



# Fossil Fool Bulletin

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

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## Activist gets \$2,000 defo pay-out from Adani

*An anti coal activist from the group Frontline Action on Coal, Scott Daines, has fought and won a defamation dispute with Adani. Daines has been awarded \$2,000 in damages and Adani has publicly apologised for making false claims about him on their Facebook page.*

Adani falsely alleged that Scott Daines and other peaceful activists from Frontline Action on Coal threw rocks at Adani workers' cars and kicked car doors during a protest in October. Adani released the defamatory statement and false accusations shortly after FLAC activists captured footage of an Adani security guard charging at and assaulting a camera operator at the protest.

Daines issued Adani a formal concerns notice under Queensland's Defamation Act. He sought a retraction of Adani's defamatory social media post and a public apology. Adani's lawyers, from the firm Ashurst, wrote back to Daines agreeing to his demands and to pay damages.

However, Adani misled its lawyers and instead of posting the apology on the Facebook page the original post first appeared on, which has 37,000 followers, Adani first posted the apology on a secret and obscure facebook page with just 50 followers. Adani then



Scott Daines. Photo: FLAC

tried to claim that as this was now the Adani Australia Facebook page, as opposed to the recently change Bravus Resources page, that it no longer had a duty to act.

Daines continued to pursue Adani for further costs and for the coal miner to post their apology on the page that the original defamatory post was first published. Daines wrote to Adani's lawyers Ashurst claiming Adani had 'duped the firm' by providing them with false information about the history and status of their social media accounts in an attempt to hide the apology from the public.

Scott Daines is continuing to pursue Adani for further damages for the delay in publishing the apology and

wrote to Adani's lawyers, Ashurst, on January 29th accusing Adani of being 'devious and untruthful...demonstrating the lowest standards of corporate behaviour' and being 'motivated by malice'.

### Adani's lawyers kept busy

Adani is currently suing another activist, Brisbane-based Ben Pennings, for his activities opposing the Carmichael Mine.

The mining company has previously bankrupted a Traditional Owner – Wangan and Jagalingou spokesman Adrian Burragubba – for his attempts to protect Country from the massive Carmichael project.

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• P2: Dendrobium expansion rejected

• P3: News Corp's climate denial exposed

P4: Passing Gas report released

# IPC knocks back Dendrobium extension

*Dendrobium Mine. Photo: Ainslie Drewitt Smith, ABC*



**The Independent Planning Commission's decision (February 5) to reject the destructive and draining Dendrobium coal mine extension is a win for common sense, according to Lock the Gate Alliance and Illawarra locals concerned about the impact of mining on the catchment.**

The extension of the South32 owned Dendrobium mine would have drained 7-8 billion litres of drinking water from the Illawarra-Sydney catchment area each year, and destroyed fragile wetlands sitting above the site.

It would have also been responsible for roughly 256 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

The IPC found the proposal was unacceptable due to:

- Uncertainty over the scale of impacts to catchment;
- The threat to 47 upland swamps above the longwalls;
- A lack of certainty over claims Blue-scope was dependent on the project given mine, plan timing information supplied by South32;
- Considerable risk of irreversible damage to 58 identified Aboriginal heritage sites;

● The significant greenhouse emissions that would be produced.

### Concerns not addressed

Ultimately, the Commission noted South32 had not appropriately addressed concerns in relation to the proposed mine design.

Government agencies WaterNSW and the Independent Advisory Panel on Underground Mining (IAPUM) were also both scathing in their assessment of South32's proposal in the lead up to the decision, and raised fears water loss from the catchment area due to the expansion would likely continue in perpetuity.

"We are absolutely over the moon that the IPC has seen reason and rejected this monstrous expansion," Protect Our Water Alliance spokesperson Deidre Stuart said.

"The Sydney-Illawarra region is the only place in the world where longwall coal mining is permitted under the public water catchment of a major city.

"While we remain disappointed the IPC has recently approved other coal mining projects beneath the catchment, today's decision at least, is a relief.

"Clearly, the scale of the destruction Dendrobium would have caused to the catchment was enough to finally make the IPC see reason."

### NSW Nats leader outraged

The decision had NSW Nationals leader, John Barilaro, spitting chips.

Barilaro said he would seek urgent legal advice as to whether the government could potentially overturn the decision

"The decision by the IPC to reject South 32's Dendrobium coal expansion will be recorded as one of the most destructive decisions since the IPC's formation," he told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"I'm getting sick to death of a small review panel, overriding hundreds of years of shared knowledge by experts in NSW Planning."

Barilaro said he believed the IPC should be disbanded.

"This unelected body won't help get us out of the COVID economic disaster and will single-handedly destroy thousands of jobs, kill investment, and destroy any hope for a manufacturing revival."

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# Scale of News Corp's climate denial revealed

**Lies, Debates, and Silences: How News Corp produces climate scepticism in Australia is an explosive new report, commissioned by GetUp, that reveals the staggering levels of climate scepticism peddled by major News Corp newspapers.**

At the recent News Corp AGM Rupert Murdoch told shareholders, "There are no climate change deniers around [in News Corp], I can assure you."

But the evidence from this investigation proves him wrong. News Corp are relentlessly negative towards climate action, minimising climate damage, ridiculing people who care, questioning science, and sowing doubt and confusion.

The exhaustive study analysed 8,612 pieces of news, opinion, editorials and letters mentioning climate change across four News Corp publications – *The Daily Telegraph*, *Herald Sun*, *Courier Mail*, and *The Australian* – between April 2019 and March 2020, covering the worst bushfire season on record and the massive School Strike 4 Climate protests.

It found that an astonishing 45% of all News Corp climate coverage expressed scepticism in the reality of climate change. 65% of opinion pieces were sceptical towards climate science. Of the 55% of stories that accepted climate science, there was negligible reporting of the findings of climate scientists or the impacts of climate change.

It also found:

- Coverage of existing or potential policies to combat climate change was overwhelmingly negative. Items discussing climate action policies were more than twice as likely to be negative (57%) than positive (27%);

- Andrew Bolt, a prominent sceptic, accounted for 12% of all climate coverage (news, features, editorials, and opinion) in the *Herald Sun*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *Courier Mail* combined, with 405 opinion articles. In the *Herald Sun* alone, Bolt was responsible for 32% of all articles mentioning climate change.

## Politicians, fossil fools & men dominate

Politicians, fossil fuel companies and men were the vast majority of sources in articles about climate change. Only 6% of all sources across four News Corp publications were scientists of any kind, compared to 47% for political figures. News Corp is more than twice as likely to quote a politician than a scientist on climate change topics

News Corp silences and marginalises anyone that questions its narrative. News Corp's climate change coverage quotes predominantly male political voices and silences scientists, women, First Nations people and impacted communities. Just 0.2% of stories quoted First Nations sources. Only 4% of stories quoted civil society groups, compared to 18% for business sources. And just 24% of all sources across climate change stories were women.

GetUp National Director Paul Oosting said, "The findings in *Lies, Debates, and Silences* are staggering, but they're not surprising. For years now, News Corp has waged a sustained, organised campaign of denial and misinformation that deceives the public, drowns out the truth and acts as a handbrake on climate action in Australia."

Investigative journalist, former Professor of Journalism at University of Technology Sydney and report co-author Wendy Bacon said, "It is extraordinary



that Australia's biggest news company chooses to produce a huge amount of inflammatory and abusive material against warnings about climate change from the world's leading scientists.

"News Corp claims to promote debate about climate change, but what we found is that rather than engage with the issues, News Corp silences and abuses scientists and those advocating for policy change, and mobilises readers against effective action to reduce carbon emissions.

"As fires burned out of control in many parts of Australia last summer, our research finds that News Corp Australia actively sought to confuse the public by campaigning against clear scientific findings that climate change is linked to more extreme weather including bushfires."

• Read the full report here:

[https://d68ej2dhub09.cloudfront.net/2790-Lies\\_Debates\\_and\\_Silences\\_FINAL.pdf](https://d68ej2dhub09.cloudfront.net/2790-Lies_Debates_and_Silences_FINAL.pdf)



## FIRED UP

The facts on climate spin, coal culture wars, greenwashing, astroturfing and much more.

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[Firedup.world](http://Firedup.world)

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Wangan Jagalingou Traditional Owners  
Aboriginal Corporation

BSB: 034-003  
Account number: 278038

HELP **BEN PENNINGS**  
DEFEND HIMSELF  
FROM ADANI:

Chip in here

<https://chuffed.org/project/disrupt-adani>

# Passing Gas report released

*A new Climate Council report has revealed the extent to which gas is driving climate change – and it is likely to be worse than the official figures suggest.*

Extracting and burning more gas puts Australians in harm's way. We are already in the grip of a climate crisis having endured the Black Summer bushfires, devastating drought and the third mass bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef in five years. The only way to keep us safe is to transition to renewables as quickly as possible.

The report '*Passing Gas: Why Renewables are the Future*' explores the Government's pledge to the gas industry and uncovers some unsavoury truths: that emissions from gas are under-reported, that the second biggest user of gas in Australia is the gas industry itself, that the international gas market is in crisis and Australia is dangerously exposed to job losses and price volatility.

The Government, in shirking renewables and backing gas, is digging up our past to spite our future.

## Key findings

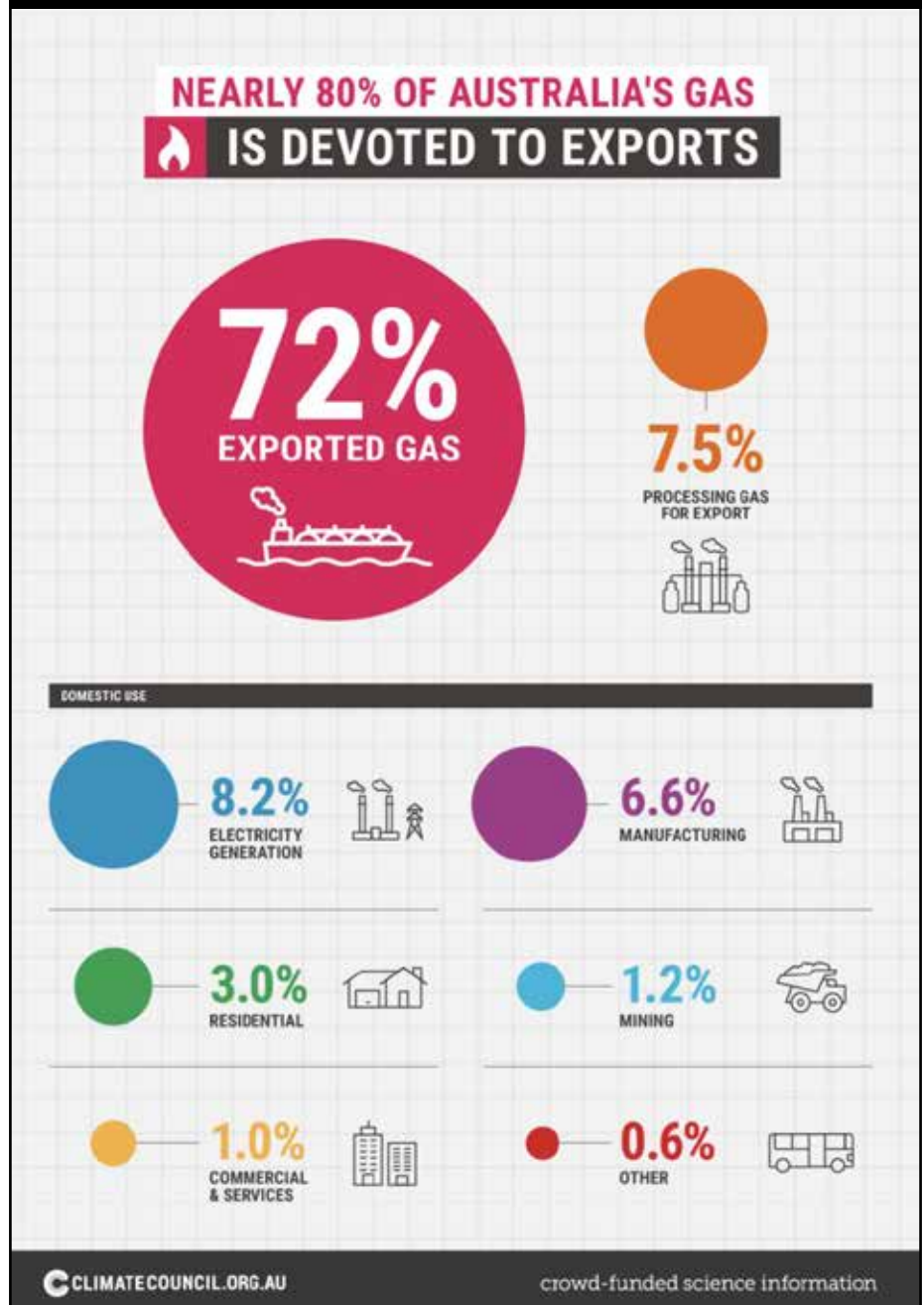
**1. Australia's in the grip of a climate crisis. Extracting and burning more gas escalates risk and puts more Australians in harm's way.**

- The past year of climate extremes—an unprecedented drought across vast swaths of Australia, the Black Summer bushfires, and a third mass bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef in five years—was driven by the 1.1°C of warming that's already occurred as a result of climate change.

- Climate change is driven by the consumption of fossil fuels: coal, oil and gas. Although a limited and discrete use of existing gas may be necessary as we fully transition to renewables and storage, if we are to avoid slipping from a climate crisis to a full-blown catastrophe there cannot be any expansion of fossil fuel production of any kind.

- There is still a chance to hold global temperatures to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, but any new fossil fuel infrastructure puts this target at risk. That includes any new gas production, or new gas projects.

## Proportion of gas consumed in Australia by sector (2018-19 financial year)



**2. Gas causes climate harm and its emissions are under-reported in Australia.**

- Even before it is burned, gas causes climate harm. The main component of gas, methane, is a greenhouse gas nearly 100 times more potent than carbon dioxide in the short term.
- Along the entire gas supply chain large quantities of methane are emitted.

- Australia is not counting the true contribution of gas towards climate change. Upstream emissions of gas, as well as other leaks, are under-re-

ported, using out-of-date measures based on decades-old analyses conducted in other countries. Once corrected, the supposed climate benefit of gas often disappears.

**3. The international gas market is in crisis, and Australia is dangerously exposed to job losses and power price volatility.**

- A drastic increase in our gas exports has exposed Australia to international boom-and-bust market cycles. The wholesale price of gas reached record

# Extreme weather costs double since 1970s, to 35bn

*The cost of extreme weather in Australia has more than doubled since the 1970s, and totalled \$35 billion over the past decade, a new Climate Council report has found.*

The report is called *Hitting Home: The Compounding Costs of Climate Inaction*.

“There is no doubt that we have entered an era of consequences arising from decades of climate inaction and delay,” said lead author and Climate Council spokesman, Professor Will Steffen. “And it is going to get worse. By 2038, extreme weather events

driven by climate change, as well as the impacts of sea-level rise, could cost the Australian economy \$100 billion every year,” he said.

For Australia, the devastating Black Summer fires, a crippling drought, and yet another mass bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef highlight our acute vulnerability to climate impacts.

“Australians are five times more likely to be displaced by a climate change-fuelled disaster than someone living in Europe. In the Pacific, that risk is 100 times higher,” said Professor Steffen.

“The regional impacts of climate change will profoundly undermine Australia’s national security. Unlike most other wealthy countries, Australia is in a region with many densely populated, near-neighbour, developing countries that are highly vulnerable to climate change,” said the former United Nations Secretary General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Dr Robert Glasser.

## Key findings

- The latest science projects that by 2100 annual deaths from extreme heat worldwide will outstrip all COVID-19 deaths recorded in 2020.

- In 2019-20, we ushered in a new and dangerous era of megafires that ravaged Australia, Brazil, Siberia and the US West Coast.

- We are on track to eliminate all of Australia’s and the world’s tropical coral reefs.

- Climate-related hazards have affected six times more people in the Asia-Pacific than in the rest of the world combined.

- Ignoring climate change is deadly. Australians are now paying the price for our own and the world’s failure to reduce emissions quickly enough or deeply enough.

- We need bold, concerted action across all levels of government, business, industry and community to reduce Australia’s emissions to net zero as soon as possible and prepare for worsening extreme weather events.

“Because many climate impacts are already locked-in, we must learn to live in a new era of drought, floods, and megafires. It’s equally clear that far greater dangers lie ahead if we fail to act with the urgency and determination that the science demands,” said disaster expert Dr Robert Glasser.

“No developed country has more to lose from climate change-fuelled extreme weather, or more to gain as the world transforms to a zero-carbon economy, than Australia does,” said Professor Steffen.

Over the coming decade, Australia must aim to at least halve its emissions, and reach net zero by 2040 at the latest.

## Passing Gas report sees shrinking role for industry

• Continued from p2

highs for most Australians between 2016 and 2019, before plummeting as a result of a global supply glut in late 2019.

- Most of Australia’s gas is expensive to produce compared to international competitors. The centrepiece of the Federal Government’s gas-led recovery, a stretch goal of \$4 per gigajoule for gas, was described as a ‘myth’ by the extraction industry’s own lobbyists.

- The combined impact of COVID 19 and a price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia saw the Australian oil and gas industry lose more jobs than any other sector of the economy in the first round of job losses this year; shedding 40% of its employees between March and April 2020.

**4. The second biggest user of gas in Australia is the gas industry itself, and that is costing all Australians.**

- In 2019, Australia became the world’s largest liquefied gas exporter, with nearly three times as much gas exported than is used in Australia each year.

- Rising emissions from the gas industry are cancelling out all the gains we have made in building a record amount of solar and wind.

- More than one quarter of all gas consumed in Australia is burned by the gas industry to liquefy and chill gas for export overseas.

**5. We do not need new gas when renewables are cheaper and cleaner.**

- Seismic shifts in the economics

of renewables over the past decade mean new gas infrastructure is not needed. The cost of the core components of lithium ion batteries, used for battery storage, have fallen by nearly 90% in the past decade, from \$1,100 per kilowatt hour in 2010 to a mere \$156/kWh in 2019.

- It will be more expensive for Australia to transition from coal to gas. Wind and solar powered generation, even after being backed by storage, is the cheapest form of new electricity generating infrastructure.

- The Australian Energy Market Operator sees a steadily shrinking role for gas over the next 20 years. In most scenarios, more than two thirds of gas power stations will retire, without being replaced with new ones.

- Incentivising gas-powered generation means disincentivising cheaper and smarter options. As the sunniest and windiest inhabited continent on the planet, and with careful planning of infrastructure, Australia can transition to 100% renewable electricity supply firmed by a mix of storage, and demand side solutions.

Amanda McKenzie, Climate Council CEO said, “We are already in the grip of a climate crisis having endured the Black Summer bushfires, devastating drought and the third mass bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef in five years, and extracting and burning more gas only puts Australians in harm’s way.”

• Download the report here:

[https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FINAL-CC\\_MVSA0245-CC-Report-Gas-V5-FA\\_Low\\_Res\\_Single\\_Pages.pdf](https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FINAL-CC_MVSA0245-CC-Report-Gas-V5-FA_Low_Res_Single_Pages.pdf)

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## Great-grandmother's solo protests

*A Darwin great-grandmother has today celebrated her one-year anniversary of staging solo anti-fracking protests outside Northern Territory Parliament.*

Rosemary Jacob, 85, a former maths lecturer who completed a law degree in her 70s, has kept a solo vigil in opposition to the NT Gunner Government's decision to green light fracking every Wednesday for the past 12 months.

Despite Darwin's notoriously oppressive heat and wild thunderstorms, Jacob has stood outside NT Parliament with her umbrella, having quiet conversations with passers-by about the need to keep fossil fuels in the ground so as to avoid the worst of global warming.

She said she started her protest at the beginning of last year because she was concerned the Covid-19 pandemic would distract the public from the threat of fracking.

She was primarily motivated by wanting to leave a better world for her four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

"As far as the Territory is concerned, we have more sunshine than just about anywhere else in the world, and more intense sunshine, so we shouldn't have to worry about energy, yet we are still fracking and not moving quickly enough to renewable alternatives," Mrs Jacob said.

"We need to urgently move away from fossil fuels because time is running out."

Jacob said she felt her quiet conversations with people outside parliament



*Rosemary Joseph. Photo: Supplied*

(and even those who work within the building) were making a difference.

"I have quite a lot of support from people who work inside parliament and I feel as though I am having an impact," she said.

"There are a number of people who, for personal reasons, can't get too enthusiastic in supporting our opposition to fracking.

"I think for most people, one part of their brain says 'we need to do something about the climate emergency' and the other says 'but do we have to do it now?'. So consequently, nothing significant is happening in too many areas and it will all catch up with us in the not-too-distant future.

"I believe we have to step back from our normal lives and look at what needs to be done and how to best go about it in as rapid a way as possible while realising we will have a lot of people opposing what we are asking for."

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## Nanna Power!

*The Gloucester Knitting Nannas are the subject of a new documentary titled 'Nanna Power: the story of the Gloucester Knitting Nannas', which has been submitted to major film festivals around the country.*

The 30-minute documentary was co-produced by Gloucester journalist, Anne Keen and Pete White from Bulahdelah, via their newly-formed production company, Treechange Films.

It was filmed on location in Gloucester on the Mid North Coast of NSW, Nanna



Power features Knitting Nannas activists Pippa Robinson, Carol Bennett, Kate Fry and Elizabeth Bartlett. They discuss their inspiration for action.

• See the documentary here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RDc4QxrmSM&feature>

**F**

## 20 wells planned for WA's Fitzroy River

*Conservation group Environs Kimberley is calling on the WA Environmental Protection Authority to reject Texan-owned fracking company Bennett Resources' push to frack twenty wells in the catchment of the National Heritage listed Fitzroy River.*

The company, a subsidiary of Black Mountain, lodged an application with the EPA last week to drill and frack up to 20 gas wells 51 kilometres west of Fitzroy Crossing, in the catchment of the Fitzroy River.

That's despite the EPA terminating an earlier proposal by the company to drill and frack six wells near Fitzroy Crossing because, according to the company, two years of baseline environmental studies was required.

Environs Kimberley Director, Martin Pritchard said, "We call on the EPA to clarify why, less than two months after Bennett Resources' six well proposal was terminated due to a lack of baseline data, the company now has a much larger proposal on the table. Surely two years' worth of studies haven't been completed in under two months."

"This is a highly polluting industry and not fit for the world-renowned Kimberley. The EPA should reject the proposal as it did for the previous six well proposal.

"The three wells that have been fracked in the Kimberley since 2010 have all had problems, including well integrity issues, gas leaks and radioactive wastewater pumped to the surface.

"We can't risk this industry in a place where companies are unable to guarantee that there won't be water pollution.

"We know that when fracking gets started it soon turns into hundreds if not thousands of wells. It happened in the USA, it happened in Queensland, and it will happen here too if Black Mountain gets a foothold. We can't have that happening here. It would destroy the landscape of the Kimberley, destroy the habitat of threatened species and damage the biggest industry we have here, tourism."

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# Palmer mine planned just 10km from reef

*The federal scientific committee that advises the government on water impacts of mining has slammed a proposal by a company owned by Clive Palmer to build a greenfield coal mine just 10km from the edge of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA).*

The Central Queensland Coal Project in the Styx Basin was first proposed north west of Rockhampton about four years ago, but the company's latest Environmental Impact Assessment amendment has drawn an unusually withering response from the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development (IESC).

## Creeks and habitat devastated

In its response to the amendment, the IESC raises concerns including the likelihood the proposed 10mtpa thermal and coking coal mine would:

- release pollutants into rivers and creeks that feed into the GBRWHA and an important fish breeding site;
- drain creeks by up to 60 metres and dewater aquifers relied on by farmers;
- physically remove more than eight kilometres of a local creek and;
- threaten vulnerable arboreal animals like the koala and greater glider.

The IESC concluded that “the project presents very significant risks to nationally and internationally recognised assets with high ecological values, including the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) and the Broad Sound Fish Habitat Area downstream of the project”.

The IESC also found little could be done to mitigate the impacts of the mine, stating, “Proposed mitigation options primarily entail offsetting residual impacts (e.g. for the 8.35 km of stream-length that will be removed) and are likely to be completely inadequate for this region because of its relatively undisturbed setting.”

Landholder Jacqueline McCamley, who owns “Tooloombah”, which is adjacent to the proposed mine site said, “Tooloombah would be unable to produce organic beef with coal mine dust polluting grazing pastures and our water.

“People all over the world are moving towards cleaner eating and living, and



Location map of Clive Palmer's Central Queensland Coal Project. Graphic: CQ Coal

it's not possible for us to meet this demand with a coal mine next door.”

President of the Environment Council of Central Queensland, Christine Carlisle said that Palmer's coal project is ethically, environmentally and economically unsustainable.

“Countries such as China, Japan and South Korea have declared commitments to becoming carbon neutral by 2050/60 with consequent reduction in demand for coal. This project is destined to become a stranded asset,” she said.

“The case for reducing the mining and burning of fossil fuels is urgent because we have witnessed at first hand our drying landscapes and loss of our native species, habitat, and the human cost of bushfires. We don't need any more coal mines.

“Corals on the Great Barrier Reef continue to bleach and die while sea water temperatures continue to rise. Mr Palmer should not be able to make

a mess and then walk away while the rest of us carry the cost. The mine should be rejected.”

## Committee's response 'unusual'

Lock the Gate Alliance Queensland spokesperson Ellie Smith said it was unusual for the IESC to be so critical of a planned project.

“The unprecedented severity of the IESC's criticism of the Central Queensland Coal Project in the Styx Basin proposal clearly demonstrates just how destructive it would be,” she said.

“This is an incredibly dangerous proposal to build a mine just 10km from the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area that poses a massive pollution risk.

“Our Reef is far too precious to be put at the mercy of Clive Palmer.”

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## COALWIRE

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

[globalenergymonitor.org](http://globalenergymonitor.org)

## EXTINCTION FOR COAL



### 3CR Community Radio Earth Matters

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# New Acland expansion set-back



Oakey Coal Action Alliance president, 85-year-old Aileen Harrison.  
Photo: Elly Bradfield, ABC

*Farmers from the Oakey Coal Action Alliance who have been battling the New Acland Stage 3 coal mine are relieved and excited after the High Court of Australia found in their favour.*

The Court found in favour of the Alliance on all counts and that New Hope was required to pay costs of proceedings.

The decision means that the issue will be sent back to the Queensland Land Court for a new hearing on the merits of the proposal.

OCAA president and alpaca farmer Aileen Harrison said, "It is a relief OCAA has been saved from any action against it.

"We hope that we can win from here on in and get the mine stopped, so we can save our water and land, and leave it for future generations."

OCAA secretary Paul King said the result was a win on all counts.

"It is a better outcome than we could have hoped for," he said.

"We have won on all counts and New Hope has been ordered to pay costs to the High Court. The High Court's decision is, in our view, vindication that the Darling Downs is for farming – not coal mining."

The decision has enraged New Hope and its workers, who fear more lay-offs

in the coming months, as the mine runs out of coal.

Queensland Resources Council chief, Ian Macfarlane, said he would also ask the state government for clarification of what was needed to approve the mine expansion.

"Former Premier Anna Bligh enacted legislation in 2007 to allow for an expansion of Xstrata's Wollombi coal mine," Macfarlane said told the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

"It's extremely concerning that a mining operation can be held up in this way by a small group of people who have been prepared to delay the project by any legal means possible, regardless of the impact on the surrounding community who want this project to happen."

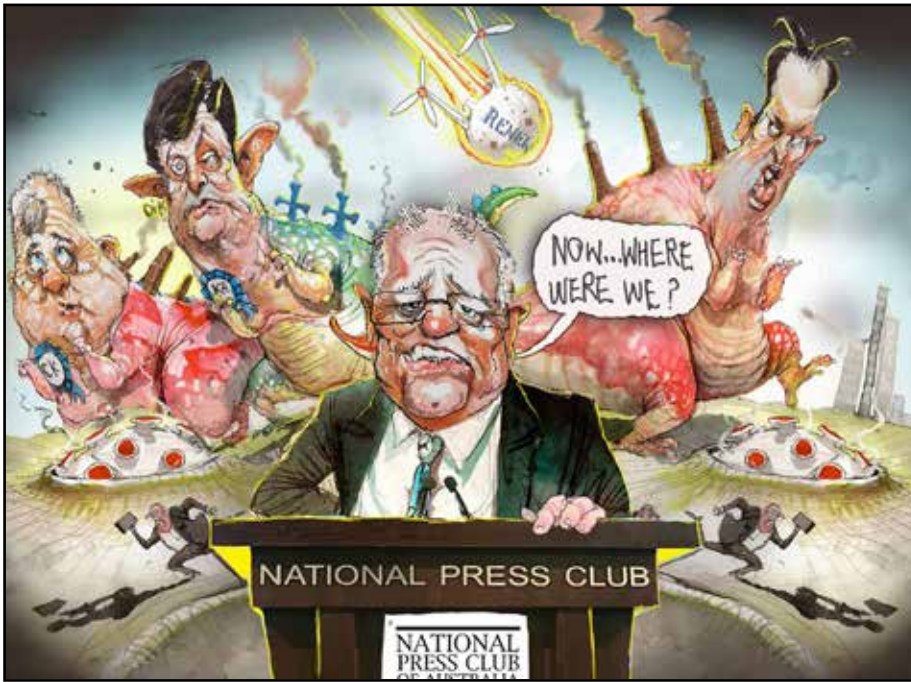
However, Maiwar Greens' MP Michael Berkman, who welcomed the decision, issued a stern warning to the state government.

"The Land Court has already said that this climate-wrecking project should be stopped, and now the High Court has ruled in favour of local farmers fighting to protect their land.

"We're warning Labor to stick to their repeated promises not to meddle with the court's decision."



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



## Hunter air polluted

*Hunter locals and health professionals are horrified at a new Environmental Impact Statement lodged by Mount Pleasant coal mine owner Salim Group that would drastically worsen the region's already unacceptable air quality.*

Sakim subsidiary MACH Energy Australia has lodged an EIS that, if approved, would extend the mine's operations to 2046, double coal production, and double the number of coal trains – all on Muswellbrook's doorstep.

The EIS contains health data for the Upper Hunter region which shows rates of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, as well as the general death rate, are much higher than NSW generally.

### Doctor urges rejection

Singleton doctor Bob Vickers desperately urged the NSW Government to flatly refuse the extension based on the health threat alone.

"We know large coal mines in the Hunter are directly responsible for higher rates of a variety of diseases here than in other parts of the country not impacted by coal mining," he said.

"I am sick and tired of seeing the diseases caused by the coal mines of the Hunter Valley and the government's total unwillingness to do anything to help.

"Our government introduced lock downs when the coronavirus was an immediate threat. The coal dust in the Hunter Valley has been a present and ongoing threat for many years now and nothing has been done.

"I would like to see the government listen to doctors on not just the public health threat of a pandemic but also the public health threat of air pollution and climate change."

Lock the Gate Alliance NSW spokesperson Georgina Woods said, "This coal mine extension would choke the life out of Muswellbrook.

"Already 20 properties in the district have been identified as likely to suffer air and noise pollution that is beyond acceptable standards and have the right to be bought out."



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# In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 21,500 words of news for your convenience.

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## THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/feb/03/adani-pays-2000-to-anti-coal-activist-after-facebook-post-wrongly-accused-him-of-throwing-rocks>

**Adani pays \$2,000 to anti-coal activist after Facebook post wrongly accused him of throwing rocks**

Graham Readfearn, *Guardian*, 03/02/2021

The mining company Adani has paid \$2,000 to an anti-coal activist and issued a public apology after it wrongly accused him and his protest group of throwing rocks and kicking work vehicles.

Scott Daines, 53, secured the apology and payment after sending legal letters to the company when it named him in a Facebook post on 8 October 2020.

Adani is now suing Brisbane-based activist Ben Pennings. As part of its case against Pennings, the India-based company engaged a private investigator to take photographs of his family.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-05/bravus-formerly-adani-accused-of-environmental-breaches-erosion/13120172>

**Bravus (formerly Adani) accused of environmental breaches, amid concerns about 'significant erosion'**

Myles Houlbrook-Walk, *ABC*, 05/02/2021

Environmentalists have alleged Bravus (formerly known as Adani) failed to properly manage erosion at its inland rail project, potentially contaminating waterways, according to a complaint made to Queensland's Department of Environment and Science.

The complaint, filed on Wednesday by Environmental Justice Australia on behalf of the Mackay Conservation Group, alleges "inadequate erosion and sediment control measures at several construction sites that are part of the North Galilee Basin Rail Project".

It details several alleged breaches of State Government conditions at Serpentine Creek on Glen Avon Road and Little Gunn Creek at Suttor Developmental Road.

Tom Crothers, director of water resource management and rural water consulting group Stellar Advisory, has seen the images that form part of the complaint and said they were very concerning.

"There's certainly some significant erosion," he said.

"They would have an impact on the local waterholes, lagoons, wetlands."

## EXPOSED: ADANI BUILDS COAL RAILWAY ON A FLOOD PLAIN DURING THE WET SEASON



## WOULD YOU INSURE THIS MESS?

Meme: Stop Adani, Facebook

## COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/major-coal-mine-extension-rejected-over-irreversible-risk-to-sydney-drinking-water-20210205-p56zut.html>

**'Sick to death': Barilaro attacks decision to reject major NSW coal expansion**

Tom Rabe, *SMH*, 05/02/2021

NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro has attacked the state's Independent Planning Commission for rejecting a major coal mining expansion near Wollongong, saying it's a destructive decision that will cost thousands of jobs.

Barilaro said he would seek urgent legal advice as to whether the government could potentially overturn the decision.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-02/coal-transition-climate-change-hunter-region/13109642>

**Coal-rich Hunter Valley ponders jobs future as Asian giants commit to net-zero carbon emissions**

Stephen Long, *ABC*, 03/02/2021

Though the end of coal is decades away, now is the time to begin developing new

industries that Australia's coal regions will need to replace the jobs set to disappear.

One Nation has made big strides here, but the Mayor of Singleton, Sue Moore, bristles at what she sees as a big city assumption that her constituents are all rednecks captured by climate change denialism.

She says: "Tell them where their jobs are going to be.' It's not a conversation about climate change, it's a conversation about jobs, jobs, jobs, and once jobs are solved then other things will flow."

The good news is, there's no shortage of groups working on ideas and planning ways that the economy can transition to a future beyond coal — and there are already businesses pointing the way.

MGA Thermal hopes to revolutionise the storage of energy and accelerate the shift to renewable power with technology for storing energy as heat in "bricks" made from an alloy of recycled metals.

• *ABC feature investigating how the Hunter's economy can transition away from economic dependence on coal as power stations shut down and overseas trading partners announce net zero carbon emissions targets.*

## OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.theland.com.au/story/7101975/former-smelter-site-given-the-green-light-for-development/>

### NSW Government approves plans to develop former Kurri Kurri aluminum smelter site

*Billy Jupp, The Land, 27/01/2021*

Plans to convert a former aluminum smelter in the Hunter region into a gas-fired power plant have moved a step closer after plans to remediate the site were approved.

The state government announced plans to convert the former Kurri Kurri aluminum smelter into “a new commercial and industrial precinct” on Tuesday, just weeks after it flagged plans to convert the site, which was closed in 2012, into a new gas-fired power station.

NSW Planning and Public Spaces Minister Rob Stokes said approval to remediate the 80-hectare portion of the site as a containment cell for contaminated material could create thousands of jobs.

NSW Water, Property and Housing Minister Melinda Pavey said the state government agreed to manage the containment cell once all the remediation works had been completed and certified.

Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Georgina Woods said “this announcement highlights the risk of rushing through the proposed Kurri Kurri gas plant on a site that still faces considerable environmental challenges from the pollution legacy of the aluminium smelter.”

“The gas plant seems geared to inflate gas demand so Santos can open up the north-west of NSW to polluting, invasive gasfields including Santos’ Narrabri Gas Project, despite overwhelming community opposition and a significant legal challenge to the gasfield,” Woods said.

“It will provide impetus for the yet-to-be-built Queensland-Hunter gas pipeline to transport the gas, despite fierce opposition by farmers along the route.

“It follows Minister Stokes’ decision to list the proposed Kurri Kurri gas plant as CSSI which enables him to run roughshod over all opposition and environmental regulations.

“Any proposal to redevelop this site must wait until the initial five year remediation works are completed and it’s been established that the groundwater plume and contaminated soils are cleaned up, and the containment cell is in place and effective.”

<https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/taylor-ready-to-build-gas-fired-power-station-20210127-p56x2f>

### Taylor ready to build gas-fired power station

*Phillip Coorey, AFR, 28/01/2021*

The federal government is all but resolved to build a gas-fired power station in the Hunter Valley amid rising pessimism the



**Kurri Kurri aluminium smelter – the chimney stacks have now been demolished.**

*Photo: Maitland Mercury*

private sector will fill the generation gap to be created when the Liddell coal-fired plant closes in 2023.

Energy Minister Angus Taylor accused his NSW counterpart, Matt Kean, of scaring away the private sector and it is increasingly likely the federal government, through its company, Snowy-Hydro, would have to make good on its threat to build its own plant.

The row comes as federal Nationals backbenchers, led by Queensland Senator Matt Canavan, outlined a plan to rejuvenate manufacturing which included the government building a coal-fired power station in the Hunter.

Last year, in response to Morrison’s gas-led recovery announcement, Kean said “governments should be supporting technology, which will deliver the cheapest form of reliable energy possible”.

“And right now, that’s not gas. That’s not coal, that’s certainly not nuclear. It’s wind and solar backed up by pumped hydro and batteries.”

<https://www.katherinetimes.com.au/story/7103556/left-in-the-dark-land-owners-sound-the-alarm-on-gas-pipeline-set-to-cross-katherine/>

### ‘Left in the dark’: land owners sound the alarm on gas pipeline set to cross Katherine

*Roxane Fitzgerald, Katherine Times, 28/01/2021*

Katherine residents and Traditional Owners fear they have been left in the dark as plans for a pipeline proposed to carry gas from the Beetaloo Basin to Darwin rapidly forge ahead.

The 100-metre wide corridor of pipeline is proposed to closely follow the Stuart Highway through Katherine and Pine Creek to reach Darwin, to concrete the onshore gas industry in the NT.

Documents first emerged in March of 2020 showing the NT Government had earmarked public money to fund the pipeline, and in September a \$327,000 tender was

awarded to CNC Project Management Pty Ltd. to plan a route.

The NT Government says the development of a pipeline to transport gas from the Beetaloo Basin to Darwin is critical “to fulfil the Territory’s gas vision”.

Katherine resident Kerrie Mott says she fears the pipeline will cross her property, and consultations will come too late once the plans are set in stone.

“The Katherine community remains steadfastly opposed to fracking and any activities associated with it,” she said.

“The proposed gas pipeline to convey the fracked gas is equally unwelcome through our region. This proposed gas pipeline appears shrouded in secrecy which is typical of the onshore oil and gas industry as a whole.

Eva Lawler, Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, told the Katherine Times consultation will occur, once a route has been identified.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/wheatstone-repairs-to-erode-chevron-lng-output-20210129-p56xy5>

### Wheatstone repairs to erode Chevron LNG output

*Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 31/01/2021*

Chevron has warned that production will be reduced this year at both its huge LNG projects in Western Australia as maintenance shutdowns and technical problems impact the \$US54 billion (\$70.6 billion) Gorgon project and the \$US45 billion Wheatstone venture.

There are problems with cracked welds at the Gorgon onshore plant on Barrow Island, while at Wheatstone, production is below capacity while an inlet separator is repaired.

Chief executive Mike Wirth voiced confidence that demand for oil and gas would not erode as quickly as some believe in the transition to lower-carbon energy and highlighted carbon capture and storage

and hydrogen as two key technologies for Chevron. The company has invested in a carbon storage start-up, Blue Planet Systems.

Japan's Inpex Corporation has revealed plans to add carbon capture and storage to its \$US45 billion Ichthys LNG project in northern Australia.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/feb/02/australias-proposed-gas-pipelines-would-generate-emissions-equivalent-to-33-coal-fired-power-plants>

### **Australia's proposed gas pipelines would generate emissions equivalent to 33 coal-fired power plants**

*Adam Morton, Guardian, 02/02/2021*

Australia has \$56bn worth of gas pipelines in development that, if all built, would be expected to allow pumping of greenhouse gases equivalent to 33 coal-fired power stations, an analysis has found.

The report by Global Energy Monitor, an anti-fossil fuel research group based in San Francisco, said there are more than US\$1tn (\$1.3tn) in oil and gas pipeline projects on the books globally.

Australia ranks fifth on a list of countries planning new pipelines, behind China, the US, India and Russia, with nearly 8,500km at pre-construction stage.

The report said that length of pipeline had the potential to allow nearly 5bn tonnes of CO2 emissions, the equivalent of 33 1,000 megawatt coal-fired power plants.

Ted Nace, executive director of the Global Energy Monitor and a co-author of the report, said new gas and oil pipelines risked locking in fossil fuel infrastructure for decades ahead. The typical lifetime for a gas pipeline is 50 years, but a growing number of countries have promised net zero emissions by mid-century.

"Pipeline infrastructure is an enabler. It's not just giving heroin, it's giving the needle to the addict," Nace said. "In times of systemic change it's one of the things you should focus on. Even within five years there are going to be better solutions."

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/feb/03/nationals-coal-push-disrupts-scott-morrison-climate-policy-pivot>

### **Nationals coal push disrupts Scott Morrison's climate policy pivot**

*Katharine Murphy & Daniel Hurst, Guardian, 03/02/2021*

The Nationals are continuing to agitate for new investments in coal, cutting across Scott Morrison's ongoing efforts to telegraph a significant pivot on climate policy.

After the prime minister used a scene-setting speech at the National Press Club on Monday to declare he wanted Australia to get to net zero emissions "as soon as possible" and "preferably by 2050" – Morrison's strongest formulation to date – Nationals in the Senate issued a joint statement declaring Australia needed to build "mod-

ern coal-fired power stations" to generate affordable, reliable energy.

The former resources minister and Queensland senator Matt Canavan, the deputy Senate leader of the Nationals, said the government needed to get behind a new plant in Collinsville.

Other coal spruikers include Nationals Senate leader and former sport minister, Bridget McKenzie and NSW senator Perin Davey.

Morrison has attempted to decouple the government from underwriting new coal projects by talking up a "gas-led recovery" from the economic shock created by the pandemic and by promoting future job opportunities in the regions associated with a burgeoning hydrogen industry.

Labor's newly-appointed climate change spokesperson, Chris Bowen, said even though Australia would continue to export coal for "many years" to come, it was important to recognise coalmining communities would come under pressure.

Bowen says the Liberals have "weaponised climate change quite destructively as an anti-jobs message" so he saw his key task as winning the debate that good climate policy was also good for jobs and the economy.

<https://www.miragenews.com/first-time-gas-explorer-gets-green-light-in-508856/>

### **First time gas explorer gets green light in world class Bowen and Surat Basins**

*Mirage News, 03/02/2021*

A Queensland-based company has been given the green light to explore for gas on prospective land in the world class Bowen and Surat basins.

Minister for Resources Scott Stewart said first time explorer AusGasCo CSG Pty Ltd

has been appointed preferred tenderer for two blocks, located to the east and south-east of Injune, totalling 114 square kilometres.

Stewart said, "In fact, during 2020 we released a total of 8,205 square kilometres for gas exploration to maintain a pipeline of future resources projects.

"These blocks were released during COVID-19 as part of the Palaszczuk Government's economic plan for recovery.

The Palaszczuk Government is also investing \$5 million to investigate the feasibility of a physical 500km gas transmission pipeline to connect the Bowen Basin to the domestic and export markets.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/santos-first-target-of-wider-fossil-fuel-exit-campaign-20210202-p56yuz>

### **Santos first target of wider fossil fuel exit campaign**

*Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 04/02/2021*

Activist investor group Market Forces is widening its radical campaign that asks ASX-listed fossil fuel companies to plan for their own demise in order to align with Paris climate goals, kicking off with a resolution put forward to Santos.

Woodside Petroleum, Oil Search, Whitehaven Coal and New Hope Corporation will be among the others to be targeted by Market Forces this year in an expansion of the strategy it introduced last year to use "wind-down" resolutions to try to ensure global warming is limited to 1.5°C.

The pressure group has released a new report singling out 23 ASX-listed companies that it says are actively undermining the Paris climate goals.

The companies, which include BHP, AGL Energy, Seven Group Holdings, Ampol and Worley, are pursuing business plans that



*A photo of FFB's TV screen, showing Matt Canavan's toy coal truck and a prominently displayed coal book on the shelf to the right of his shoulder.*

would doom the Paris Agreement to failure, the group says.

The resolution to be put to Santos' AGM on April 15 asks the company to disclose how its spending plans will facilitate "the efficient managing down of oil and gas operations" in a timeframe consistent with the accord, and return remaining capital to shareholders.

"Santos does not intend to close down its oil and gas operations, as doing so would be against the interests of shareholders and would not be consistent with global climate and human development goals, particularly reducing air pollution and poverty," the company said in response.

<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/rugby-union/protesters-force-waratahs-to-shut-gates-to-captain-s-run-in-narrabri-20210204-p56zku.html>

### Waratahs hold closed captain's run as mining protesters accuse Santos of 'false accusations'

Tom Decent, SMH, 04/02/2021

Extra police and security will be present in Narrabri for a Waratahs and Reds trial match on Friday to keep an eye on potential mining protesters who forced both sides' captain's run sessions to be taken behind closed doors on Thursday.

It comes as the protest group, Gamilaraay Next Generation, lashed out at "false accusations of vandalism and violence" from Santos, the Australian gas and mining company which is hosting a three-day rugby festival around the Super Rugby trial, and insisted their protest would be done safely and under police watch.

The Waratahs and Reds prevented members of the public in the rural NSW country town from watching players go through their paces after Santos alleged there had been "threats of vandalism" from those seeking to protest the gas project and the rugby teams' sponsorship agreement with the mining company.

The Santos Festival of Rugby Facebook page released the following statement.

"Due to threats of vandalism from protesters to the Dangar Park rugby field, we've had to close off public access to the captain's runs," the post read.

No protesters were spotted on Thursday, a Facebook event labelled "Narrabri Day of Action" was scheduled for Friday, prompting some concerns among organisers.

"Gamilaraay Next Generation call a Day of Action in protest of Santos' Narrabri Gas Project and the Santos Festival of Rugby," the event page reads.

"The Santos Coal Seam Gas Project is causing irreversible damage to Gomeroy Country, the Pilliga Forest as well as the Great Artesian Water Basin.

"Gamilaraay Next Generation condemn the participation of NSW Rugby Union and QLD Rugby in the Santos Festival of Rugby.

In a statement sent to the *Herald*, the

group rejected Santos' claims of potential vandalism.

"Gamilaraay Next Generation have been actively and willingly working in collaboration with the Narrabri Police to ensure the event is safe and successful for attendees, organisers and the wider community," the statement read. "Gamilaraay Next Generation publicly express our disgust regarding the false accusations of vandalism and violence made by Santos Festival of Rugby on their Social Media platforms. This is highly hypocritical, given Santos' current destruction and vandalism of the Pilliga Forrest and the Great Artesian Basin."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-06/channel-country-fracking-plans-origin-energy/13057536>

### Queensland asked to consult traditional owners, scientists before examining Channel Country fracking plans

Ellie Grounds & Maddeline McCosker, ABC, 06/02/2021

Traditional owners and environmental groups in Queensland's Channel Country are imploring the State Government to pause consideration of applications for petroleum leases in the region until independent scientific assessments and stakeholder consultation are conducted.

Eleven applications for petroleum leases across more than 250,000 hectares of land in the Channel Country bioregion of the Lake Eyre Basin are before the Government for approval.

The applications were made in July by gas company Blue Energy but listed Origin Energy as the authorised holder.

If granted, it could see unconventional gas extraction – fracking – occur in the region for the first time.

The Lake Eyre Basin Traditional Owners Alliance and environmental group, Western Rivers Alliance, are calling for a moratorium on considering the applications until promised stakeholder consultation has taken place.

## CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/australia-on-track-to-break-paris-carbon-emission-commitments-20210127-p56x93.html>

### Australia on track to break Paris carbon emission commitments

Nick O'Malley, SMH, 28/01/2021

Australia must reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2045 if it is to do its part to keep warming to less than 2 degrees, an expert panel has found.

The 2°C figure is the upper limit of the Paris Agreement signed by the government in 2016. To reach the more ambitious goal of 1.5°C set by the agreement, the nation must reduce emissions by 74% by 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2035, according to an analysis by the newly

created Climate Targets Panel. The panel includes leading Australian climate scientists such as professors Will Steffen, Lesley Hughes and Malte Meinshausen, as well as former Liberal leader John Hewson.

The Australian government has committed to reducing emissions by 26 to 28% by 2030 from a 2005 base, which Professor Steffen says is inadequate to meet Paris goals.

## THE GOOD NEWS

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/stop-us-in-our-tracks-biden-s-new-climate-chief-john-kerry-invokes-australian-bush-fires-20210128-p56xce.html>

### 'Stop us in our tracks': Biden's new climate chief John Kerry invokes Australian bushfires

Bevan Shields & Matthew Knott, SMH, 28/01/2021

US President Joe Biden's climate tsar has invoked last summer's Australian bushfire crisis as evidence the world "can't afford to lose any longer" and must urgently slash carbon emissions.

John Kerry, a former US secretary of state under Barack Obama, is rallying world leaders to bring more ambitious policies to a crunch summit in Glasgow later this year through his role as Biden's international climate envoy.

His appointment and a much more aggressive approach to global warming by the Biden-led White House has put fresh pressure on the Morrison government to commit to net zero emissions by 2050.

The Biden administration made climate change its focus with a series of new executive orders designed to elevate climate "as an essential element of US foreign policy and national security".

The White House announced it was suspending all oil and gas leases on federal land, would begin transforming the government's vast fleet of cars and trucks into electric vehicles and propose legislation to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies.

Biden will host a leaders climate summit on Earth Day, April 22.

Australia has a goal of cutting emissions by 26-28% by 2030. It has not signed up to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 but Morrison's language has shifted recently and many Liberal MPs believe he will take the pledge to the Glasgow summit.

Kerry estimated the world had to phase out coal five times faster than current rates, ramp up renewable energy six times faster and transition to electric vehicles 22 times faster.

In a panel discussion after Kerry's speech, Shell CEO Ben van Beurden said companies knew they would have to reduce the supply of oil, gas and coal but said a careful transition was needed.

Kerry responded: "The problem with gas is if we build out a huge infrastructure for gas now and continue to use it as the bridge fuel when we haven't really exhausted the

other possibilities, we're going to be stuck with stranded assets in 10, 20, 30 years.

"And gas is primarily methane. The fact is methane is 20 times damaging, if not more, than fossil fuels."

His views on gas are significant because the Morrison government has flagged the resource as a transition fuel for the coming decades.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-05/plans-unveiled-for-worlds-biggest-battery-in-hunter-valley/13124814>

### Plans unveiled for world's biggest battery in the Hunter Valley

*Liz Farquhar & Bindi Bryce, ABC, 05/02/2021*

Planning is underway for the world's largest battery to be built in the NSW Hunter Valley, with the company behind it confident that it will be up and running in two years.

CEP Energy, whose chairman is former NSW premier Morris Iemma, has secured a 30-year lease to install a 1,200-megawatt battery at Kurri Kurri north-west of Newcastle.

The company said it would be eight times more powerful than the Hornsdale battery that fuels SA's grid, and while it would be able to store many types of energy, it was expected to mainly store solar-generated power.

There are concerns the construction of the battery could affect the breeding grounds of a critically endangered bird, the regent honeyeater.

## FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/nationals-coal-crusade-an-expensive-political-fantasy-20210126-p56wvn.html>

### Nationals' coal crusade an expensive political fantasy

*Mike Foley, SMH, 26/01/2021*

Nationals senator Matt Canavan has again called on the federal government to dig out some funding to build a coal power plant, but the Morrison government's new energy policies mean new coal power is dead, if not buried.

Nevertheless, support for a new coal plant remains an impossible test for Nationals leader Michael McCormack.

Senator Canavan on Tuesday released a Nationals backbench policy for new coal power, which he said would lower electricity prices and grow manufacturing.

"We believe the government should build a coal-fired power station because that remains Australia's cheapest form of reliable power," he said.

Coal fired power costs three times as much to build as big solar farms and twice as much as wind, according to the 2020 GenCost report by CSIRO and the Australian Energy Market Operator, which compares the cost of building and running various electricity generation technologies.

The GenCost report says new coal capacity costs \$4450 per kilowatt to build, large scale solar is \$1408 and wind power is \$1951.

Director of the Centre for Climate and Energy Policy at the Australian National University Frank Jotzo says this means "there is no prospect at all for a commercially built new coal-fired power plant in Australia".

"It really is an open-shut case now. Australia's electricity future is in renewables, bolstered by storage in batteries and pumped hydro," Professor Jotzo said.

The man caught in the middle is McCormack.

The Deputy Prime Minister must now choose between support for an expensive folly with taxpayer money or provoking the ire of backbench coal crusaders.

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7102691/national-party-backbench-call-for-more-coal-fired-power-to-boost-manufacturing-is-howled-down-from-the-left/>

### Manufacturing 2035 adds fuel to the energy debate with federal parliament to resume next week

*Ian Kirkwood, Newcastle Herald, 28/01/2021*

The National Party's Manufacturing 2035 has provoked a hostile response from the left with its call for as many as a dozen new coal-fired power stations to provide the "affordable and reliable" electricity it says is needed to help restore Australia's "manufacturing strength".

But report was welcomed by the Hunter Business Chamber, which said that COVID had reinforced a need for «sovereign manufacturing capability».

Manufacturing 2035 says this is "in effect, four to 12 new coal-fired power stations", and calls for a new station in the Hunter as well as one in Collinsville, Queensland, that is the subject of a feasibility study'.

Georgina Woods from Lock The Gate Alliance said the report was "a media release, not a plan, with numbers and ideas plucked from nowhere that will go nowhere".

"It's a public relations tool with a bizarre focus on expensive and polluting coal in a cynical attempt to divide our community because its backers think that will garner them some votes," Woods said.

<https://www.crikey.com.au/newsletter/issue-1164>

### Murdoch's Australia Day award – brought to you by miners and bankers

*David Hardaker, Crikey, 27/01/2021*

A so-called lifetime achievement award for Rupert Murdoch [comes] from the Australia Day Foundation.

The Australia Day Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation in the UK, set up as a networking base for Australian business and high achievers. Losers need not apply.

The foundation and its awards are backed by a group of international conglomerates including mining giants BHP, Rio Tinto, Woodside and Anglo-American. Australia's big banks, the National Australia Bank and Westpac, are also in on the act. Another leading name is CQS, the wealthy London hedge fund founded by Australian business figure Sir Michael Hintze.

Hintze is not well known in Australia, but ... has been a force behind the climate-sceptic



*During his acceptance speech for a fossil fuel-sponsored Australia Day award, media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, 89, said that censorship had hobbled discourse with "awful woke orthodoxy". He complained of "A wave of censorship that seeks to silence conversation, to stifle debate and ultimately stop individuals and societies from realising their potential." He added that a "rigidly enforced conformity, aided and abetted by so-called social media, is a straitjacket on sensibility".*

*Photo: Contributed from Murdoch's London bunker*

Global Warming Policy Foundation which has given voice to the views of Tony Abbott and Cardinal George Pell.

The story of fossil fuel interests appropriating Australia's national awards with the help of taxpayer-funded agencies, it appears, has so far been missed by Australia's major media players.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/albanese-drops-butler-from-climate-in-reshuffle-restart-on-emissions-20210127-p56xk4.html>

## Albanese drops Butler from climate in reshuffle restart on emissions

David Crowe, SMH, 27/01/2021

Federal Labor leader Anthony Albanese will drop climate spokesman Mark Butler from the key portfolio in a shake-up that aims to bridge a gulf within the party on gas fields, coal mines and greenhouse emissions.

Albanese is expected to announce the reshuffle within days to transfer health spokesman Chris Bowen into the climate portfolio.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/butler-dumped-as-labor-climate-opposition-collapses-at-a-truly-pivotal-moment/>

## Butler dumped as Labor's climate opposition collapses at a truly pivotal moment

Ketan Joshi, Renew Economy, 28/01/2021

It's odd how climate news tend to rhyme and counter itself across the world in perfect unison. Joe Biden has just announced a huge raft of major new climate policies, after coming to power off a campaign that focused heavily on climate.

It's a big moment, and it's being received well by both the American energy industries and by the progressive activists that helped shape Biden's policies.

Back in Australia, the news that opposition climate spokesman Mark Butler is losing the climate change portfolio to a member of the party's right wing was leaked to media. What a contrast. As the federal government sinks even deeper into a climate and energy funk, the opposition marks this major global climate moment by sacking one of their best.

The total absence of any countering force to pressure a government that's become stunningly and openly destructive on climate is a dark moment for Australia, and it's worth exploring how we got here.

If you trace back through every big climate and energy moment of the past two years (and before that, too), the Labor party has failed catastrophically to summon any might or certainty or even bare sufficiency in their opposition to the federal government's fossil expansion fantasies.

The climate-intensified bushfires were mostly ignored and there has been near zero debate about where COVID19 recovery cash flows.

There's a popular conception that Labor's 45% 2030 target, which it took to the 2019 federal election, was a major part in their loss. That's generally justified on an 'election review' that blamed opposition to the Adani coal mine for their loss; along with too-ambitious climate policies.

It was co-chaired by Dr Craig Emerson, who recently wrote in the AFR that ending fossil fuel extraction is akin to an act of white supremacy.

The alternative – of doing climate advocacy in an effective way, immune to those immature attacks – wasn't even considered in that review.

The internal fight was won by the fossil industry.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/major-test-for-government-on-its-commitment-to-halt-species-extinction-20210128-p56xix.html>

## Major test for government on its commitment to halt species extinction

Mike Foley, SMH, 28/01/2021

A tough test of the Morrison government's environment credentials looms after a major report on national conservation laws called for urgent reforms to prevent further extinction of Australia's wildlife.

Former competition watchdog Graeme Samuel handed down his final report from his review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act on Thursday afternoon and highlighted the situation facing the government.

Since colonisation about 100 of Australia's unique flora and fauna species have been wiped off the planet. The rate of loss, as comprehensive as anywhere else on Earth, has not slowed in the past 200 years.

In his statutory review of the EPBC Act, required every 10 years, Samuel said the laws need fundamental reform and a "sensible and staged pathway" is required to achieve the broad reform agenda, but urgent action is required including beefing up compliance and enforcement to stem wildlife losses.

The final report was handed to the Environment Minister Sussan Ley ahead of a looming Senate vote on a bill that aims to speed up development and boost the economy by cutting green tape.

The bill would create a 'single touch' system that creates bilateral agreements with states and hands Commonwealth responsibilities for environmental assessments of major projects.

The final report inserted two major recommendations since the interim report. It said the federal government should immediately create a new environment assurance commissioner, who could oversee bilateral deals where federal powers are devolved to state governments, and be required to report to parliament regularly.

It also called for the removal of exemptions for the logging industry from the EPBC Act, which are created under Regional Forestry

Agreements between state and federal governments.

Labor and the Greens oppose the single touch proposal. If One Nation Senators Pauline Hanson and Malcolm Roberts side with the government, as expected, the Coalition would need to secure one of the three Senate crossbench votes out of Rex Patrick, Jacqui Lambie, or Centre Alliance's Stirling Griff.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jan/28/australia-urged-to-overhaul-environment-laws-and-reverse-decline-of-our-iconic-places>

## Australia urged to overhaul environment laws and reverse 'decline of our iconic places'

Lisa Cox, Guardian, 28/01/2021

The Morrison government must overhaul Australia's environmental laws, including establishing new independent bodies to take on responsibility for monitoring the environment and enforcing compliance with the law, a once-in-a-decade independent review has found.

The final report from the review of the laws finds the environment is suffering from two decades of failure by governments to improve protection systems meant to ensure the survival of the country's unique wildlife.

The head of the review, the former competition watchdog head Graeme Samuel, made 38 recommendations to transform the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/resources-sector-call-on-josh-frydenberg-to-think-big-for-may-budget/news-story/8512c3b12dbc8ca4b37582e3c5bee7d>

## Resources sector calls on Josh Frydenberg to think big for May budget

Geoff Chambers, Aus, 31/01/2021

Australia's biggest mining, oil and gas companies have called on Josh Frydenberg to adopt an ambitious tax and industrial relations reform agenda ahead of the May budget and deliver investment incentives to unleash a wave of new projects and exploration.

Resources jobs have boomed during the pandemic, including a 25% employment surge in coalmining.

Pre-budget submissions from the Minerals Council of Australia and Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association list 12 priority recommendations, including tax and industrial relations reform, slashing green tape, investment incentives, jobs creation and ensuring the resources sector remains globally competitive.

The MCA submission said: "Australia's large business company tax rate has stayed at 30% since the last century, while other countries have reduced their rate, rendering Australia an uncompetitive jurisdiction."

Miners have also called for no changes to the fuel tax credit scheme or any move that would “increase the already high tax burden on the sector”.

They say the \$1.4bn-a-year petroleum resource rent tax should also be amended to help unlock gas supplies and investment.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/morrison-eyeing-more-ambitious-climate-target-of-net-zero-by-2050-20210201-p56vj3.html>

**Morrison eyeing more ambitious climate target of net zero by 2050**

David Crowe, SMH, 01/02/2021

A more ambitious climate change target will be part of Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s agenda for the year ahead after he expressed his hope to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, a goal that divides government MPs.

Morrison signalled his hope to set the target as government policy before the next election in a speech to the National Press Club.

“Our goal is to reach net zero emissions as soon as possible, and preferably by 2050,” he said.

Morrison said this would depend on science and technology, such as driving down the cost of clean energy from hydrogen, rather than a “tax” in the form of a price on carbon.

The 2050 target remains a divisive issue within the Coalition, with conservatives declaring it too expensive while many Liberals acknowledge calls from their constituents to encourage the government to embrace the goal.

Australian National University professor Will Steffen and colleagues in a new group, the Climate Targets Panel, have called instead for a 74% cut to emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2035 to limit warming to 1.5 degrees.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/samuel-rejects-miners-call-to-wind-back-vexatious-and-frivolous-community-appeals-20210201-p56vg2.html>

**Samuel rejects miners’ call to wind back ‘vexatious and frivolous’ community appeals**

Mike Foley, SMH, 01/02/2021

A mining industry push to remove community groups’ right to mount legal challenges to major project approvals has been slapped down by a review of national environment laws.

In their submissions to the once-a-decade review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act led by former competition tsar Graeme Samuel, mining lobby groups said legal challenges under Commonwealth law should not extend to community members.

However, Samuel said community appeal rights were a “fundamental foundation of Australia’s democracy”.

“To characterise these types of actions as ‘lawfare’ misrepresents the importance of legal review in Australian society,” he said.

The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies (AMEC) had argued the EPBC Act should be amended to stop “vexatious and frivolous appeals by third parties ... and appeals should not be available to the broader public but only for those with a direct interest in the project”.

However, Samuel said it was needed to improve decision making and noted only a small number of decisions had been challenged relative to the roughly 6500 projects referred under the act.

The report recommended community appeal rights be expanded to include “limited merits review” for development approvals, which would test the substance of a decision and the outcomes under the EPBC Act.

The Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) welcomed the call for merits reviews, but said the devil would be in the detail on “how such a pathway would work and what limits would be set in legislation”.

“The recommendations on merits review and legal standing by Graeme Samuel confirm the important role of public interest

cases and reject the ‘lawfare’ furphy,” EDO head of law reform Rachel Walmsley said.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/compelling-case-against-obeids-and-macdonald-crown-submits-20210201-p56vj3.html>

**‘Compelling’ case against Obeids and Macdonald, Crown submits**

Kate McClymont, SMH, 01/02/2021

The more the evidence is scrutinised, the “more compelling” is the case against Ian Macdonald, Eddie Obeid and Moses Obeid, submitted the Crown prosecutor in the trio’s long-running criminal trial in the NSW Supreme Court.

It has been a year since the commencement of the case against former mining ministers Ian Macdonald, 71, and Eddie Obeid, 77, along with Obeid’s son Moses, 51. They have pleaded not guilty.

Prosecutor Sophie Callan, SC, said Macdonald committed eight acts of misconduct in public office through his actions in establishing and granting an exploration licence over the Obeids’ family property near Mount Penny in the Bylong Valley. The conspiracy delivered a massive financial windfall to the Obeids.

Callan submitted that not only did Macdonald get his departmental officers to draw up an exploration licence at Mount Penny, but he then leaked to the Obeid family confidential information and provided a crucial map that was seized at the Obeids’ Birkenhead Point office during a raid by ICAC in November 2011.

Once the properties were purchased, the Obeids organised a land alliance that enabled them to extract a promise from the winning bidder, Cascade Coal, that the three properties would be purchased by the mining company for four times their value.



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