



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

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Santos lobbied for pipeline

Santos lobbied the Morrison Government to subsidise a gas pipeline that would enable its controversial Narrabri gas project, new documents released under FOI reveal.

The email records, from within the National COVID-19 Commission, show that as early as May 2020, Santos was telling the federal government it would “support sensible policies that ... Provide low-cost financing for investment in “missing pipeline links” on an open access, regulated basis (eg Wallumbilla-Narrabri-Newcastle).”

Santos suggested “This could be through Government or private investment with NBN Co and NAIF being examples of each.”

Upper Hunter Shire Councillor Sue Abbott, whose region would be impacted by the proposed Queensland-Hunter gas pipeline, said Santos’ request was not surprising given the Commonwealth Government’s well-known and heavily criticised plan to waste taxpayer money on polluting gas projects.

Fossil fuel co’s put their hands out

“This is yet another example of a fossil fuel company sticking out its hand for taxpayer money because it cannot make a project pay for itself. This would be a dreadful way to spend public money,” she said.

“Building a gas pipeline through the Upper Hunter would destroy agricultural land and horse studs – the Upper Hunter is a world-renowned equine cluster.

“At the end of the day this gas pipeline is likely to leak, it’s likely to cause the same damage and pollution pipelines



have already caused elsewhere around the world, and it’s ultimately likely to lead to expensive court battles.

“Building this pipeline, let alone subsidising it, is poor practice for people’s health and wellbeing.

Federal gov’t intransigence

“It is well and truly time we moved away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. This Federal Government’s intransigence is just unbelievable.”

Quirindi farmer Annette Wallis, who would be impacted by the QLD HGP said, “It is totally arrogant of Santos to suggest taxpayer money should be

spent on damaging gas pipelines that would upend many farmers’ operations.

“Rather than handing out public cash to gas companies, let’s see the government make it easier for farmers to build on their current land management practises, reduce their methane production, and work towards their farms being carbon neutral for the benefit of the environment.

“Covid, drought, and tension with China has shown how important our primary sector is, and it is high time for the government to invest in the hand that feeds the table, rather than short term, destructive gas projects.”

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• P2: NSW greenlights a billion tonnes of GHG

• P3: Miners top political donations

P4: Fracking compendium releases 7th edition

NSW greenlights a billion tonnes of pollution

Failures in NSW planning law and a lack of legal avenues for the public to challenge mining project approvals are locking in more than a billion tonnes of greenhouse gas pollution.

Lock the Gate argues this is happening because:

- The Planning Department refuses to accept responsibility for the greenhouse contribution of mining projects, despite a long-standing law requiring it to do so;
- The Independent Planning Commission's objectivity has been compromised by political interference that has weakened its independence;
- The public lacks legal "merits appeal" rights to challenge the vast majority of mining project approvals.

In total, the NSW Independent Planning Commission has approved mining projects that will create nearly 1.2 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions since the Land and Environment Court found contributing to climate change was among the reasons the proposed Rocky Hill coal mine was not in the public interest.

Three coal mines pending

If it approves three more coal mines now referred to it for decision, the IPC will have rubber stamped an additional 457.9 million tonnes of carbon emissions before the end of summer, taking the total greenhouse pollution endorsed by the NSW planning system since Rocky Hill to 1.6 billion tonnes.

According to advice provided by former Chief Scientist Penny Sackett on the Narrabri gas project, the entire remaining global carbon budget for a likely (66%) chance of keeping warming to below 1.5 degrees is just 35 billion tonnes.

The alarming approval rate shows predictions made by LTG three years ago are coming true. As well, more mine expansions that are yet to be brought before the IPC remain in the assessment pipeline.

The demonstrable weakening of the IPC position on climate after backlash from the mining lobby and political pressure is self-evident.

In 2019, the IPC factored climate change into conditions attached to the United Wambo mine and its decision to refuse the Bylong mine, but since

Approved mining projects	Date approved	GHG including downstream emissions (million tonnes over the life of the project)
United Wambo	29/08/2019	266
Rix's Creek Continuation	12/10/2019	72
Vickery Coal Project	12/08/2020	370
Santos Narrabri gasfield	30/09/2020	128
Russell Vale Expansion	08/12/2020	11
Maxwell Underground	22/12/2020	337
Dendrobium Extension	Pending	~256
Tahmoor South	Pending	94
Mangoola Continued Operations	Pending	107.9

then has approved five coal and gas projects and failed to place any substantive constraints on emissions.

Minerals Council campaigned

The four most recent approvals – Maxwell Underground, Vickery, Russell Vale, and Santos' Narrabri gasfield – followed a targeted campaign by the NSW Minerals Council aimed at weakening the IPC and the subsequent kneecapping of the Commission by a review instigated by Planning Minister Rob Stokes.

Lock the Gate argues the IPC's inconsistent approach to minimising greenhouse pollution from these mining projects and the weakening of its independence by Mr Stokes means the Land and Environment Court must be allowed to consider merits review of such decisions.

Under NSW law, communities lose their right to a merits appeal of decisions if the IPC holds public hearings on a project, a decision that rests with the Minister for Planning, Rob Stokes.

Merits appeal rights were retained for the Rocky Hill project because there was no public hearing held by the IPC on that project, enabling the Land and Environment Court to rule on the merits on appeal from the proponent. This option has not been available for any other project.

LTG NSW spokesperson Georgina Woods said, "Long-standing regulation stipulates that the consent authority, in this case the IPC, must consider whether a project should come with conditions that ensure greenhouse gas emissions – including downstream or scope 3 emissions – are minimised.

"The IPC has failed to do this with every single mining or gas project that came before it last year.

"The Commission has done nothing to constrain even the direct emissions from the mining process that add to New South Wales and Australia's pollution burden, freely allowing companies to vent methane into the atmosphere, burn fuels on site, and generally treating the mining industry as exempt from efforts to tackle climate change.

Minister knee-capped IPC

"The public has lost faith in the IPC's ability to make decisions about controversial mining projects with an impartial eye since Minister Stokes knee-capped the authority following the rejection of the Bylong Valley mine."

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COALWIRE

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

globalenergymonitor.org



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

Miners top political donations

Top 10 entities making political donations

Period 1999-2019: Centre for Public Integrity

Entity	Amount
1. Mineralogy	\$98,570,579
2. Queensland Nickel	\$21,081,433
3. Woodside	\$1,959,000
4. Santos	\$1,544,465
5. Aus Gold Mining Group	\$1,119,230
6. WMC Ltd	\$755,000
7. Australian Gypsum Industries	\$555,777
8. Trepang Services Pty Ltd atf Trepang Services Unit Trust	\$520,000
9. Western Areas NL	\$515,000
10. Minara Resources Pty Ltd	\$515,000

New analysis of 20 years of Australian Electoral Commission donation disclosures shows the resources industry is the largest donating industry to Australia's political parties and campaigners. The research from the Centre for Public Integrity shows:

- The resources industry is the largest donating industry, making contributions 2.5 times greater than the property industry, the next biggest donor;
- The resources industry made \$136.7 million in political contributions from 1999-2019;
- Many of the largest contributions came from companies who have policies against making political donations. These contributions were instead made to political campaigners who campaign and donate on their behalf;
- The Coalition received \$15.18 million, more than three times the \$4.88 million received by Labor;
- Donations peaked in 2019 (Clive Palmer election) and 2016 (carbon tax election).

“The resources industry is by far the largest donating industry. Together they have donated 2.5 times more than property developers,” said the Hon Anthony Whealy QC, Chair of the Centre for Public Integrity.

“Donations can lead to greater access and influence.

“Companies that have policies against making donations are still having influence by donating to political campaigners and peak bodies. These organisations advocate and make donations on their behalf.”

“Clive Palmer made the largest political donation in history in the 2019 election. He influenced voters through ads and direct communications. There is nothing stopping other mining magnates from doing this in the future.”

“We need urgent reform to cap donations and spending, and make all donations transparent to voters in real time.”

• **Download the report here:**

<https://publicintegrity.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Donations-case-study-resource-and-energy-industry.pdf>

Adani rips up land before protecting finch habitat

The Morrison Government has approved a delay of several years before Adani needs to “legally secure” land that would act as an offset for a host of endangered and threatened animals and plants.

Adani (now calling itself Bravus) applied to extend the deadline for it to secure offset habitat for animals like the southern black throated finch, ornamental snake, yakka skink, and squatter pigeon by a year at the mine site, while also requesting a new five-year deadline to secure offsets for its railway.

An EPBC notice issued this month shows the Federal Agriculture, Water, and Environment Department approved the delay to the original timeframe.

More pressure on threatened species

Lock the Gate’s Queensland spokesperson Ellie Smith said the offset delay would place further pressure on species already under serious threat.

“It is totally outrageous for Adani to be given an extension to secure land for these endangered and threatened species while it begins ripping apart their habitat at its Carmichael mine site,” she said.

“Offset strategies are often ineffective ways to mitigate damage done by large mining projects to begin with.

“In fact, we know part of Adani’s offset area was originally slated for a mining lease area covered by another Galilee Basin mega-mine.

“This delay will just increase the odds that any habitat secured by Adani as a so-called offset will do little to protect these at-risk species into the future.

“Adani has a long track record of totally disregarding the environment, including unlawful action, so it’s no surprise it is doing what it can to erode the limited environmental conditions imposed on its Carmichael coal mine.”

See past editions of Fossil Fool Bulletin at
<https://knitting-nannas.org/> (under the Resources tab)

Essential reference to risks and harms of fracking now in 7th edition

Now in its seventh edition, *The Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (the Compendium)* is a 475-page fully referenced compilation of evidence outlining the risks and harms of fracking.

The Compendium is organized to be accessible to public officials, researchers, journalists, and the public. In addition, the Compendium is complemented by a fully searchable, near-exhaustive citation database of peer-reviewed journal articles pertaining to shale gas and oil extraction, the Repository for Oil and Gas Energy Research, that was developed by PSE Healthy Energy and which is housed on its website:

psehealthyenergy.org/our-work/shale-gas-research-library/

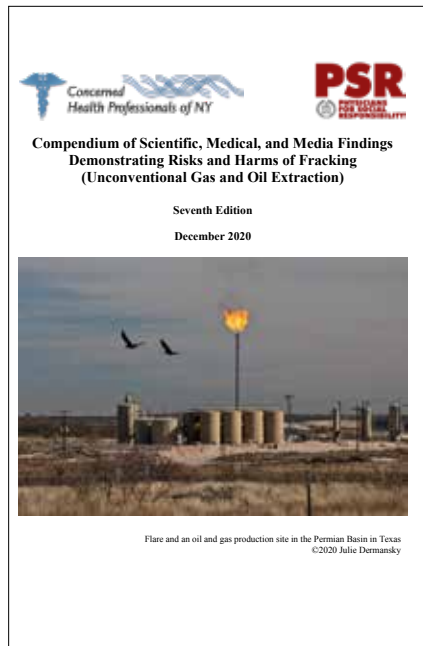
For this seventh edition of the Compendium, as prior ones, findings were compiled from three sources: articles from peer-reviewed medical or scientific journals; investigative reports by journalists; and reports from, or commissioned by, government agencies. Peer-reviewed articles were identified through databases such as PubMed and Web of Science, and from within the PSE Healthy Energy database. Our entries briefly describe studies that document harm, or risk of harm, associated with fracking and summarize the principal findings.

The studies and investigations referenced in the dated entries catalogued in Compilation of Studies & Findings are current through August 1, 2020.

Compelling themes emerge

In this review of the data, 17 compelling themes emerged; these serve as the organizational structure of the Compendium. Readers will notice the ongoing upsurge in reported problems and health impacts, making each section top-heavy with recent data.

The Compendium focuses on topics most closely related to the public health and safety impacts of fracking. These include risks from fracking infrastructure, including compressor stations, pipelines, silica sand mining operations, natural gas storage facilities, the manufacture and transportation of liquefied natural gas (LNG), and gas-fired power plants.



Fracking, a major source of two greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide and methane, is incompatible with climate solutions. Climate change is a public health crisis and receives our close attention in this seventh edition.

Given the rapidly expanding body of evidence related to the risks and harms of unconventional oil and gas extraction, we plan to continue updating the Compendium approximately every year. It is a living document, housed on the websites of Concerned Health Professionals of New York and Physicians for Social Responsibility. Read more about the process and scope of our work in the "About this Report" section of the Compendium.

Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction) Seventh Edition, December 14, 2020

• **Download the Compendium here:**

<https://concernedhealthny.org/compendium/>



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Fossil fools get conference subsidy from Morrison govt

Guardian Australia reports that the Morrison government is offering fossil fuel companies grants of up to \$250,000 to attend industry events as part of a program that is supposed to help the Australian conference industry recover from a coronavirus-induced slump.

A dozen events involving the oil, coal and gas industries are among 150 so far approved by the Australian Trade and Investment Commission as part of the \$50m stimulus package.

They include the International Mining and Resources Conference (IMARC) in Melbourne, where police action in 2019 to break up a blockade left one protester in hospital.

FFB was about to apply, fancying a flight to Melbourne and a cocktail schmooze with the fossil fools – but like most of Morrison's schemes, this one is only for the big end of town.

To qualify, you must "have a minimum of \$20,000 in total eligible project expenditure". That rules this little newsletter right out.

IMARC, which attracts around 7,000 participants, was cancelled last year due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Under the program, businesses can claim a grant of half of many of the expenses incurred for both attending a trade show and appearing at one. Costs that the government will cover include air fares, accommodation, registration of delegates, and the cost of building, installing and staffing event booths.

The government will also match event sponsorship spending dollar for dollar, up to a maximum of \$10,000.

Other fossil fuel-heavy conferences eligible for the grant program include AOG Energy, which focuses on oil and gas, in March, and petroleum conference the South East Asia Australia Offshore and Onshore Conference, which is to be held as part of NT Resources Week in August.



Chevron keeps pumping out CO2

Despite the failure by Chevron to address ongoing pollution problems at its Gorgon LNG facility on Barrow Island, WA Environment Minister Stephen Dawson has refused to place enforceable limits on the amount of carbon pollution that the company can release, or require the company to provide real time reports on the success of its controversial carbon pollution injection system.

The decision by the Minister followed an appeal by the Conservation Council of WA (CCWA) seeking tougher conditions on the operating license for the facility, which has been plagued with problems since the giant LNG facility commenced operation.

No enforceable pollution limits

CCWA Director Piers Versteegen said it was “an international embarrassment” that WA’s biggest polluter would be allowed to continue operating without any enforceable pollution limits, and that the public would be kept in the dark about the company’s pollution control efforts.

“This is a textbook case of regulatory capture where Chevron have been allowed to use their power and influence to maintain a complacent regulator, and the responsible Minister has done nothing substantive to correct the situation.

“Some outlets have reported that Minister Dawson has strengthened the license by requiring a review of conditions after ten years rather than the 20-year period originally granted.

“The shortening of the license period to trigger a review of the license after a decade is really the absolute minimum improvement that could possibly be made. Quite frankly it looks like a greenwash while the facility continues to operate with no pollution limits, no ongoing disclosure of its pollution, and no sanctions when it fails to meet its operating conditions.

“The real story here is that Chevron’s much-lauded carbon capture system is failing and the State Government and regulator is allowing itself to be complicit in the release of millions of tons of carbon pollution, while the public is

kept in the dark about Chevron’s ongoing pollution breaches,” he said.

On January 12 it was revealed through Freedom of Information requests by independent media outlet *Boiling Cold* that the system to capture and inject carbon pollution underground at the Barrow Island facility has been curtailed only months after its delayed start, because of new problems with the carbon injection wells. Previous estimates suggest that delays and technical issues have resulted in at least seven million tonnes of additional pollution being released.

“The lack of disclosure of and public reporting in this license allows Chevron and others in the oil and gas industry to maintain the claim that carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) will be a viable solution to their pollution problems,” said Versteegen. “In reality, the world-first CCS facility on Barrow Islands has been plagued with technical problems, mismanagement, and regulatory failure from the very beginning.”

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Origin wants to frack Channel Country

Fracking company Origin Energy has applied for petroleum licenses over large swathes of floodplains in Queensland’s environmentally sensitive Channel Country, in a blatant attempt to pre-empt a decision on the future of the desert rivers by the Palaszczuk Government.

A number of the licences were previously held as “Authority to Prospect” (ATPs) by self-described “small cap listed” fracking company Blue Energy.

But in its July 2020 quarterly report, Blue Energy stated it had entered into a deal with “an Australian energy company” to offload the licenses, and blamed “legislative uncertainty” for its inability to prospect.

The Queensland Palaszczuk Government is currently negotiating with Traditional Owners, landowners, and other stakeholders on how the sensitive floodplains of the Channel Country should be managed, after promising to protect them in the lead-up to the last election, and the election before that.

However, that hasn’t stopped Origin making a bid for giant leases across the floodplain in a pre-emptive strike prior to final decisions being made. Other fracking companies, like Santos, already hold considerable exploration tenements on the floodplains.

The same month as Blue’s announcement, Origin Energy lodged an application for PLs over 225,000 hectares of highly sensitive Channel Country floodplains, classed as “Strategic Environmental Areas” under Queensland’s Regional Planning and Interests Act.

The Origin PLs cover Blue Energy’s ATPs, and border the spectacular and nationally important Lake Yamma Yamma.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Carmel Flint said, “This bid by Origin Energy seems deliberately designed to pre-empt previous Palaszczuk Government commitments, which were renewed last year before the election, to protect the pristine rivers of the Channel Country.

“As well, it demonstrates the failure of Queensland planning laws to proactively protect what has been classed as some of the most important environmental areas in the state, from destructive and polluting unconventional gasfields.

Call to protect sensitive floodplains

“We know the government’s top scientists advised fracking should not occur on these floodplains, due to the risk it poses to the sensitive and unique environment of the region. It is absolutely crucial the Queensland Palaszczuk Government listens to that science and ensures these floodplains are protected.

“In light of all this, Lock the Gate is calling for an immediate moratorium on all unconventional gas exploration and production on the sensitive floodplains of the Channel Country.”

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Arrow to pierce polluted land

Farmers are outraged over an amendment by Arrow Energy which, if approved, would allow the multinational company to drill hundreds of additional gas wells through land and groundwater potentially contaminated by the Linc Energy underground coal gasification disaster.

Arrow, a joint venture (50/50) between Shell and PetroChina and headed by Cecile Wake, has applied to increase the number of coal seam gas wells it wants to drill at Hopeland, on the Western Downs. The operation will escalate from six existing wells to 286 as part of its mammoth Surat Gas Project.

The company also wants to build 440km of water and gas pipelines to support the increase in wells.

QLD's biggest environmental disaster

Hopeland was the site of the failed Linc Energy underground coal gasification experiment, which contaminated surrounding land and underground water despite warnings from scientists and cost the Queensland taxpayer \$31 million in clean up bills.

Linc went belly-up nearly five years ago, owing more than \$300 million to creditors.

Brisbane District Court found it guilty (2018) of causing serious environmental harm in the six years to 2013, and fined the company \$4.5 million – which is unlikely to ever be paid.

Five former Linc executives, including boss Peter Bond, have been committed to stand trial for allegedly breaching environmental laws.

They are defending the case and deny wrongdoing. A date for the hearing is yet to be announced.

Toxic chemical cocktail

In the wake of the disaster, it was revealed hundreds of square kilometres of prime agricultural land across the Downs were at risk from a cocktail of toxic chemicals and explosive gases due to the failures at the Linc site.

At the time, the State Government imposed an "excavation exclusion zone" on 314 square kilometres around the Linc facility where landholders would be banned from digging any hole deeper than two metres.



In 2019 it was revealed that despite the Queensland Government creating a 10km CSG exclusion zone around the Linc disaster area, Arrow and QGC were still able to extract gas within the zone.

Arrow's amendment would mean wells would be drilled within the smaller 10km exclusion zone.

Brian Bender, whose property is less than 10km from the former Linc site, said he did not believe Arrow's proposal was safe.

"Arrow can say whatever it likes about this site but I would like to see some independent research conducted as well as more information from the department confirming what Arrow is claiming in its application," he said.

"I'm a firm believer nothing should be done until the Linc energy situation is fully resolved and at this stage it is simply not resolved.

"There should not be any CSG activity around the Linc Energy site.

"The risk of further contamination is too great. Until all the information regarding the damage has been released, there should be no drilling at that location.

"There are too many unknowns in this situation."

Bender also said he supported the Queensland Government buying back

domestic water bores that were connected to the Walloon coal measure due to the risk of contamination.

The application comes just months after it was revealed gas and water began bubbling up through old coal exploration drill holes on farming properties at Chinchilla near coal seam gas wells.

Hundreds of farm water bores drained

The 2019 Underground water impact report (UWIR) for the Surat Basin showed more than 100 farming bores in the Surat Basin had been drained due to the CSG industry, and predicted a further 500 would be drained if the industry expanded locally as expected.

Lock the Gate Queensland spokesperson Ellie Smith called on the Queensland Government to reject Arrow's application.

"Coal seam gas is a risky enough business as it is," she said.

"For Arrow to want to drill hundreds of wells at Hopeland near the Linc underground coal gasification disaster is simply madness.

"We must stop sacrificing our best farmland to greedy gas companies who are wrecking Queensland's land and water just so they can flog dirty gas to the highest bidder."

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Carbon minerals wants zombie licences revived

Gas company and Santos joint venture partner Carbon Minerals is progressing plans to raise its zombie petroleum licenses from the dead on the Liverpool Plains, a national food bowl, despite calls by State Government MPs for expired tenements to be permanently slain.

Farmers have renewed their calls for the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government to immediately extinguish the licenses in response to a Carbon Minerals ASX statement last month indicating it had submitted environmental studies for exploratory seismic surveys and gas drilling to the Planning Department.

The statement also indicated the company could conduct "further exploration in relation to proposed seismic testing and exploratory drilling... in advance of renewed licenses for exploration in (zombie) Petroleum Exploration Licence Areas 1 and 12."

The statement comes amid a flurry of activity following the IPC's decision to greenlight the Santos Narrabri gasfield, with other companies that hold zombie petroleum licenses across the north west of NSW now attempting to raise their tenements from the dead.

Recently, the NSW Planning Department confirmed it had received an application to bring PEL456, which is located in the Upper Hunter and is majority held by multinational private company Kerogen investments, back to life. Efforts are also being made by Comet Ridge, which with Santos jointly owns zombie licences PEL 6, PEL 427, and PEL 428, to bring two of those PELs back to life.

The applications to reinstate the licenses are at odds with comments by NSW Agricultural Minister Adam Marshall and Member for Tamworth Kevin Anderson, who have told media they support the permanent removal of at least some of the zombie licenses. Independent MP Justin Field, meanwhile, has legislation before the NSW Upper House to extinguish the PELs.

Fossil Fool Bulletin

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In the news this month

This month Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 19,900 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.dalbyherald.com.au/news/250-jobs-mackay-firm-scores-140m-carmichael-mine-c/4181085/>

250 Jobs: Mackay firm scores \$140m Carmichael mine contract

Melanie Whiting, Dalby Herald, 20/01/2021

A Mackay engineering firm has won a second multimillion dollar contract on the Carmichael mine project, securing 250 jobs.

Bravus Mining and Resources, formerly known as Adani, has announced DRA Global will deliver the project's \$140 million coal preparation plant.

<https://www.echo.net.au/2021/01/bob-brown-criticises-adani-move-to-arrest-journalist/>

Bob Brown criticises Adani move to arrest journalist

Philippa Clark, Echonet Daily, 21/01/2021

Environmentalist Bob Brown has warned that Adani's latest move to arrest an Indian journalist is designed to scare media away from investigating the company's activity.

A court in Adani's home state of Gujarat has issued an arrest warrant for investigative journalist Paranjay Guha Thakurta in relation to a criminal defamation case brought by Adani.

Bob Brown said: "This is a SLAPP [strategic lawsuit against public participation] writ aimed at both silencing the journalist and sending a shiver of fear through the media to halt any genuine investigation into Adani's commercial empire."

Brown pointed out the similarities to Adani's court case against Australian climate campaigner Ben Pennings, where Adani repeatedly applied for warrants to raid Pennings' home for 'confidential information'.

The coordinator of website AdaniWatch, Geoff Law, said that Adani is clearly spooked by the wave of protest against the group's activities in India, where communities are opposing pro-corporate farm laws, moves to turn Goa into a coal hub, massive new port developments, and the takeover of indigenous lands for coal plants.

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/catch-22-keeps-mariners-caught-in-geopolitical-storm-20201228-p56qev.html>

Catch-22 keeps mariners caught in geopolitical storm

Nick Bonyhady, SMH, 28/12/2020

Desperate mariners on ships stranded for months by China's effective ban on Australia



Meme: Stop Adani, Facebook

lian coal imports are being prevented from leaving by a stand-off between a complex network of shipping firms.

While the coal ships cannot unload in China, maritime law allows importers to insist the ships not take their cargo elsewhere on pain of forcibly "arresting" the ship as though it were a person.

Bloomberg says about 74 vessels, carrying about 8.1 million tonnes of coal from Australia, are in limbo because of China's decision to allow power stations to import coal from any country "except for Australia".

As a result about 1500 mariners, some of whom have been at sea for nearly two years because of COVID-19-related restrictions, have been unable to get off the vessels.

"We just want to request ... on humanity ground [sic] please release us," said Gaurav Singh, 29, an officer on the Anastasia, where some crew members are suicidal after waiting for about five months.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/sustainability/strongly-opposed-watersnw-slams-plan-for-sydney-catchment-coal-mine-20210108-p56src.html>

'Strongly opposed': WaterNSW slams plan for Sydney catchment coal mine

Peter Hannam, SMH, 10/01/2021

WaterNSW has blasted plans to expand a coal mine in Greater Sydney's catchment that has secured approval despite the likely loss of billions of litres of water a year.

The agency said it was "strongly opposed" to South 32's plan to extend its Dendrobium underground mine west of Wollongong because of expected damage to water quality and quantity, and to 25 key swamps that would be affected by the diversion of water caused by subsidence and cracking.

WaterNSW noted the owners had "continually underestimated" the fracturing of stream over the mine's history.

"WaterNSW considers that it is possible that surface water losses could be up to double those that have been assessed [by South32, and are] in the order of 6-7 gigalitres a year," it said.

Peter Turner, mining projects officer with the National Parks Association, said it

was “astounding that Planning has urged approval for this brazenly reckless and greed-driven proposal”, despite knowing water losses would likely be permanent given the difficulty of remediating the mine.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/south32-offers-more-than-100m-to-counter-water-losses-from-its-mine-20210111-p56t8x.html>

South32 offers more than \$100m to counter water losses from its mine

Peter Hannam, SMH, 11/01/2021

South32, the miner behind a plan to expand coal extraction under Sydney’s catchment, says it has offered more than \$100 million over the life of the project to compensate for water losses.

The firm’s Dendrobium mine, located west of Wollongong, is seeking approval from the Independent Planning Commission to extend its operations. Its proposal, supported by the NSW Planning Department, would include an upfront \$16 million payment and then annual reviews of losses.

WaterNSW has provided “in-principle support for ‘offsets’ for surface water losses, this position was based on South32 demonstrating a precautionary approach using the “‘avoid-minimise-offset’ hierarchy”, it said, adding “WaterNSW considers that this has not been adequately demonstrated”.

South32 estimates the compensation will reach about \$108 million all up, with the initial \$16 million payment intended to cover losses after the project concludes.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-19/acerrejon-coal-mine-colombia-in-environment-rights-abuse-probe/13069168>

BHP, Glencore, Anglo American face OECD investigation over environmental damage and human rights abuses at Colombian coal mine

Sue Lannin, ABC, 19/01/2021

Three of the world’s biggest miners including BHP could be forced to close down Latin America’s largest open pit mine, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) set to investigate environmental destruction and alleged human rights abuses.

The probe comes just months after the United Nations called on BHP, Anglo American and Glencore to suspend some operations at the massive Cerrejon thermal coal mine in Colombia, in the La Guajira region, near the border with Venezuela.

The mine has operated for 30 years and has long been accused by the local community, including the Indigenous Wayuu people, of forced evictions, pollution and human rights abuses.

Complaints to the OECD have been filed in Australia, Ireland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom by the Global Legal Action Network (GLAN) with the support of a coalition of Colombian and international human rights and environmental groups.

The mining giants could be forced to progressively stop mining at Cerrejon, rehabilitate the environment and compensate surrounding communities if the OECD finds they are responsible for the problems under its guidelines for multinational enterprises.

Complaints have also been lodged against Ireland’s Electricity Supply Board, which is a major purchaser of the mine’s coal.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-21/analyst-predicts-shenhua-will-scrap-watermark-mine/13072596>

Shenhua tipped to scrap Watermark mine as NSW points to ‘changed’ financial landscape

Patrick Bell & Amelia Berlesconi, ABC, 23/01/2021

A resources analyst has predicted Shenhua will drop its controversial proposal for the 10-million-tonne Watermark coal mine on the NSW Liverpool Plains.

- Shenhua Energy has sought an extension for the first \$200m instalment of its lease;
- China has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2060;

John Barilaro says the environment in relation to mining “has changed a little bit”.

A decision to scrap the mine would satisfy many local landholders, as well as the Gomeri Traditional Custodian, who have argued that the project would threaten significant cultural sites.

The Liverpool Plains was also identified in the NSW Parliament’s koala inquiry as an important region for the species due to its fertile soils.

Tim Buckley, from the pro-renewables Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, said the likelihood of the Watermark mine going ahead was slim.

“China Shenhua has been going slow very deliberately, because they realised I think five or six years ago that they’d bought a stranded asset,” he said.

“It’s in fact entirely misaligned with the Chinese government’s direction.

“A graceful exit, I think, would be a great outcome from a 12-year debacle for China Shenhua.”

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://themarketherald.com.au/leigh-creek-energy-axxck-looks-to-raise-18m-for-power-plant-development-2021-01-05/>

Leigh Creek Energy looks to raise \$18M for power plant development

Jessica De Freitas, Market Herald, 05/01/2021

Leigh Creek Energy (LCK) has received commitments from U.S.-based institutional investor, Energy Exploration Capital Partners, to raise up to \$18 million.

The money will be raised via three phases under the institutional placement.

Leigh Creek Energy will use the money to

accelerate the development of stage one commercial works for its power plant. The five-megawatt gas-fired power plant will supply power to LCK’S namesake project in South Australia.

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/twiggy-s-lng-venture-in-talks-with-buyers-as-gas-crunch-looms-20210110-p56sy8.html>

Twiggy’s LNG venture in talks with buyers as gas crunch looms

Nick Toscano, SMH, 11/01/2021

Billionaire Andrew “Twiggy” Forrest’s Squadron Energy is in talks with potential gas customers as it aims to beat AGL and other energy giants to become Australia’s first importer of natural gas.

Squadron Energy has been accelerating works to develop a liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal at Port Kembla, including signing a long-term lease at the site and finalising an agreement to connect it to pipelines.

Analysts expect the project to reach a final investment decision as early as the first quarter of the year and Squadron is aiming for gas imports to start flowing by 2022, ahead of potential winter supply shortfalls from as early as 2023.

Electricity and gas retailer EnergyAustralia has already signed on to buy LNG from Squadron’s proposed Port Kembla project.

<https://www.katherinetimes.com.au/story/7086651/fast-tracked-gas-industry-road-upgrades-prompt-outrage/>

Fast-tracked gas industry road upgrades prompt outrage

Roxanne Fitzgerald, Katherine Times, 14/01/2021

Fracking opponents have reacted with anger after acting Prime Minister Michael McCormack today took further steps to fast track the Northern Territory’s Gas Industry Roads Upgrades program.

A total of \$217 million has been earmarked for the road upgrades, touted today to accelerate “enormous economic benefits of the Beetaloo Basin” by McCormack and Resources Minister Keith Pitt.

Dan Robins, anti-fracking group Protect Country Alliance’s spokesman, said Australian taxpayers should be outraged. “No one is asking for this – it’s little more than a waste of Australian taxpayer money to meet the demands of politicians within the government who are ideologically wedded to fossil fuels,” he said.

“It’s as if all the environmental risks are pushed on the public while these private companies take all the profits and unwarranted government subsidies.”

Keith Pitt, Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia, said the upgrades are expected to support more than 400 jobs.

The \$217 million this announcement will upgrade the Buchanan Highway, Western Creek Road and Gorrie Dry Creek Road.

During a press conference in Darwin today, a plan to offset potential emissions from fracking activity – estimated to reach 117 million tonnes every year – could not be outlined in detail.

“Well, we’ve always got a plan,” McCormack said.

Robins said today’s announcement “shows complete disdain for the majority of Territory Traditional Owners, communities, and farmers who strongly oppose fracking in the Beetaloo Basin.”

“Mr McCormack clearly dodged questions today about how the Beetaloo’s projected carbon bomb could be offset – the government’s own estimates show this could total 117 million tonnes per annum.”

<https://www.boilingcold.com.au/chevrons-gorgon-co2-emissions-to-rise-sand-clogs/>

Chevron’s Gorgon emissions to rise after sand clogs \$3.1B CO2 injection system

Peter Milne, Boiling Cold, 12/01/2021

Greenhouse gas emissions from Chevron’s Gorgon LNG project will increase after the safety regulator curtailed burial of carbon dioxide as wells to control underground pressure are not working.

Documents obtained by a *Boiling Cold* freedom of information request reveal Chevron and its partners Shell and ExxonMobil have spent \$3.1 billion (\$US2.4 billion) to mid-2020 on the showpiece carbon storage project, and still, there are costly problems.

Before Chevron fired up the CO2 injection system in August 2019 it needed the safety regulator’s approval because one of its main components was out of action: wells to move water out of the underground formation that will store the CO2. They are still not working.

Gorgon is the world’s largest carbon capture and storage system dedicated to reducing greenhouse gases. The delayed start-up was a blow to the credibility of CCS that is one of five technologies the Federal Government is relying on to lower emissions.

<https://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/7092614/sydney-newcastle-pipeline-the-key-to-kurri-power-plant/>

Snowy Hydro CEO Paul Broad calls for renewed discussion about accessing gas resources

Matthew Kelly, Maitland Mercury, 20/01/2021

The chief executive of Snowy Hydro Paul Broad says tapping into [Jemena’s] Sydney to Newcastle gas pipeline is the most efficient short term option for fuelling the federal government’s proposed Kurri gas power plant.

“The plan is to suck it out of the pipe into a lateral so it can be zig-zagged into the Kurri site, ... a really big storage for us.

“If Narrabri (coal seam gas project) gets up we will then be able to bring it in from there as well.”

While the federal government is yet to commit to building the 750 megawatt plant, that would be used to compensate for the loss of coal-fired generation, it appears increasingly likely to project will get the go-ahead.

Broad has called for a renewed community discussion about accessing local gas resources to meet the region’s energy needs.

“I would argue, perhaps controversially, that in the Hunter we have more gas underneath us than society needs for the next 200 years,” he said.

“We should have an adult discussion about how we access that gas.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-24/prelude-floating-gas-plant-restarts/13067684>

LNG production at Shell’s Prelude gas processing plant in Western Australia restarts following 11-month closure

Ben Collins, ABC, 24/01/2021

Liquified natural gas (LNG) production has restarted this month on the world’s largest floating object, Shell’s half-kilometre long Prelude gas processing facility.

There has been an 11-month shutdown following a technical issue only described as an “electrical trip” by Shell, and three incidents that the offshore energy regulator NOPSEMA described as “dangerous occurrences”. Two of those incidents involved “loss of hydrocarbon containment”.

The facility has been moored 400 kilometres north of Broome in north-west Australia since November 2017.

It is intended to process 3.6 million tonnes of LNG each year from undersea gas fields which is then offloaded to LNG ships for export.

Shell has never revealed the cost of constructing Prelude and declined to be interviewed or answer questions about the recent production restart.

Estimated construction costs of \$12–17

billion to then process a maximum of 3.6 million tonnes annually will make it hard for Prelude to compete with land-based LNG according to resource industry analyst Tim Treadgold.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-21/fracking-earthquake-monitoring-beetaloo-basin-seismic-activity/13074210>

Geoscience Australia expands earthquake monitoring system in NT’s Beetaloo Basin

Daniel Fitzgerald & Steve Vivian, ABC, 21/01/2021

The national agency responsible for Australia’s seismographic network is expanding its earthquake monitoring capability in the Northern Territory as the Federal Government continues its plans to expedite fracking in the Beetaloo Basin.

The Beetaloo Basin, about 500 kilometres south-east of Darwin, is one of five Australian gas fields the Government plans to open up under its post-pandemic “gassed recovery”, with the Commonwealth spending more than \$200 million since December 2020 to make the immense gas reserve ready for production by 2025.

Trevor Allen, a senior seismologist with Geoscience Australia, said it was imperative scientists began monitoring seismic activity in the basin now, before commercial production got underway.

If the agency does not expand its monitoring system before fracking increases in the Beetaloo, Allen said the cause of any seismic activity in the region would become much harder to identify. Geoscience Australia aims to have the new system installed by the end of the current wet season.

The data captured by the system will be fed back to Geoscience Australia’s offices in Canberra in real time and will be openly accessible to researchers, industry and the public.

Earthquakes that have been attributed to hydraulic fracturing have occurred in the UK and in remote areas of British Columbia



Shell’s Prelude floating liquified natural gas (LNG) processing facility is the world’s largest floating object. Photo: Shell Australia

and Alberta in Canada. In the US state of Oklahoma, a process whereby fluid waste from oil and gas production is pumped underground for storage has triggered multiple earthquakes.

Allen said Geoscience Australia had not yet observed any incidences of earthquakes being caused by shale gas fracking in Australia.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/business/farmers-irate-as-arrow-energy-seeks-new-csg-wells-near-site-tainted-by-failed-linc-energy/news-story/dc423c8c96a8b8d23891201e04d14dc7>

Farmers irate as Arrow Energy seeks new CSG wells near site tainted by failed Linc Energy

Anthony Marx, *Courier-Mail*, 22/01/2021

It went spectacularly bust nearly five years ago owing more than \$300m to creditors.

But Linc Energy, which spawned one of Australia's worst environmental disasters as a result of its botched underground coal gasification activities, is still casting a long shadow across Queensland.

We learned this week that coal seam gas giant Arrow Energy, headed by Cecile Wake, has sought approvals to drill hundreds of new wells near the area previously contaminated by Linc on the Western Downs.

NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.theland.com.au/story/7079551/our-own-nuclear-disaster/>

Our own nuclear disaster

Joel Fitzgibbon, *The Land*, 10/01/2021

Twenty-two years ago last month, something very strange happened in the Australian Senate.

Political opportunism and pragmatism combined to place a permanent prohibition on nuclear power generation in Australia.

It is time to correct that mistake and the constraints it now places on our capacity to deliver reliable and affordable energy to households and industry alike.

Parliamentary bookshelves around the country are full of committee, Royal Commission, and other expert reports which recommended the embrace of nuclear generation in Australia.

Notwithstanding, you can imagine the political opportunism which would dominate parliamentary debate if a government sought to repeal the two 1990s legislative prohibitions.

Nuclear power stations provide around 10% of the world's electricity supply.

The 1990s prohibition wasn't about keeping us safe.

Rather, it was about politics.

At the time anti-nuclear sentiment in Australia was high.

Activists were mischievously conflated nuclear weaponry with civil nuclear uses and waste disposal.

The search for a safe and permanent home for waste from Lucas Heights provided the activists with further propaganda material.

The latest generation of nuclear plants are smaller, enabling faster, safer, less expensive, and more standardised construction.

No longer dependent on large amounts of water for cooling purposes, they can be built in remote locations, well away from our predominantly coastal communities.

Indeed, they can be built underground.

It's time to remove the legislative prohibitions on nuclear generation to give investors the opportunity to test community support for the latest and best technology through world's-best consultation and science-based approvals processes.

• **Joel Fitzgibbon (Labor) is the Member for Hunter. Note the smaller nuclear plants to which he refers exist only on nuclear companies' drawing boards and will be far more expensive than renewables with storage.**

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/what-is-carbon-capture-and-storage-and-does-it-work-20210122-p56w5z.html>

What is carbon capture and storage (and does it work)?

Nick O'Malley, *SMH*, 24/01/2021

Carbon capture and storage (CCS advocates cite the undertaking as evidence of the technology's potential to limit greenhouse gas emissions by otherwise polluting industries.

But its detractors – which include leading engineers and scientists along with climate activists – say that CCS is an unproven and expensive Band-Aid designed to extend the life of unnecessary, dirty industries. They say it is a diversion that has wasted billions of dollars that might have been better spent on reducing emissions.

Huge sums [have been] channelled to CCS projects via various state and federal government grants and programs. The outlay has now reached around \$4 billion.

Acting Greens leader Nick McKim said, "Of that \$4 billion, only \$60m has ever made it to a commercial-scale project. And that project [Gorgon] has emitted over 7 million more tons of CO2 than it's environmental approval allowed for."

Peter Milne from Boiling Cold, who has covered the Gorgon Project for years, notes that wind turbines and solar cells can be mass produced, whereas every geological formation considered for CCS demands a new approach and new research.

Senator McKim has this to say: "You have to ask yourself, who in their right mind would think it's cheaper to dig up a fossil, set it on fire, try to capture the emissions and bury

it – rather than just whacking up some solar panels?"

CCS [may have] a significant role in crucial industries outside the power sector that cannot yet be decarbonised, such as in steel and cement production.

• **Excellent description of CCS technology and its pro's and con's.**

THE GOOD NEWS

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-12/largest-battery-in-australia-to-be-built-at-nsw-coal-fired-plant/13050642>

Largest battery in Australia to be built at ageing NSW coal-fired power plant

Gareth Hutchens & Emelia Terzon, *ABC*, 12/01/2021

An energy provider's plan to build Australia's largest battery is the latest development in a quickly transitioning energy market.

Origin's executive general manager Greg Jarvis said the battery would support Origin's transition away from coal-fired power generation by 2032.

Origin released an expression of interest to private companies this week to construct and install the battery at its Eraring plant and has begun talking with network company Transgrid about connecting the battery to the national grid via the Eraring substation.

The Eraring plant – which is Australia's largest power station – is Origin's only coal-fired power plant. It is scheduled to be decommissioned in 2032.

The mega-battery will allow Origin to use the plant's existing infrastructure and network connections long after the plant has stopped producing energy by burning coal.

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/europe-vows-to-work-against-fossil-fuel-investments-globally-20210125-p56wjl.html>

Europe vows to work against fossil-fuel investments globally

Nikos Chrysoloras, *SMH*, 25/01/2021

The European Union plans to use its diplomatic and economic muscle to accelerate global energy transition away from fossil fuels, as the bloc aligns its foreign and security policy with its ambitious climate objectives.

"EU energy diplomacy will discourage all further investments into fossil fuel-based energy infrastructure projects in third countries, unless they are fully consistent with an ambitious, clearly defined pathway towards climate neutrality," foreign ministers are poised to say in a joint communique on Monday.

EU leaders committed last month to cut the bloc's 2030 greenhouse emissions by 55 per cent compared to 1990 levels, and affirmed their pledge to turn Europe into the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050. Alarmed that the bloc's ever stricter environmental regulations will

simply force polluting activities to relocate elsewhere in the world, they are eager to eliminate “carbon leakage” by forcing the rest of the globe to fall in line with the Paris Agreement against climate change.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/dec/24/nsw-pandering-to-morrison-government-by-declaring-hunter-valley-gas-fired-power-station-essential>

NSW ‘pandering’ to Morrison government by declaring Hunter Valley gas-fired power station essential

Lisa Cox, *Guardian*, 24/12/2020

The NSW government has granted critical infrastructure status to a proposed new gas-fired power station in the Hunter Valley in a move energy analysts say is “pandering” to the federal government.

The state’s planning minister, Rob Stokes, said he made the declaration because the commonwealth proposal to build the power station on the site of a former aluminium smelter in Kurri Kurri had “significant economic potential”.

The Morrison government has said it would commission Snowy Hydro to build the power station as part of its so-called “gas-fired” recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic if the private sector does not invest in 1,000 megawatts of new energy capacity by April next year.

The federal government has demanded a new gas-fired power station be built to replace the ageing Liddell coal-fired power station, which is due to close by 2023.

The government has claimed new electricity generation is urgently needed, despite its own taskforce and the Australian Energy Market Operator (Aemo) finding this is not the case and that other committed and probable projects would be “more than sufficient” to maintain energy reliability.

Richie Merzian, the climate and energy program director at progressive thinktank the Australia Institute, called the decision another sign Australian governments were “quick to back in more fossil fuels”.

“NSW is in a tough position. It wants to go hard into the renewable space but it has to keep the federal government on side,” he said.

“This is pandering to the gas-fired government in Canberra.”

Merzian said Stokes’ decision would increase public scrutiny of the proposed Kurri Kurri project and predicted that, like the Narrabri gas project, it would be “heavily challenged, including potentially in the courts”.



The brutal dispossession of First Nations people that began at invasion continues today. In NSW and across the country, our laws systematically favour the rights of mining companies to destroy precious cultural heritage for profit over the rights of First Nations people to their land, waters and culture. Thousands of people across the country will stand in solidarity with First Nations communities on January 26.
Meme: Stop Adani, Facebook

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/highly-problematic-for-public-trust-australian-political-donations-revealed-20210117-p56up0.html>

‘Highly problematic for public trust’: Australian political donations revealed

David Crowe, *SMH*, 18/01/2021

A surge in donations at the last federal election has taken the resource industry’s political payments to \$136.8 million over two decades and a new analysis has named the sector as the biggest donor in Australian politics.

Mining and gas companies ramped up their spending on political parties in recent years to outstrip property developers and other big donors, led by a funding blitz from coal and iron ore magnate Clive Palmer.

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2021/01/19/woodside-political-donations-1ng>

Woodside leads the pack in fossil fuel political donation spree

Georgia Wilkins, *Crikey*, 19/01/2021

Woodside Energy has a history of getting what it wants from governments.

New figures revealed this week show just how much the oil and gas industry has funnelled into the nation’s major political parties, and Woodside is the biggest spender of them all.

It has spent almost \$2 million in political donations over the past two decades, analysis by the Centre for Public Integrity shows.

Woodside’s cash splash has coincided with a run of favourable decisions from governments, most recently a marketing pledge from Prime Minister Scott Morrison that a gas-led recovery would pull Australia out of the COVID recession.

So what do you get for political donations? Here are some times Woodside got its way:

- In 2004 the Howard government used ASIO to bug the offices of the Timor Leste cabinet to get an edge in negotiations over access to the Greater Sunrise gas fields, benefiting Woodside and its shareholders. This has led to the extraordinary prosecution of Canberra lawyer Bernard Collaery and Witness K for helping expose the bugging

- In 2019 Woodside successfully lobbied the Western Australian government to dump its environmental protection authority guidelines that would recommend large projects be carbon neutral

- In 2019 the WA environmental protection authority allowed Woodside to retrospectively amend existing licences relating to its Burrup Hub gas project, meaning it can process gas from any source rather than two sources. Environmental groups say the changes are unlawful and are challenging them in court

- In 2020 Resources Minister Keith Pitt handed Woodside \$8.8 million to advise the government how to clean up its own abandoned production oil vessel in the Timor Sea.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/george-christensen-struggling-to-secure-numbers-for-banking-climate-inquiry-20210120-p56vlim.html>

George Christensen struggling to secure numbers for banking climate inquiry

David Crowe, *SMH*, 21/01/2021

An impasse in Parliament has stymied a push to investigate banks and insurance companies that consider climate change as a factor in major deals, with Nationals MP George Christensen struggling to get the numbers for the inquiry.

In a test for the government, Christensen has failed twice to secure a majority vote for a review he vowed to pursue last year out of concern banks were refusing to lend to coal projects.

Liberals are seeking to change the terms of reference after Christensen “blew his top” at a meeting in December when Labor refused to vote for the inquiry and a key Liberal MP, Katie Allen, could not attend.

The objections are a setback for Resources Minister Keith Pitt, who asked the committee to set up the inquiry, and Nationals colleagues who have railed at banks for questioning projects like the Adani coal mine in Queensland.

Dr Allen, a paediatrician before winning the Melbourne seat of Higgins, which stretches from South Yarra to Ashburton and Malvern East, is believed to be preparing alternative terms.

While Dr Allen declined to comment on the committee deliberations, her public position is to take greater action on climate change.



Politicians love dress-up mining costumes: PM Scott Morrison visited South32's Cannington Mine in McKinlay, Queensland, last week. He probably wasn't so happy while trapped in a dysfunctional mine lift for around 10 minutes. Photo: AAP

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/scott-morrison-backs-coal-wealth-for-decades-to-come-20210120-p56vzn.html>

Scott Morrison backs coal wealth for decades to come

David Crowe, SMH, 20/01/2021

Coal mining will continue to generate wealth for Australians for decades to come, Prime Minister Scott Morrison has declared in a new statement fending off calls to phase out fossil fuels and toughen action on climate change.

Morrison backed the industry during a visit to regional Queensland and said he was willing to visit a coal mine even though such a tour "hasn't been on my schedule" since he became Prime Minister.

"These mines have got, you know, 10, 20, 30 years to run," Morrison said of coal mining during a media appearance in McKinlay, a Queensland town east of Mount Isa.

"And that's a lot of opportunity for those communities. And, look, I think people who work in these sectors know that things change over time. And they understand that.

"But what's important is that we continue to extract and get the value from the opportunity and wealth that's there that really benefits the rest of this country."

• Morrison got stuck in a SOUTH32 COAL mine lift for around 10 minutes during his visit.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/23/coalition-quietly-adds-fossil-fuel-industry-leaders-to-emissions-reduction-panel>

Coalition quietly adds fossil fuel industry leaders to emissions reduction panel

Adam Morton, Guardian, 23/01/2021

The Morrison government has quietly appointed fossil fuel industry leaders and a controversial economist to a committee responsible for ensuring the integrity of projects that get climate funding.

Critics have raised concerns about whether some appointees to the Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee may have a potential conflict of interest that could leave its decisions open to legal challenge.

The new chair of the committee is David Byers, a former senior executive at the Minerals Council of Australia, BHP and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, who now runs CO2CRC, an industry and government-funded CCS research body.

Byers is joined by the economist Dr Brian Fisher, a former head of the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics who has authored reports warning of the economic impact of emissions reduction targets and been accused of overestimating the cost of combating climate change.

Other recent appointees include Allison Hortle, a petroleum hydrogeologist and research group leader in CSIRO's oil, gas

and fuels program, and Margie Thomson, an agricultural economist and chief executive of the Cement Industry Federation.

Bill Hare, the chief executive and senior scientist with Climate Analytics, said he was concerned the government planned to allow fossil fuel companies to receive climate funding for merely reducing emissions below inflated estimates of what their CO2 output otherwise might be.

Rod Campbell, a research director with progressive thinktank the Australia Institute, said he believed some of the new appointments should not have been made.

He said in his view Byers had "a clear conflict of interest" as he was paid to run a "CCS lobby group" and the committee would play a role in deciding whether CCS received climate funding.

In an opinion piece in *The Australian* in 2019, Byers said a "100% renewables fixation and climate emergency panic" had narrowed the technology options the world was willing to consider.

Fisher is not accused of having a conflict of interest, but several climate market analysts who spoke with *Guardian Australia* said they were surprised by his appointment given his climate analysis has been politically divisive.

In a piece for *Guardian Australia*, Frank Jotzo, a climate economist and professor at ANU's Crawford School of Public Policy, said Fisher's modelling was based on ridiculous and outdated assumptions and ignored opportunities for cheap cuts.

F

Independent news and insight into energy, industry and climate in Western Australia from Peter Milne

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

Renew Economy provides clean energy news and analysis in a daily newsletter available at

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/>



**SAVING THE LAND, AIR AND WATER FOR THE KIDDIES
KNITTING NANNAS AGAINST GAS**

