Head of Research and Investigations, Dr Nikola Casule said.

## Scott Morrison drops dodgy Kyoto credits

*In response to Prime Minister Scott Morrison announcing that Australia will drop the plan to use dodgy Kyoto credits to meet its Paris climate target, Greenpeace Australia Pacific spokesperson Nelli Stevenson said:*

"The Morrison government has long been shamed on the global stage for its use of dodgy accounting to cover up its gross inaction on climate change. For the past seven years, all we have seen from the Morrison Government is inaction, waffle, and propping up the coal, oil and gas industries responsible for climate change.

"Australia needs a strong, Federal climate policy, not a Federal government kicking back on the heavy lifting being done by states, territories, and businesses who are getting on with the job of moving to safe and reliable 100% renewable energy."

## Production gap highlighted



*To limit warming to 1.5°C or well below 2°C, as required by the 2015 Paris Agreement, the world needs to wind down fossil fuel production. Instead, governments continue to plan to produce coal, oil, and gas far in excess of the levels consistent with the Paris Agreement temperature limits.*

A new report – The Production Gap – highlights the discrepancy between countries' planned fossil fuel production levels and the global levels necessary to limit warming to 1.5°C or 2°C. This gap is large, with countries aiming to produce 120% more fossil fuels by 2030 than would be consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

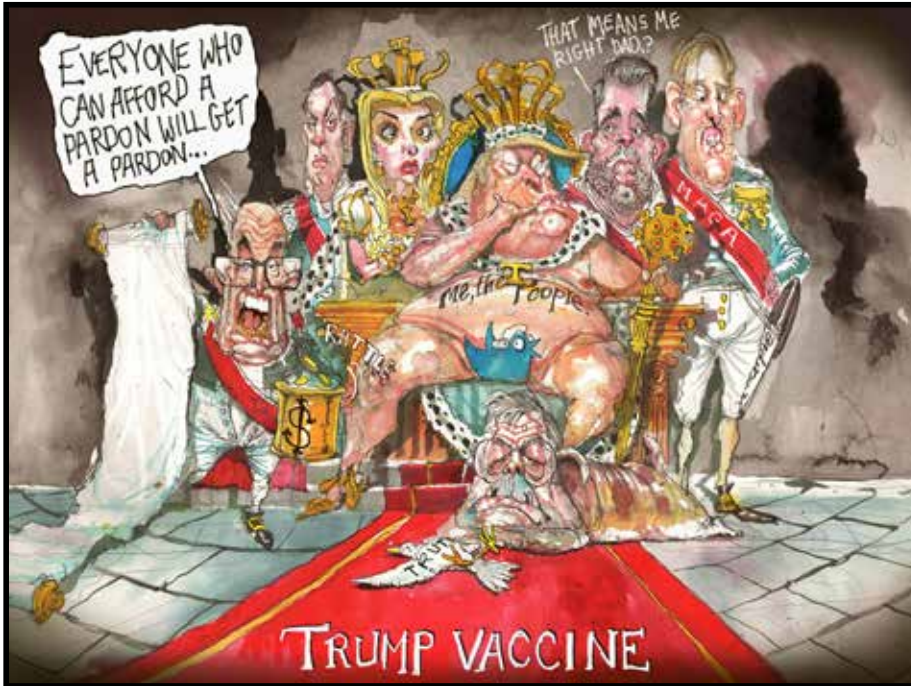
The COVID-19 pandemic and associated response measures have introduced new uncertainties to the production gap. While global fossil fuel production will decline sharply this year, government stimulus and recovery measures will shape our climate future: they could prompt a return to pre-COVID production trajectories that lock in severe climate disruption, or they could set the stage for a managed wind-down of fossil fuels as part of a "build back better" effort.

This special issue of the Production Gap Report looks at how conditions have changed since last year, what this means for the production gap, and how governments can set the stage for a long-term, just, and equitable transition away from fossil fuels.

• Download the report at:

<http://productiongap.org/2020report>

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## Inside the news

**Matt Canavan, Barnaby Joyce and David Gillespie** reassured country people that the National Party stands for **coal and gas, not farms**, as they dressed up in miners' hi-vis costumes in late November (p10-11). They paraded themselves around a coal mine and party donor Trever St Baker's coal power station in the Hunter Valley. Joyce also owns land under a gas tenement in western NSW.

The **three fossil fools** have launched a petition calling for a new coal-powered HELE plant in the Hunter, which has attracted 1,300 signatures to date.



Days later, hundreds of people in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and regional centres rallied in support of Aboriginal traditional owners to voice their strong opposition to **Santos's \$3.6bn gasfield** in western NSW, which will devastate **Gamilaraay Gomeroi cultural ties** to sacred and significant heritage sites (p8-9).

They had support from the **Knitting Nannas Against Gas**, such as those in Lismore pictured below by Gwilym Summers.



Protesters also appeared at an India vs Australia cricket match at the SCG (p5) calling on the **State Bank of India** not to give **Adani** a \$1 billion loan to further its Carmichael Mine development in Australia's Galilee Basin.

As powerful vested interests push **fossil fuels** harder than ever before, people power is essential to show them we want a **liveable planet** and a **government that's not for sale**.

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# In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 19,700 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.nationalheraldindia.com/india/watch-anti-adani-protesters-invade-pitch-during-india-australia-odi-appeal-to-sbi-to-bowl-out-adani-loan>

### Anti-Adani protesters invade pitch during India-Australia ODI, appeal to SBI to 'bowl out Adani loan'

*National Herald of India, 27/11/2020*

The growing public sentiment against Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani in Australia came to the fore at Sydney Cricket Ground, where the first ODI between India and Australia was being played, on Friday when two protestors holding placards which read "State Bank of India: No \$1 BN Adani Loan' made their way into the field.

"Millions of Indian taxpayers who are watching the first game of the Indian cricket tour have a right to know that the State Bank of India is considering handing their taxes to a billionaire's climate-wrecking coal mine," a statement from the Twitter handle of 'Stop Adani' campaign read.

Protesters alleged that the loan would amount to handing over Indian taxpayers' money to Adani to dig a coal mine, which no bank in the world has so far been willing to fund.

A spokesperson of the 'Stop Adani' campaign, Manjot Kaur, who is a university student and former school striker from the central west coal region in NSW was quoted as saying by the media that the SBI needs to 'bowl out' Adani's loan and 'swing the bat for a safe future for Indians'.

<https://inql.com.au/business/2020/12/01/whos-the-boss-lucas-dow-returns-to-the-power-seat-at-adani/>

### Who's the boss: Lucas Dow returns to the power seat at Adani

*John McCarthy, In Queensland, 01/12/2020*

Adani's one-time chief executive Lucas Dow is back in the executive suites after being appointed as country head and chief executive of Adani Australia.

It follows a mysterious five months during which Dow stood down as chief executive of Australian mining business, now known as Bravus, only to be appointed as a director. No explanation has been given for that move.

Dow's reappointment follows the departure Jeyakumar Janakaraj, who better known as JJ, to head up the Adani global business in Singapore.

Lucas Dow will also continue to be a director of Omni Resources.



*A protestor against the State Bank of India's proposed loan to Adani on the field at the SCG. Photo: Twitter*

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-02/adani-fined-by-federal-department-environmental-carmichael-coal/12942440>

### Mining company Bravus, formerly Adani, fined for 'misinterpreting' environmental approval conditions

*Lily Nothling, ABC, 02/12/2020*

Mining company Adani, now known as Bravus, has paid a \$26,000 fine for "misinterpreting" environmental approval conditions at its Carmichael coal mine in central Queensland.

The Federal Environment Department issued the company two infringement notices in October for failing to implement its species management plan.

The Department said the mining giant cleared land without surveying the area within an appropriate timeframe.

It said the company also failed to revise its species management measures as a result of ecological surveys.

In a statement, a Bravus spokesperson said it had paid the \$25,920 fine.

"Two minor compliance issues were raised by the Department in relation to a pre-clearance survey which had expired by 24 days, and an updated species management plan not being submitted within the three-month window required, following a pre-clearance survey," the spokesperson said.

## COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/nov/25/more-than-60-australian-coal-carrying-ships-kept-waiting-to-unload-off-ports-in-china>

### More than 60 Australian coal-carrying ships kept waiting to unload off ports in China

*Daniel Hurst & Helen Davidson, Guardian, 25/11/2020*

More than 60 ships carrying Australian coal have been stranded at sea – some for months – while waiting to enter Chinese ports, according to analysts, with the Morrison government being urged to clarify the long delays.

Dozens of vessels are being kept waiting, according to the global commodity and energy price reporting agency Argus, which has been tracking the situation.

An Argus representative told Guardian Australia some of those vessels left Australia as long ago as May and many had been waiting in Chinese waters since September.

Beijing appeared to be "singling out Australian coking coal imports", Argus said, with 86% of the coking coal waiting outside the Chinese ports of Jingtang and Caofeidian coming from Australia.

The details come after Bloomberg reported 66 vessels loaded with Australian coal were positioned in Chinese waters, including 53 that had been waiting about

four weeks or longer to offload the material at China's ports.

The International Transport Workers' Federation had publicised the case of the Indian-flagged *Jag Anand*, which arrived at the port of Jingtang in northern China in mid-June but had been waiting five months to be allowed to berth.

After the federation raised fears of a humanitarian crisis, given the 23 Indian seafarers aboard the vessel were fatigued, Birmingham said the case was "deeply troubling, particularly because it goes beyond the mere question of trade and involves the question, of course, of individuals who have found themselves at sea for a prolonged period of time".

Jo Clarke, a correspondent for *Argus*, said the queue of vessels loaded with Australian coal had been growing over the past couple of months.

"We see around 65 coal vessels [with Australian coal] waiting off Chinese ports, with around 19 of those being the larger Capesize vessels, with capacity of around 175,000 tonnes, and the rest the smaller Panamax, with capacity of 75,000 tonnes," she said.

"We have not heard of any vessels being asked to leave and is difficult to on-sell the cargoes, so the ships are anchored, waiting."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-26/cfa-v-hazelwood-over-mine-fire/12922696>

### **CFA seeks \$18.1m from owners of the Hazelwood power station for 2014 mine fire**

*Jarrod Whittaker, ABC, 27/11/2020*

The Country Fire Authority's efforts to recover the cost of putting out the 2014 Hazelwood mine fire will be considered at a Supreme Court trial starting next year.

The CFA is seeking \$18.1 million plus interest from the Hazelwood Power Corporation and four related companies for the fire which started on February 9 when a bush-fire entered the Latrobe Valley coal mine and burnt for 45 days.

In its statement of claim, the CFA wants Hazelwood's owners to pay for its services under the Country Fire Authority Regulations Act 2004.

The Hazelwood Power Station and its co-defendants argue that the CFA was carrying out its duty in fighting the fire and there is no liability to pay a fee.

The defendants also argue in their statement of claim that they pay the annual Fire Services Levy imposed on land in Victoria to help fund Victoria's firefighting services.

The matter will return to court on Friday, February 12 2021.

Last year, the Supreme Court found the Hazelwood power station's owners guilty in two separate criminal trials related to the fire. In the first, a jury found the owners guilty of putting the staff and the public in danger as a result of the fire.

In the second, the plant's operators were found guilty of pollution offences.

The court fined the companies a combined total of more than \$1.9 million.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-20/dartbrook-coal-approval-dealt-blow-horsebreeders-join-legal-case/12900050>

### **Thoroughbred breeders can join legal case, halting approval of Dartbrook coal mine in NSW Hunter**

*Jake Lapham, ABC, 20/11/2020*

A proposal to resume operations at a mothballed underground coal mine in the NSW Hunter Valley has been dealt a setback, with the Land and Environment Court refusing to rubber stamp its approval.

Australian Pacific Coal had reached an agreement with the Independent Planning Commission (IPC), earlier this month, for an extension of its mining license through to 2027, paving the way for operations to resume. The mine near Muswellbrook has been mothballed for 14 years after it closed due to fire and fatalities.

But a successful last-ditch legal challenge from the Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association (HTBA) will allow them to join proceedings as a party, preventing the court from ratifying the earlier agreement.

In the Land and Environment Court, Justice Duggan accepted some aspects of that revised proposal may have been so different from the original, that it could constitute a new proposal, and allowed HTBA to join proceedings on that basis.

The decision means Australian Pacific Coal now face a significant hurdle in gaining approval for the license extension.

Intense community interest has surrounded the Dartbrook mine since it was acquired by Australian Pacific Coal in 2016.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/australian-coal-exports-face-perfect-storm-as-china-restrictions-hit-20201130-p56j9b.html>

### **Australian coal exports face 'perfect storm' as China restrictions hit**

*Eryk Bagshaw & Anthony Galloway, SMH, 01/12/2020*

Australian coal exports face a GFC-style threat to their viability, one of the country's top insolvency experts will claim as Chinese import restrictions, reduced demand and funding for renewables wipes out key markets.

McGrathNicol's chairman Jason Preston will on Tuesday say the escalation of China's trade restrictions completes "a perfect storm" for coal exporters, as dozens of ships carrying up to \$700 million worth of coal remain stranded off the Chinese coast unable to unload their cargo.

"It comes on top of COVID dampening coal demand, fiscal stimulus policies being directed to competing renewable energy and [environmental, social, and corporate] governance policies causing investors to

reduce their exposure to carbon," he said. Chinese imports of Australian coking coal fell by more than 20% in October compared to the same time last year.

China's trade disputes with Australia now span \$20 billion in exports across the coal, wine, seafood, timber, barley and cotton sectors. In mid-November the Chinese embassy released a list of 14 grievances and urged the Australian government to change course on its foreign policy positions.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/sustainability/demand-drop-closes-coal-mine-as-neighbour-seeks-approval-to-expand-20201205-p56kvr.html>

### **Demand drop closes coal mine as neighbour seeks approval to expand**

*Peter Hannam, SMH, 06/12/2020*

The future of the two main coal mines digging under Sydney's water catchment hangs in the balance with one closing for two months because of weak demand and the other seeking approval to expand.

The Metropolitan mine run by struggling giant Peabody Energy will be shut from January 4 for eight weeks with miners being offered "access to paid leave". The nearby South32-owned Dendrobium mine concluded four days of public hearing on Friday over plans to extend its life out to 2048.

Peabody told its Community Consultative Committee on Tuesday the coronavirus was to blame for the temporary closure, with the company planning to review conditions during the shutdown.

The company spokeswoman, however, dismissed what she described as "rumours around our financial position" that might affect Peabody's ability to meet obligations to rehabilitate the mine once it is finally shut.

Last month, Peabody – the world's largest private coal company – warned that there was "substantial doubt" it could meet its debt obligations over the next year.

Peabody's perils contrast with South 32, which is pressing ahead with plans to expand its Dendrobium mine so it can extract another 78 million tonnes of coal within the Special Areas region.

Peter Turner, the mining projects science officer for the National Parks Association, said Metropolitan's troubles only highlighted "the economic fragility of mining beneath the catchment" and the South32 project should not proceed.

In Peabody's case, a failure of the company would raise questions over who would pay for the necessary remediation of damage down to the Eastern Tributary, quite apart from the long-term costs of closing the Metropolitan mine.

Dr Turner described the Dendrobium extension as a "diabolical proposal" that ran the risk of causing the permanent loss of water as cracks extend from the extracted coal seam, diverting water away from dams and drying out important swamps above.

In the future, as sealed mines fill with the water there would also be the risk of con-

taminants reaching the surface and entering nearby dams supplying the Greater Sydney region.

## OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.nvi.com.au/story/7026963/barilaro-commits-to-town-wide-narrabri-activation-precinct/>

### Deputy Premier John Barilaro commits to a Narrabri special activation precinct

Andrew Messenger, *Namoi Valley Independent*, 24/11/2020

Deputy Premier John Barilaro has committed to developing a special activation precinct in Narrabri.

Barilaro said his Department of Regional NSW would take carriage of investigating how to develop the project, which will cover the entire town.

An investigation into the scope of the project will take 18 months. But he committed that shovels would hit the ground during “this term of government” – before 2023.

The announcement comes after gas company Santos won state approval for a \$3.6bn coal seam gas project outside the town in September.

Combined with the national Inland Rail Port, set to run through the town, Barilaro said the two projects could turn the region into one of “the economic hubs of regional NSW”.

In a previous announcement in the town, Barilaro said Narrabri’s Inland Port project could be the most significant site on the route of the national Inland Rail project.

Standing outside Wilga Park power station, the MP told media the two projects together gave the region all the ingredients to attract new business.

The inland port will develop a large industrial precinct and freight exchange and house the proposed ammonium nitrate and baking soda manufacturing hubs Santos said could follow development of its gas project.

The inland port is expected to create 1000 jobs on its own.

State government money will help pay for essential infrastructure including water, electricity and communications connections that operators need to relocate close to the Inland Rail route.

Narrabri-based energy consultant Rowan Boehm, who opposes the gas project, said renewable energy “is the future for NSW and the North West”.

“The NSW Government’s own roadmap defines this very clearly, and it also very clearly does not identify the need for a major gas hub for the region.”

“Gas might have been the right direction 50 years ago, but that’s not the case today.”

He said the “energy hub” is just a smoke-screen “for a last hurrah for the gas industry”.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/federal-green-light-nsw-gas-project-194753949--spt.html>

### Federal green light for NSW gas project

Matt Coughlan, *Yahoo!News*, 25/11/2020

The Morrison government has approved a controversial gas field in northwest NSW, paving the way for the \$3.6 billion coal seam project to go ahead.

Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley said her approval was based on the Commonwealth’s expert science committee on coal seam gas.

“I am satisfied that the conditions, and the staged nature of work in the area, will safeguard the biodiversity of the Pilliga Forest,” she said on Tuesday.

Oil and gas giant Santos has been given the go-ahead to build its Narrabri project over 95,000 hectares in the forest and nearby grazing land.

It involves drilling 850 new gas wells over 20 years.

Federal approval conditions to protect water in the area include an early warning system with ongoing bore-monitoring to identify potential groundwater issues.

A chemical risk assessment framework will be in place for coal seam gas operations.

Santos will also be bound to stop work at gas wells if a groundwater exceedance is predicted, while 134 other state government conditions must be met.

Local farmer Scott McCalman said landholders across the Narrabri district were furious about the approval.

“It is frankly disgusting that state and federal governments would just write off 23,000 submissions against this destructive gas field and ignore the science that shows it will threaten our groundwater,” he said.

Resources Minister Keith Pitt said Santos had linked 200 jobs directly to the project with a further 1300 roles in the construction phase.

Traditional owner Polly Cutmore said Gomeri people would continue to fight the project.

“Scott Morrison doesn’t decide for us, the Independent Planning Commission doesn’t decide for us what happens on our country,” she said.

“We do, not them. These policies and procedures are just to suit white men, not us.”

Left-leaning think tank the Australia Institute’s climate director Richie Merzian said the project would do nothing to improve energy security and reliability.

The Climate Council’s Lesley Hughes said the government should instead be helping Australia become a world leader in renewable energy.

“The Narrabri project will have devastating impacts on local biodiversity and water resources, and will accelerate dangerous climate change,” Professor Hughes said.

“Australia does not need new gas, and a majority of Australians don’t want it.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/nov/26/narrabri-gas-project-should-not-have-been-approved-while-santos-plans-remain-uncertain-opponents-say>

### Narrabri gas project should not have been approved while Santos plans remain uncertain, opponents say

Lisa Cox & Graham Readfearn, *Guardian*, 26/11/2020

Opponents of Santos’s \$3.6bn Narrabri gas project say it should not have been approved given the company has not explained which parts of the Pilliga forest will be cleared or finished investigating what it would mean for local groundwater.

The federal environment minister, Sussan Ley, announced on Tuesday the government had approved the controversial development, which would involve up to 850 gas wells being drilled in grazing land and forest in northern NSW.

The anti-mining group Lock the Gate and community members opposed to the project said the gas field had been approved despite continuing uncertainty about the effect it would have on the environment.

Concerns were also been raised about how the project would affect several threatened species and impact koala habitat.

<https://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/7030493/gas-terminal-signs-a-deal-for-12-kilometre-pipeline/>

### Gas terminal signs a deal for 12-kilometre pipeline

Glen Humphries, *Illawarra Mercury*, 27/11/2020

A 12-kilometre pipeline will be built connecting the Port Kembla Gas Terminal to the east coast gas network.

Squadron Energy - owned by billionaire Andrew “Twiggy” Forrest – is developing the gas terminal and announced the deal with Jemena on Friday.

The news comes on the back of Squadron signing a 25-year lease for a site in the inner harbour at Port Kembla. The pipeline will run around the harbour and connect to the Eastern Gas Pipeline at Cringila.

Squadron Energy said, “Now with an agreement for long term tenure for the site and a pipeline agreement secured, the Port Kembla Gas Terminal remains the only project in the eastern states capable of assisting the NSW state government to overcome predicted gas shortages by 2024.”

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/narrabri-gas-project-goes-against-all-commercial-odds-20201126-p56j33.html>

### Narrabri gas project goes against all commercial odds

Madeline Taylor, *SMH*, 27/11/2020

The news of the Narrabri gas project’s final environmental approval comes, jarringly, in the same week that the NSW government

pushed through its landmark Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill. This bill supports a 20-year roadmap for the delivery of 12 gigawatts of renewable generation and two gigawatts of “deep” long-duration storage, while stimulating \$32 billion of private sector investment by 2030 and saving NSW households an average of \$130 on their electricity bills from 2023.

New gas projects are increasingly struggling to prove commercial viability. Santos has written \$1.1 billion off the value of its gas investments this year alone, leaving questions as to whether the company will be able to fund the \$3.6 billion Narrabri project.

Despite a pledge by Santos to keep Narrabri gas for the NSW market, it is not guaranteed to provide energy security for the state, as there is no NSW domestic gas reservation regulation. There is also no legally binding reservation condition attached to the federal or Independent Planning Commission approval conditions to Narrabri gas production.

It could be more likely that Narrabri gas will instead be sold at a premium to the highest bidder – likely southern states, such as Victoria.

There are other options to secure energy security for the NSW gas market. The approved Port Kembla Gas LNG terminal is under construction, with a 25-year lease with NSW Ports. It will inject 100 petajoules of gas a year in NSW, or 500 terajoules a day, sourced either internationally or domestically from existing large-scale gas projects at a comparatively cheaper price to the Narrabri Gas Project of \$6-8 per gigajoule.

Perhaps of most concern is the NSW government announcement that it will create a gas precinct near Narrabri to streamline further gas approvals. There are no other pending petroleum production licence applications for unconventional gas exploitation in NSW. The development of the four Narrabri petroleum production licences will signal a positive political environment for petroleum developers to further exploit the Gunnedah Basin and other NSW unconventional gas basins on the basis of the “public interest”. This is despite considerable environmental and community opposition to the social effects of gas production in highly productive agricultural areas.

• *Dr Madeline Taylor is an expert in energy and natural resources law at Sydney Law School and the Sydney Environment Institute at University of Sydney.*

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/santos-targets-net-zero-emissions-by-2040-as-climate-pressure-grows-20201130-p56j6h.html>

### **Santos targets net-zero emissions by 2040 as climate pressure grows**

*Nick Toscano, SMH, 01/12/2020*

Santos, one of the nation’s largest oil and gas companies, will target deeper emissions cuts in the next decade with a goal

to become a “net-zero” emitter by 2040. Managing director Kevin Gallagher will outline new targets at an investor briefing on Tuesday including a 26-30% reduction of its direct emissions by 2030 based on 2020 levels.

The company will also become the first large Australian oil and gas producer to target a goal of net-zero emissions by 2040.

Gallagher said Santos would mitigate its emissions by purchasing nature-based offsets such as tree-planting programs, accelerate the deployment of more renewable energy and utilise carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology to trap and bury carbon dioxide underground before it was emitted into the atmosphere.

The company’s strengthened targets come as it nears a final investment decision to give the go-ahead for one of the world’s cheapest CCS projects at its Moomba gas plant in South Australia. After completing the final field trial, successfully injecting 100 tonnes of carbon dioxide into a depleted gas reservoir in the Cooper Basin, Santos is 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.

<https://www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/story/7034408/gas-led-recovery-to-cost-ag-jobs-and-increase-land-use-conflicts/>

### **Gas-led recovery would cost ag jobs and increase land use conflicts, Australian Farm Institute says**

*Jamieson Murphy, Qld Country Life, 01/12/2020*

A gas-led recovery would come at a cost to farmers by reducing agricultural jobs while increasing land use conflicts, a new briefing paper by the Australian Farm Institute says.

With most potential gas sites located in regional Australia, more gas projects will inevitably lead to more land use conflicts for farmers.

Large chunks of the nation’s agricultural land is covered by Petroleum Exploration Licences, including 33.2% of grazing land, 13.1% of irrigated cropping and 12.9% of dryland cropping.

Report author and AFI executive director Richard Heath said a gas-led recovery would come “at a compromise to agriculture” and pointing to research that showed 1.8 jobs were lost in the ag sector for every job gained in the gas sector.

Quirindi farmer Peter Wills found himself in the middle of a land use conflict after taking over the family farm, when he discovered the Hunter-Queensland Gas Pipeline would run through his property.

“They’re essentially forcing me to go into business with them to put a gas pipeline on my farm,” Wills said.

“I will have to wear any long-term damage to my land value. I certainly wouldn’t want to buy property with a pipeline going through it and I am being forced to own one if it ever goes ahead.”

Wills said a gas-led recovery will mean more farmers fighting to stop companies from building gas infrastructure on their land.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/dec/03/hundreds-rally-in-australian-capital-cities-against-the-36bn-narrabri-gas-project>

### **Hundreds rally in Australian capital cities against the \$3.6bn Narrabri gas project**

*Lorena Allam, Guardian, 03/12/2020*

Hundreds of people in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane have rallied in support of Aboriginal traditional owners



*Gomeri people took their fight against Santos’ Narrabri gasfield to the front steps of Parliament in Canberra on December 3. “We the Gomeri will stand strong and keep our fight burning until Santos are evicted off our sacred lands!” they said.*

*Photo: Moree Ecological Holistic Information Centre, Facebook*



to voice their strong opposition to Santos's \$3.6bn gas project in western NSW, which they say will devastate Gamilaraay Gomeri cultural ties to sacred and significant heritage sites.

The Gomeri traditional owner Polly Cutmore told the Canberra rally: "We are calling on all our mob and anyone who loves and respects Gomeri country to let these politicians know they don't make decisions for us.

"Susan Ley has not taken notice of the majority of people who live on Gomeri country and oppose this gasfield.

"She has ignored us, the scientists, the farmers, so many people, and we've had enough."

Public response to the development has been overwhelmingly opposed. The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment received nearly 23,000 submissions. Almost 98% were opposed on a range of grounds, including that it could damage groundwater relied on for agriculture, lead to a loss of pressure in the Great Artesian Basin, affect biodiversity in the Pilliga forest and release substantial greenhouse gas emissions.

"[Ley] should meet with us and tell us directly why she has ignored 23,000 submissions opposing this gasfield, and why she is relying on Santos's word," Cutmore said.

In Brisbane, more than a hundred people protested outside Santos Place in the CBD, while rallies were also held in Sydney and Melbourne.

At the Sydney rally, the Gomeri woman Tameeka Tighe told the crowd: "I'm here to tell you, this land is the law, and we've been here since the beginning of time and we're not going anywhere.

"We're here to take everything our ancestors were denied. We're Gomeri next generation, and we're going to be here until the end of time.

"There's one land and there's one law, and that's ours: Gomeri."

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/australia-s-gas-fired-recovery-plans-ignite-industry-fear-20201203-p56k7v.html>

## Australia's 'gas-fired' recovery plans ignite industry fear

Nick Toscano, SMH, 04/12/2020

Australia's oil and gas companies are appealing to the Morrison government to take a cautious approach as it begins assessing plans for a domestic gas-reservation scheme, pointing to new research suggesting such interventions discourage investment and don't guarantee lower prices.

As gas producers grow increasingly worried about the knock-on effects of interventions in Prime Minister Scott Morrison's "gas-fired" COVID-19 economic recovery plan, the nation's peak oil and gas association will launch a report on Friday warning

price controls and schemes to set aside a certain amount of gas for local buyers could impede the very investment needed to bring on new supply.

The research from energy consultancy EnergyQuest, commissioned by the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA), examined gas market policies of 20 major gas-producing nations accounting for more than 70% of the world's gas production.

APPEA represents the nation's largest oil and gas giants including Woodside, Santos, Origin, BHP, Shell, BP and Jemena.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/santos-may-import-carbon-dioxide-waste-to-moomba-20201204-p56kqj>

## Santos may import carbon dioxide waste to Moomba

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 07/12/2020

Santos' planned carbon capture and storage project at its Moomba gas plant has attracted interest from South Korea and Japan, and raised the possibility of carbon dioxide being imported into Australia for permanent disposal at the South Australian site at world-beating low costs.

The deals depend on CCS becoming eligible to generate Australian Carbon Credit Units, something under discussion within government.

While the details of the agreements with the overseas parties have not been disclosed, they could potentially mean those parties acquire tradeable carbon credits that could count towards their emissions reduction obligations back home.

Chief executive Kevin Gallagher said Santos had also been asked to investigate taking CO2 waste from other parts of the world. "I don't know how that works, but people want to talk to us about importing CO2 into the Cooper Basin if we can permanently store it," he said.

Gallagher said the initial project would be the second-largest CCS project globally after Gorgon in Western Australia, with the world's lowest costs, at less than \$30 a tonne over the life cycle.

While the project is ready for a final investment decision, Santos will not give the green light until the federal government declares it is eligible to generate Australian Carbon Credit Units, a decision hoped for towards mid-2021.

CCS remains a hugely controversial technology amid concerns among environmental groups that it will be used as an excuse to prolong the life of fossil fuels. High costs mean the process has also been uncommercial, while uncertainty reigns over the potential for long-term carbon leakage and over long-term liabilities.

# CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/nov/25/nsw-upper-house-passes-renewable-electricity-bill-after-rejecting-one-nation-amendments>

## NSW upper house passes renewable electricity bill after rejecting One Nation amendments

AAP/Guardian, 25/11/2020

New South Wales upper house MPs have finally passed renewable electricity legislation after a marathon parliamentary sitting in which almost 250 One Nation-proposed amendments were rejected.

The government upper house leader Damien Tudehope on Tuesday suspended the Legislative Council's midnight adjournment to work through the 249 amendments to the electricity infrastructure investment bill.

The amendments were put forward by One Nation's Mark Latham in an attempt to thwart the bill's passage, which is supported by the Coalition government, Labor opposition and Greens.

NSW deputy premier John Barilaro on Wednesday told reporters the policy had the full support of the government, opposition and the Greens.

"Mark Latham has his democratic right to put up amendments and go through the democratic process of the House, and we as the government and crossbench will debate those amendments," he said.

The lower house will be recalled on Friday afternoon, after earlier breaking for the Christmas period, so that it can vote on the amended energy bill.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/dec/01/three-quarters-of-australians-back-target-of-net-zero-by-2030-guardian-essential-poll-shows>

## Three-quarters of Australians back target of net zero by 2030, Guardian Essential poll shows

Katharine Murphy, Guardian, 01/12/2020

Public support for action on climate change is higher now than it was at the peak of the catastrophic bushfires last summer, according to the latest Guardian Essential poll, which shows a strong majority supporting a net zero target by 2050.

The latest survey of 1,034 voters has 81% support for the Morrison government adopting a net zero emissions target by 2050 – which is a 10 point increase in the level of voter support for the policy recorded back in January.

The survey suggests a majority of voters would favour stronger climate action earlier, with 75% of the sample supportive of setting a net zero target by 2030 rather than mid-century, which is an 11 point increase since January.

Public support is also there to ban political donations from fossil fuel companies (72% support, up from 62% in January), and 87% of the sample say they would

support accelerating the development of new industries and jobs that are powered by renewable energy (up from 81% during the fires).

The survey also indicates a majority would support a policy of requiring mining companies to fund bushfire hazard reduction (80% support compared with 68% support in January).

While the survey suggests climate action in Australia is now a cause with strong majority support, some issues remain controversial. Australians remain divided about whether we should be opening new coalmines (49% support new mines and 51% oppose them) and whether the fossil fuel industry should get taxpayer subsidies (42% support and 58% oppose this).

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/un-report-rightfully-shames-australia-over-fossil-fuel-plans-20201202-p56jxw.html>

## UN report rightfully shames Australia over fossil fuel plans

Fergus Green, Richard Denniss & Richie Merzian, SMH, 03/12/2020

Australia is the world's third largest exporter of fossil fuels. According to a new report released today by the United Nations Environment Program and leading international research organisations, Australia's contribution to the world's production of coal, oil and gas is only growing.

The UN analysis – which highlights the Australian government's plans to increase fossil fuel production, mostly for export – makes for sober reading.

The global warming carbon budget sets a limit on the amount of fossil fuels the world can produce if we are to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees. But by 2030, if Australia and other major fossil fuel producers realise their plans, we will produce more than double that amount.

Among the big fossil fuel producers, the group of wealthy countries with diversified economies, like Australia, are much better placed to transition away from fossil fuels. After all, coal mining employs less than half a per cent of Australian workers.

Australia's fossil fuel production is privately owned and these private companies "tend to be highly politically organised, investing considerable resources into lobbying, campaign finance, public relations, and think tank sponsorship, and exerting influence through a 'revolving door' between business and government." It seems the "Canberra bubble" is a great employer of coal and gas workers who don't work on site.

These powerful fossil fuel stakeholders are frustrating efforts to transition to cleaner energy and cleaner exports. Overcoming these challenges, the report continues, "will require weakening these incumbent interests in general, engaging with industry actors that are making serious efforts to support transitions, and strengthening co-operation with other firms and unions."



David Gillespie, Matt Canavan and Barnaby Joyce underground at Centennial Coal's Mandalong mine on November 26. Photo: William Rollo

The most obvious place to start is to abolish subsidies for new fossil fuel exploration, given that the world has already found more than enough.

Fortunately, because of the highly capital-intensive nature of the coal, oil and gas industries, redirecting the same investment into almost any other industry creates a lot more jobs than are created via fossil fuel subsidies and handouts.

The greatest impact Australia can make on the climate front is to put a moratorium on new coal mines and gas fields.

## FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/anthony-albanese-backs-in-behind-mark-butler-climate-action-20201125-p56hxe.html>

### Anthony Albanese backs in behind Mark Butler, climate action

Rob Harris, SMH, 25/11/2020

Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese's closest allies say he is "not for blinking" on Labor's climate change policies and will not be shifting the energy portfolio away from long-time frontbencher Mark Butler in an upcoming reshuffle.

Butler, a South Australian left-faction powerbroker, said on Wednesday his future in the job was a decision for Albanese and he remained "passionate" about strong action on climate change.

The federal Labor caucus has been plagued with division over the issue since last year's election defeat, which culminated in the resignation of shadow cabinet member Joel Fitzgibbon earlier this month.

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7030335/nationals-push-for-new-hunter-coal-fired-power-station-as-two-day-mining-tour-concludes/>

### Barnaby Joyce, Matt Canavan and David Gillespie take the National Party message to Mandalong underground and Vales Point power station

Ian Kirkwood, Newcastle Herald, 27/11/2020

With public surveys repeatedly reporting overwhelming public support for renewable energy, National Party MPs Barnaby Joyce and David Gillespie, along with Queensland Senator Matt Canavan, are often portrayed as energy troglodytes.

But as far as Senator Canavan is concerned, the trio are putting "practicality ahead of wishful thinking" in calling out what they say are major shortcomings with renewable energy – especially in overcoming its intermittency – and have dubbed their two-day tour of the Hunter "the caravan of common sense".

As well as visiting Centennial Coal's Mandalong underground mine and Delta Electricity's Vales Point power station yesterday, they launched what they said was a new website – [huntercoal.com.au](http://huntercoal.com.au) – which contains an online petition calling for a new 'high efficiency low emission' (HELE) coal-fired power station under the banner of "Nationals for Coal".

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/canavan-leads-caravan-for-coal-urging-nationals-to-bury-future-in-fossil-fuels-22525/>

### Canavan leads "caravan" for coal, urging Nationals to bury future in fossil fuels

Giles Parkinson, Renew Economy, 27/11/2020

"Nationals for coal". It has a certain ring to it, don't you think. And it leaves no doubt where the party now owes its allegiances, not so much with farmers and the regional communities they feign to support, but with Big Fossil.

Perhaps it's all about who donates the most.

The former and still aspiring federal leader of the National Party, Barnaby Joyce, and his former chief of staff, former Nationals leader in the Senate and former resources minister Matt Canavan have been on a two day tour of coal mines in the Hunter Valley, slamming the NSW Coalition government's renewable transition plan and calling for a new coal fired power station in the area.

According to the *Newcastle Herald*, which sent a photographer down a mine shaft to take a picture of Joyce, Canavan and another Nationals MP David Gillespie, the Nationals trio are calling themselves the "caravan of common sense". Numerous alternatives spring to mind.

On Thursday, we are told, they visited Centennial Coal's Mandalong underground mine, and the Vales Point power station that is half owned by prominent LNP donor Trevor St Baker, where they launched a new website – [huntercoal.com.au](http://huntercoal.com.au) – which calls for a new coal-fired power station under the banner of "Nationals for Coal".

Canavan wondered why, if renewables were so cheap, they needed support or a government plan. Almost in the same breath, he fretted about the fate of his federal government's grant to St Baker's coal generator, the one St Baker bought off the NSW government for just \$1 million and which has delivered him hundreds of millions of dollars in profits.

Gillespie urged Australia "to follow America's lead" and cut power prices by building more coal fired power stations. Someone must have forgotten to tell him that the US coal industry is moribund and mostly bankrupt, and US coal production has fallen to its lowest level in more than 50 years.

And don't think this is just a bunch of government back-benchers doing the

dirty work of the fossil fuel lobby. Current resources minister and Nationals MP Keith Pitt put in his two cents worth on Sky News, describing the NSW plan – which is whole-heartedly supported, incidentally, by the NSW Nationals, – as a "fantasy".

Pitt, who reminded viewers that he is an electrical engineer, then went on to talk about "carbon capture and storage", which he said was already commercial, which will be news to the carbon capture and storage industry which is seeking massive government handouts.

Pitt then went on to say CCS was merely promising. "Technology has to be the solution," he said. It will be, but not the technologies that these Nationals are talking about.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/nov/28/mining-giants-make-fresh-bid-to-explore-for-gas-with-licence-that-covers-land-owned-by-barnaby-joyce>

### **Mining giants make fresh bid to explore for gas with licence that covers land owned by Barnaby Joyce**

*Christopher Knaus, Guardian, 28/11/2020*

Oil giants Santos and Comet Ridge are again pushing to explore for gas under a licence that covers land owned by Barnaby Joyce, which he said he would sell almost seven years ago, acknowledging it could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

In 2013, Joyce was revealed to own land in Gwabegar, near the Pilliga state forest in north-west New South Wales, a region central to the state's coal seam gas development plans.

Joyce's land, described as "mongrel land" with little agricultural use, was covered by a petroleum exploration licence held as a joint venture between Santos and Comet Ridge, raising the possibility that he could financially benefit from any future drilling on his property.

Joyce always maintained that he did not know of the exploration licence when he purchased two blocks for a combined \$572,000 in 2006 and 2007. He said there was no prospect of gas being extracted from the land and according to reports at the time, denied categorically he had any knowledge of anything that could drive up the value of the land at the time he bought it.

Joyce did say, however, that he would sell the land, if he could get the right price, to avoid "any viewed conflict of interest" between his role in government and the Nationals party, and the highly polarising issue of coal seam gas.

Joyce's land has not been sold in the seven years since, despite his attempts to sell it. It is not currently on the market, Joyce said.

Simon Pockley, a landholder in the nearby Warrumbungle mountain range who has campaigned against coal seam gas extraction, said he believed there was a "clear conflict of interest" in Joyce's land-holding.

"Of course there is, for a public figure who stands to gain," he said.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/coal-baron-rules-out-suing-over-nsw-energy-plan-as-opposition-wanes-20201128-p56irg.html>

### **Coal baron rules out suing over NSW energy plan as opposition wanes**

*Peter Hannam, SMH, 29/11/2020*

Energy magnate Trevor St Baker has dismissed media reports he plans to sue the NSW government over its new energy plan as some of the biggest companies prepare to rejig their investments.

St Baker, whose company Sunset Power bought the Vales Point power station for \$1 million in 2017, said he had "no intention to sue" and had communicated that to the Berejiklian government.

News Corp papers on Tuesday reported the entrepreneur, sometimes dubbed a "coal baron", had "vowed to sue [Energy Minister Matt] Kean over the ambitious energy plan that aims to lure private investment to build 12 gigawatts of new capacity, or about nine Vales Point plants, by 2030.

"It was a total misquote," St Baker said, adding that while "we think there are flaws in the plan ... we're pleased that there's an open door [to Minister Kean]".

The landmark energy plan passed into law on Friday after the government overcame a marathon effort over 30 hours in virtually one sitting by One Nation MP Mark Latham to shackle the bill with almost 250 amendments, and also reference St Baker's criticisms.



*Barnaby Joyce, David Gillespie, and Matt Canavan at Vales Point Power Station on November 26. Photo: William Rollo*

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<https://knitting-nannas.org/bulletins.php>

<https://www.armidaleexpress.com.au/story/7035035/contrarian-view-joyce-to-lobby-on-behalf-of-anti-wind-groups/>

## Barnaby Joyce to lobby on behalf of emerging opposition to New England renewable energy zone

*Andrew Messenger, Armidale Express, 30/11/2020*

Barnaby Joyce will lobby the Commonwealth against a state renewable energy plan which he said will turn his electorate into a “sea of wind farms”.

The former Deputy Prime Minister and member for New England said he will work, as a local member, on behalf of a number of community groups that have sprung up in opposition to wind farm developments.

“If anyone says they are going to cover New England with wind towers, they’re in for one heck of a battle,” he said on Facebook on the weekend.

The New England region was last week designated as a Renewable Energy Zone.

State government plans accommodate for much as 8,000 megawatts of wind, solar and battery power in the region, development worth as much as \$12.7 billion.

Joyce said the “legislation that would close down four coal fire power stations will result in 600,000 hectares of new wind farms.”

“That starts to scare people. That goes from a novelty to a threat,” he said.

“I don’t want hundreds of thousands of further hectares of new wind farms.”

Given the bipartisan near-consensus on reform, Joyce said it was his responsibility to “vent the contrarian view”.

Instead of vast new renewables development, Government should look to upgrading the coal-fired Liddell power station to meet future power needs, Joyce said.

<https://inql.com.au/news/2020/11/30/mining-company-with-lobbyists-on-the-books-spent-660000-on-election/>

## Mining company with lobbyists spent \$660,000 on election

*Sean Parnell, In Queensland, 30/11/2020*

The New Hope Group has been shedding staff amid ongoing delays with the proposed expansion of its New Acland coal mine.

For months, the company has been calling on the Palaszczuk Labor Government to finalise approvals for the stage three expansion of the mine, near Toowoomba.

The proposed expansion has been controversial, pitting environmentalists against local advocates, and sparked legal action.

Corporate disclosures reveal New Hope spent \$658,528.31 campaigning in the lead-up to the October 31 state election. It lobbied both sides of politics, and advertised the merits of its proposal, before Labor was re-elected for a third term.

The company also campaigned ahead of

the weekend federal by-election in Groom, a seat retained by the Liberal National Party, and has sought to resume negotiations with the State Government.

On Friday, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk told a Queensland Resources Council lunch that the coal sector was under extraordinary pressure due to trade tensions between Australia and China. She said her government would continue to fight for the sector.

New Hope was the first company signed up by former Labor official, MP and Palaszczuk staffer turned lobbyist Evan Moorhead. During the election, New Hope paid for digital media services to be delivered by another lobbying firm, Govstrat, which has stronger links with the LNP.

An analysis by the ABC last week revealed Moorhead’s Anacta Strategies had met with staff working in the Premier’s office more than any other lobbyist.

The firm has also been paid to work for the Labor Party.

Anacta Strategies held six meetings in a single month last year with the Premier’s chief of staff and the chief of staff of then-state development minister, Cameron Dick.

The main opponent to the New Acland mine expansion, the Oakey Coal Action Alliance, complained of only securing six meetings in more than three years with frontbenchers or their staff.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-03/territory-economic-reconstruction-commission-middle-arm-plans/12943406>

## Darwin Harbour to face more industrialisation under Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission plan

*Felicity James, ABC, 03/12/2020*

Proposals to further industrialise the harbour are a prominent feature of the NT Government’s latest plan, released on Tuesday, to help it recover economically over the next decade.

The new economic recovery strategy was drafted by the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission (TERC), set up by the NT Government and co-chaired by Andrew Liveris, former chief executive of the Dow Chemical Company, one of the world’s largest chemical manufacturers.

The commission’s plan includes a proposed petrochemical precinct at Middle Arm, supported by development of the Beetaloo Basin.

Petrochemical plants convert natural gas into a range of end products, such as plastics, paint, detergents and fertilisers.

NT Government tender documents reveal further details about potential interest in the Middle Arm site for ammonia production, a possible urea plant, a methanol plant, mercury processing, hydrogen production and a minerals refinery for iron ore, titanium and vanadium.

A coalition responding to the TERC’s plan – including the Environment Centre NT, the NT Council of Social Service and the Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union NT – likened the report to Jekyll and Hyde.

Environment Centre NT co-director Kirsty Howey said the TERC’s report appeared to have been written by two different people, promoting gas and petrochemical industry growth alongside renewable energy targets.

“There are concerns around the world that this boom in the production of plastics by petrochemical plants could in fact lock in emissions for many years to come and prolong our dependence on fossil fuels,” Howey said.

Howey also said there was a growing body of research about health risks related to petrochemical plants.

She used the example of an area in Louisiana dubbed “cancer alley” because of suspected cancer clusters related to the pollution created by the plants.

“Petrochemical plants are known to be extremely toxic, they produce large amounts of waste,” Howey said.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/australian-industry-group-backs-domestic-gas-reservation-policy-20201204-p56kmi>

## Australian Industry Group backs domestic gas reservation policy

*Angela Macdonald-Smith & Elouise Fowler, AFR, 06/12/2020*

Arguments that a domestic gas reservation system on the east coast would lead to the collapse of oil and gas investment are “absurd”, according to the Australian Industry Group.

It said a gas reservation system could be combined with other options to provide long-term security to domestic gas users, including extending control of LNG exports and imposing a national interest assessment test on new gas export developments.

“Western Australia’s reservation policy has clearly not been incompatible with immense investment by the oil and gas sector over the years,” Ai Group said in its submission to the Morrison government’s review on a proposed national gas reservation scheme.

“The idea that an eastern or national reservation would necessarily lead to the collapse of oil and gas investment is absurd.”

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7042602/matt-kean-is-right-coal-is-no-help-in-the-fight-against-heatwaves/>

## Matt Kean is right: Coal is no help in the fight against heatwaves

*Matt Edwards, Canberra Times, 07/12/20*

The fossil fuel interests were out in force last week in the usual places, following NSW Energy Minister Matt Kean’s promotion of his new energy policy, which passed Parliament late last month.



NSW Energy Minister Matt Kean has copped criticism from the Murdoch media for his promotion of renewable energy. Photo: Contributed

His crime? To dare to suggest on Twitter that environmental benefits and cost savings to the community outweigh the profits of polluting vested interests and a select few "coal barons".

Seems pretty innocuous, you would think, and a reason to celebrate the dawn of a more positive future for our industry, our economy and our local environment.

Not for some. Labor backbencher Joel Fitzgibbon, increasingly at odds with senior members of his own party, portrayed the minister as "an idealist rather than a realist, gloating about a premature victory over those who are arguing for no more than job security and energy reliability".

And former Labor leader Mark Latham, now working for Pauline Hanson, attempted vexatiously to block the passage of Mr Kean's energy package through the NSW upper house, attacking it with almost 250 amendments and telling 2GB radio "it's appalling that he's Energy Minister!"

The Murdoch press were incensed.

The *Herald Sun's* James O'Doherty furiously recounted that coal had saved NSW during the heatwave, helping residents stay cool. One might as well thank cigarettes for reducing the stress of a blocked aorta.

"Coal is also forecast to deliver \$1.4 billion in royalties to the government this year," O'Doherty pointed out, failing to mention the staggering cost to the health system

of an industry responsible for the premature deaths of nearly 800 people a year nationwide, according to Australian health researchers.

That's to say nothing of the immeasurable threat posed by fossil fuels to our future generations, all too concerning to scientists like myself.

This is not about an attack on jobs or lifestyles - this is about a responsible transition at a time when new coal-fired power plants no longer stack up economically, and most existing ones are scheduled to close by 2035, wiping nine gigawatts of generation capacity from the market.

At Coalition for Conservation, we applaud conservative leaders who are serious about conservation. We want nothing more than for our children and grandchildren to inherit a better world. The over-reliance on coal to provide baseload power in heatwaves is dangerous, both to the environment and the economy.

Heatwaves are not a reason to support coal. They are an eye-opener to realise we must transition to renewables and storage. The minister's policy is a good way to do just that.

• *Dr Matt Edwards is vice-chairman of Coalition for Conversation, a solar research scientist at the University of NSW, and the founder BlueVolt, a startup bringing solar power to cities.*



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