



Fossil Fool Bulletin

Fossil fools in the spotlight this week: A resource for people working towards a sustainable energy future

Published by Eve Sinton fossil.fool.bulletin@gmail.com

FFB 1.5 18 DECEMBER 2017

Mine opponents rejoice as Adani cancels contracts with Downer

Adani and the major contractor tasked with building the Carmichael mine have parted ways.

Groups opposing the mega-mine in the Galilee Basin see the move as another nail in the coffin for the mine, following the veto of a \$1 billion loan from NAIF.

In a statement this morning, Adani Australia said, "Following on from the NAIF veto last week and in line with its vision to achieve the lowest quartile cost of production by ensuring flexibility and efficiencies in the supply chain, Adani has decided to develop and operate the mine on an owner operator basis."

"Adani and Downer have mutually agreed to cancel all Letter of Awards and Downer will provide transitional assistance until 31st March 2018."

Downer had received a \$2 billion contract in 2014 to provide technical services to Adani including drilling, blasting and coal and waste haulage for the mine.

Adani said it "remains committed to develop the Carmichael project and will ensure the highest level of standards and governance. This will not affect our commitment or the number of local jobs across Queensland."

"This is simply a change in management structure and ensures that the mine will ultimately be run out of our Adani Australia offices in Townsville."

Ben Pennings of Galilee Blockade said Downer's departure was "the biggest nail in the coffin for the Carmichael

mine thus far".

"Adani are unlikely to find another Australian company willing to risk building and operating such a controversial mine," he said.

"Adani have never operated a mine of this scale and have absolutely no experience operating mines in Australia — building Carmichael mine themselves would take years longer and significantly increase risks for investors."

Adani unlikely to find another company willing to risk building and operating such a controversial mine

The Galilee Blockade Facebook page rejoiced: "BIG BIG VICTORY. We are so happy, so proud. Thank you to all who bought Downer shares, protested, blockaded and got arrested to get Downer out of bed with Adani. You are all true heroes."

Adani's Facebook page was soon peppered with comments.

Tim Buckley wrote, "Another wheel falls off, Downer EDI has a duty of disclosure to their shareholders, and clearly have walked away from this ongoing saga of continual delays and mis-information."

"This follows all the Chinese banks ruling out funding this stranded asset last month, and the Qld Government sensibly deciding to veto a \$1bn Australian taxpayer subsidy following their election win."



Adani Australia says it currently employs over 800 people and has invested over \$3.3B in Queensland.

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P 2: Rocky Hill mine rejected; CSG chemical assessment disappoints; PAGE 4: all the week's fossil fools

HOLIDAYS: FFB returns on 8 January 2018 after Christmas & New Year

CSG chemical assessment fails to impress

The National Toxics Network (NTN) says it is unimpressed with the government's report on CSG, released last week after a five year wait.

"It is a little galling after waiting for over five years, that the copious amounts of documents are released a week before Christmas," the group said.

"So was it worth the wait, well no.

"The focus of the National Assessment was solely on the above-ground (surface) handling of 113 chemicals used for drilling and hydraulic fracturing for coal seam gas in Australia within a sample time period from 2010 to 2012 and only in NSW and Queensland.

"Chemicals were identified primarily through an industry survey and direct requests to Australian CSG companies. Much of the data provided by industry is claimed as confidential business

information and therefore secret.

"More importantly, the Assessment did not assess potential risks from chemicals entering deeper groundwater, mixtures of chemicals, geogenics (chemicals in the coal seam or rock that are mobilised by the fracturing process), fugitive emissions and ambient air, shale or tight gas extraction, potential effects on agriculture or the food chain, or the individual risks of chemicals used at particular sites. Rather profound omissions.

"The assessment concluded 57 of the 113 chemicals were harmful in their pure, concentrated form but dismissed concerns as the public was unlikely to come into contact with them unless there was a large spill or transport accident.

"A further desktop study "Deeper groundwater hazard screening for

chemicals used in coal seam gas extraction" was also released. It looked at 13 chemicals supposedly representative but limited to those with reliable data.

"Only a fraction of Australia's industrial chemicals have been assessed and have 'reliable data'. Importantly, sub-lethal toxicity effects of contaminants such as endocrine disruption were not considered nor were the effects of mixtures of contaminants as the ecotoxicological data to do that is not available.

"This project found that the identified exposure pathways were either unlikely or extremely unlikely to exist in the study areas, despite industry reporting spills and releases having occurred and despite the report noting there was no information on well failure rates in Australia."

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Arrow won't take 'no' for an answer

Arrow Energy has refused to rule out taking farmers to court, to force access for its Darling Downs CSG operations.

Chinchilla resident Shay Dougall said, "Arrow should hang their heads in shame today, saying that – despite their friendly words in a public meeting – they will NOT allow landholders to say NO.

"What a shocking thing to have to clarify to the public – that in fact they will force CSG onto local people and force them to live in a gasfield.

"It's now clear that the landholders' right to the peaceful enjoyment of their property is trumped by the gas industry needs and that the government sanctions this.

"Forcing farmers to live in a gasfields is an extraordinary aspect to this CSG industry. Its primacy over our community and environment surely must give us the most pause.

Communities across the Western Downs have seen impacts such as loss of groundwater, noise and air emissions and overland flow damage due to the CSG industry.

"All for the gas to be vacuumed overseas via Gladstone."

FFB

Rocky Hill coal mine rejected

Lock the Gate Alliance has welcomed the Planning Assessment Commission's rejection of the Rocky Hill coal mine on the outskirts of Gloucester.

The group has called on the NSW Government to reform land use and planning law to provide a buffer around all towns and villages.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Georgina Woods said, "Lock the Gate congratulates the people of Gloucester and Midcoast Council for working hard to stop this mine, secure the future of their town and set a new benchmark for sensible planning decisions when it comes to managing mining conflict.

The Commission found that the coal mine was not in keeping with the objective of Midcoast Council's zoning for the area, which was to protect the rural scenic amenity of Gloucester and that letting the mine disturb nearly 500 hectares of agricultural land was not sympathetic to the character of the Gloucester Valley.

"It's just common sense that the doorstep of a regional town like Gloucester is not an appropriate place for an open cut coal mine. The mine would have made residential areas of Gloucester unliveable with noise and dust pollution.

"The immediate next step to give certainty to the people of Gloucester



is to cancel Gloucester Resources' coal exploration licence in the area and that's what the Minister for Resources should immediately do.

"Communities should not have to fight this hard to maintain the tranquility and liveability of rural towns and villages.

"New South Wales needs clear rules that stop projects like this from being proposed in the first place. It would save everyone money, time and heartache if the Government made a sensible rule to keep coal mines away from towns and villages and made productive agricultural land off limits to mining altogether."

The Planning Assessment Commission's decision is available here:

<http://pac.nsw.gov.au/projects/2017/10/rocky-hill-coal-project>

NT fracking report shows unresolved risk from gasfields



The NT Fracking Inquiry has released its Draft Final Report, with the completed report due in March.

The draft report is a comprehensive body of work that identifies a host of risks associated with fracking gasfields, including the potential to harm drinking water and public health and spread contaminants.

"This report confirms what thousands of concerned Territorians have been saying; that fracking gasfields come with a myriad of risks that would put an incredible burden on the Territory," said Naomi Hogan, National Coordinator for the Lock the Gate Alliance.

Significant accident potential

"Even with 120 recommendations to attempt to avoid the worst of the fracking pollution risks, the Panel finds that there is significant potential for accidental releases, leaks and spills of hydraulic fracturing chemicals and fluids, flowback and produced water.

"We could be buried under the weight of all the risks and potential negative impacts coming from the fracking industry.

"Communities and landholders will now redouble efforts to ensure our parliamentary leaders understand and act on the risks identified through this report," said Ms Hogan.

Mark Swindells, owner/operator of the award-winning Uluru Camel Tours in Central Australia said the report confirms the concerns of tourism operators across the Territory who fear industrial gasfields will detract from the tourism values of their regions and iconic visitor spots:

"Any recommendations that allow for the moratorium to be lifted are a concern for Tourism operators in the NT. For tourism to maintain growth in the NT there should be a total ban on fracking," he said.

Melissa Bury from the Frack-free Fannie Bay community group in the Chief Minister's electorate says the report confirms the real costs for long-term

management and monitoring of gasfields will be borne by taxpayers.

"Economists at the Inquiry hearings and the ACIL Allen economic report found that the jobs figures the fracking industry had been pushing were grossly overstated.

"The draft report identifies a shopping list of reforms needed to try and reduce fracking industry risks. It would likely put a strain on our economy and under resourced regulators that would far outweigh any potential economic benefits.

"I don't think any Territorian would put faith in the Government to protect us from the full list of fracking risks. It's our water at stake. It's not worth the risk for such a short term and tiny employer," she said.

Flooding will spread poisons

Raymond Dixon is a custodian for land at the centre of proposed gasfields in the Beetaloo sub-Basin near Elliott:

"Our communities are at the centre of proposed fracking activity and stand to be most-impacted if the government allows fracking to go ahead.

"Our entire region is connected through underground aquifers and surface water during the Wet. We are concerned that flooded gasfields can spread poisons over our pastoral lands, important cultural areas and destroy the drinking water of thousands of local people.

"We refuse to be forced into a gasfield.

"That is why we will continue to stand strong and say no, and we are calling on the Chief Minister to act now to protect our region from this damaging industry," he said.

Territorians are encouraged to attend the final round of community consultations slated for early 2018, and speak to their local representatives to ensure they vote with communities to protect land, water and livelihoods following the release of the final report in March 2018.

News this week

Breaking news of the **Adani-Downer split** grabbed the front page at the last minute today. There's more of the Adani saga in our **This Week** section.

A report from India of a **land hand-over** to **Adani** for a new power plant confirms how accustomed Adani is to government largesse. It also shows how Adani habitually attaches the figure **10,000 jobs** to its projects. Clearly ridiculous for a single power plant, which appears to be solar though unspecified.

Ten thousand jobs is a popular number everywhere, with Adani still spiking it in statements about its Australian operations. New Queensland LNP leader and mining fan **Deb Frecklington** repeated the fake number in a statement about the defeated party's policy re-assessment.

Frack fan **Matt Canavan** also came up with **10,000** as the number of jobs to be generated if the NT government would just "get on with the job" of fracking the Territory.

Karen Middleton wrote a cracking good piece in *The Saturday Paper* about **Gina Rinehart** and the Galilee. Her venture with **GVK Handcock** is quietly formulating plans to dig up 270,000 square kilometres for which it holds development licences. **Resolution PR's Josh Euler** has been busy meeting LNP and Katter party representatives for a chat, presumably on his client Gina's behalf.

An important study from Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale region finds babies born near **fracking** sites are more likely to have **low birth weights**. The study provides good evidence of causal effect, most likely from air pollution.

Tellus Holding's proposed **toxic waste dump and salt mine** in has been given a tick by the NT's EPA. To be built 120km south of Alice Springs, the facility still needs government approval. Local Titjikala people are divided on the project.

Finally, the **Minerals Council of Australia** still has a firm focus on its **nuclear dreaming** and is pushing to end the ban on nuclear power. It wants 1990s legislation over-turned so nuke power plants can be built here.

In the news this week:

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 23,200 words of news for your convenience.

[Click on the links to view the full, original articles.](#)

ADANI SAGA

http://www.afr.com/news/politics/mining-investment-surges-but-adani-project-unlikely-bis-20171210-h01z-ti?utm_source=TractionNext&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Worm-Subscribe-111217

Mining investment surges but Adani project unlikely: BIS

Mark Ludlow, *Australian Financial Review*, 10/12/2017

Growth in Australia's mining industry is expected to more than double this financial year even without Adani's controversial \$16.5 billion mega-mine which is unlikely to proceed, according to a new report.

It predicted the Adani mine, which will no longer be eligible for a concessional loan from the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, would struggle to be built, but says other coal projects could get off the ground.

BIS Oxford Economics said the completion of \$200 billion in liquid natural gas projects across Australia was the biggest contributor to the spike in mining production.

http://lnk.edition.crikey.com.au/1/grzdgUgCXMs5udj1x-zMWaxA7utm_source=TractionNext&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Insider-Subscribe-121217

Will Adani ever get the money it needs to build that bloody mine?

Chris Woods, *Crikey*, 12/12/2017

Seven years ago, Anna Bligh announced the approval of what would be Australia's largest ever coal mine. Now that mine — Adani's proposed \$16.5 billion Galilee Basin project — is swamped with controversies. These include the expected environmental impact of the mine, rubbery employment figures spruiked by Adani, and questions around native land use agreements.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-11/traditional-owners-fear-losing-native-title-rights-adani-mine/9246474>

Traditional owners say they were forced to negotiate with Adani for fear of losing native title rights

Paul Robinson, *ABC*, 11/12/2017

Traditional owners in central Queensland say they could have lost all of their native title rights if they did not negotiate with Adani on a proposed coal mine in central Queensland. The Native Title Tribunal registered



Queensland Premier writes to PM to veto \$1 billion Adani loan

Annastacia Palaszczuk promised during the election campaign that she would veto the NAIF loan on her first day back in the job.

[BRISBANETIMES.COM.AU](http://brisbanetimes.com.au)

an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) on Friday with the Wangan and Jagalingou People (W&J) for the Carmichael mine, north-west of Clermont.

W&J claimants who opposed the mine said they planned to continue legal action to challenge the land use agreement.

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/queensland-premier-writes-to-pm-to-veto-1-billion-adani-loan-20171212-p4yxn4.html>

Queensland Premier writes to PM to veto \$1 billion Adani loan

Felicity Caldwell, *Brisbane Times*, 12/12/2017

Re-elected Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk has written to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to veto an almost \$1 billion concessional loan for the Adani mine.

After being sworn in on Tuesday, Ms Palaszczuk tweeted a photo of her letter to Mr Turnbull, fulfilling a promise she made during the election campaign to put a stop to the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility loan on her first day.

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/all-policies-are-on-the-table-including-support-for-adani-lnp-leader-20171213-p4yxo7.html>

All policies are on the table, including support for Adani: LNP leader

Felicity Caldwell, *Brisbane Times*, 13/12/2017

The LNP's support for the Adani coal

mine will be under review, along with more than 100 of the party's policies.

Opposition leader Deb Frecklington said the LNP needed to address the issue of why the party did not win the Queensland election in November.

"But what I am very concerned about is jobs in regional Queensland and I can tell you right now that around 10,000 jobs that would have been made through that project, the Galilee Basin itself, really does need to be opened up, and should be opened up, but only if the right environmental approvals are in place and only if everything correct is in place for the Galilee Basin to open up," she said.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Markets/Commodities/India-s-Adani-to-adjust-as-Queensland-to-veto-coal-mine-funding>

India's Adani to 'adjust' as Queensland to veto coal mine funding

MUMBAI (*NewsRise*) 13/12/2017

Adani Group said it will "fully consider and adjust to the constraints" of non-availability of a local government funding for its 16 billion Australian dollars (\$12 billion) coal mine in Australia, playing down an initial setback in raising money for the long-delayed project.

Adani Australia, on Tuesday, said it has invested more than \$3.3 billion in Queensland.

"We would not be investing our time, money and energy in this manner if

our projects were not viable and if we were not serious about delivering our projects,” the company said in a statement. “Adani Australia will now fully consider and adjust to the constraints the veto of NAIF funding brings.”

The loan veto won't change Adani Australia's strong regional presence in Queensland, it said.

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/state-editions/ranchi/govt-hands-over-175-acre-land-to-adani.html>

Govt hands over 175 acre land to Adani

Daily Pioneer 13/12/2017

The State Government on Tuesday handed over 175 acres of land to Adani Power Limited for setting up 1,600 MW power plant in Godda. Chief Secretary Rajbala Verma handed over the land transfer papers to Adani Power CEO Rajesh Jha here on Tuesday and hoped that the work will soon be started by the company.

The CS said an investment of 15,000 crore will be done in the first phase and 10,000 people will get employment in the plant.

<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/resources/2017/12/16/gina-rinehart-and-the-galilee/15133428005647>

Gina Rinehart and the Galilee

Karen Middleton, The Saturday Paper, 16/12/2017

Rinehart's GVK Hancock holds the development licences for the Kevin's Corner, Alpha and Alpha West coal projects in the so-far-unmined Galilee Basin, inland from Bowen and spanning 270,000 square kilometres down to its southern point inland from Rockhampton.

With all the attention on Adani, GVK Hancock has been able to promote its own interests quietly in the background, enjoying under-the-radar status while public controversy swirls around its competitor.

It seems the Queensland government may yet support the competitor [Aurizon] rail line proposal, despite having suggested during the election campaign that it would not.

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/adani-breaks-silence-on-palaszczuk-government-after-election/news-story/2244660735a88db09995adec95340b6e>

Adani breaks silence on Palaszczuk government after election

Andrew Backhouse, Townsville Bulletin, 14/12/2017

“Adani Australia currently employs over 800 people and has invested over \$3.3 billion in Queensland, which is one of the biggest investments by an

Indian company in Australia.

“We would not be investing our time, money and energy in this manner if our projects were not viable and if we were not serious about delivering our projects which will ultimately generate more than 10,000 direct and indirect jobs across all of our projects.

The statement from Adani generated a debate on the company's social media page.

COAL ROCKS

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/energy/origin-aims-to-halve-emissions-by-2032-20171214-p4yxpg.html>

Origin aims to halve emissions by 2032

Cole Latimer, Sydney Morning Herald, 14/12/2017

Origin has announced a goal of slashing its emissions in half by 2032, in line with the Paris Climate Change Agreements, through the closure of the Eraring coal-fired power station.

The shutdown of Eraring would leave AGL's Bayswater power station – which is coupled with the soon to be closed Liddell power station – the last coal-fired power station in NSW.

A spokesman said the focus will now shift to growing Origin's renewable energy base and working with the government to finesse national energy policy to reduce emissions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/dec/14/national-australia-bank-stops-all-lending-for-new-thermal-coal-projects>

National Australia Bank stops all lending for new thermal coal projects

Gabrielle Jackson, The Guardian, 14/12/2017

National Australia Bank says it will halt all lending for new thermal coal mining projects, becoming the first major Australian bank to phase out support of thermal coal mining.

While the bank will continue providing finance for coal projects already on its books, NAB said an orderly transition to a low-carbon Australia was critical for the economy and for continued access to secure and affordable energy.

<http://reneweconomy.com.au/audit-office-slams-australias-dud-investments-in-clean-coal-90953/>

Audit office slams Australia's dud investments in clean coal

Giles Parkinson, Renew Economy, 14/12/2017

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) has published a damning as-

Audit office slams Australia's dud investments in “clean coal”

By Giles Parkinson on 15 December 2017



essment of Australia's carbon capture and storage program, noting that more than \$450 million has been invested by the government over the past decade, and nothing achieved.

Not a single tonne of CO2 has been saved, no technology is ready for deployment, and the ANAO report slams the government for having no strategic direction, no oversight over the projects, and little accounting for the spending.

<http://www.theherald.com.au/story/5123921/direct-contravention-rocky-hill-blocked/?cs=305>

Rocky Hill mine near Gloucester rejected

Matt Carr, Newcastle Herald, 15/12/2017

EXPLORATION for the Rocky Hill coal mine near Gloucester will not proceed after the Planning Assessment Commission knocked it back on Thursday, dubbing it a “direct contravention” of the objectives behind the area's zoning.

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/not-in-public-interest-gloucester-coal-mine-rejected-by-planning-commission-20171215-h059jn.html>

‘Not in public interest’: Gloucester coal mine rejected by planning commission

Peter Hannam, Sydney Morning Herald, 15/12/2017

The NSW Planning Assessment Commission has refused consent for a coal mine planned for Gloucester, potentially culling a second major mining venture near the mid-north coast town in less than two years.

<https://www.gloucesteradvocate.com.au/story/5123726/rocky-hill-mine-development-refused-by-pac/?cs=435>

GRL's Rocky Hill Coal Mine in Gloucester is refused

Anne Keen, Gloucester Advocate, 15/12/2017

A month after the Planning Assessment Commission held public meetings in Gloucester, the final decision has been announced; both the Rocky Hill Coal Mine Project and the Stratford Extension Project applications have been rejected.

GAS, GAS, GAS

<https://www.whitsundaytimes.com.au/news/gladstones-major-refineries-projects-that-didnt-pay/3286537/>

REVEALED: Which Gladstone projects didn't pay tax last year

Tegan Annett, *Whitsunday Times*, 09/12/2017

NEW data released by the tax department revealed the major companies which earn more than \$100 million a year but did not pay tax last financial year.

The data shows owners of the three Curtis Island LNG plants, Wiggins Island Coal Export Terminal and Boyne Smelter Limited were among 732 companies that paid no tax in Australia between 2015-16.

<https://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/csg-company-says-good-faith-negotiations-preferabl/3289485/>

CSG company: 'Good faith' negotiations preferable to court

Matthew Newton, *The Chronicle*, 13/12/2017

COAL seam gas company Arrow Energy has reserved the right to take farmers to Land Court as a last resort to access properties.

Tuesday's Chinchilla community consultation meeting heard Arrow Energy had estimated around 400-500 agreements with landholders would be required over the life of the project.

The Surat Gas Project will involve the drilling of about 2500 wells.

<https://www.chinchillanews.com.au/news/arrow-energy-holds-info-sessions/3290420/>

Arrow Energy holds info sessions

Brooke Duncan, *Chinchilla News*, 14/12/2017

Arrow representatives visited Chinchilla on Tuesday to give a presentation and answer questions on what the deal will mean for communities in the Western Downs.

About 85 people attended the information session, which covered topics including the project timeline and groundwater impacts.

According to data presented at the meeting, the Tipton expansion project is first on the list, with 955 new wells planned, followed by developments at Kogan (630 new wells), Dalby (440 new wells), Miles (590 new wells), and Chinchilla.

There will be two new compression stations constructed, one at Tipton and another at Miles.



REVEALED: Which Gladstone projects didn't pay tax last year

NEW data released by the tax department revealed the major companies which earn more than \$100 million a year but did not pay tax last financial year.

WHITSUNDAYTIMES.COM.AU

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/agl-goes-green-at-liddell-but-prices-remain-high-20171211-p4yxlm.html>

AGL goes green at Liddell, but prices remain high

Cole Latimer, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/12/2017

The announcement of AGL's new combination of renewable and gas generation had a small impact on near-term NSW baseload electricity future contract prices, driving them down as confidence in energy security rose.

In the near-term, Liddell continues to have operational issues.

While slated as having 1680 MW capacity, one of the four units - which has been out of action for months - is not likely to be back online until the end of January, underscoring its unreliability.

Combined with the fact one unit is often wholly utilised to power the nearby Tomago smelter, this means only half of Liddell's full capacity will be utilised by consumers and other industrial customers.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-13/gas-supply-boosted-but-still-expensive-accr-report/9252386>

Gas supplies have increased but prices are still too high, argues consumer watchdog ACCC

Lucy Barbour and Matthew Doran, *ABC*, 13/12/2017

Those are the key findings of the latest report by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) into the nation's gas market.

ACCC chairman Rod Sims said the deal struck between the Federal Government and gas producers two months ago had already been felt, even though prices were still above the levels the ACCC wanted to see.

"What we've seen is LNG producers have reduced exports to provide more gas to the domestic market, and that has overcome the shortfall, and that has seen prices for many companies fall from around \$16 [per gigajoule] to around \$8 to \$12," he said.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/wholesale-gas-price-plunge-after-exporters-toe-turnbulls-line/news-story/de5a7c9b05d602ce436e6145be564dc4>

Wholesale gas price plunge after exporters toe Turnbull's line

Matt Chambers, *The Australian*, 13/12/2017

East coast wholesale gas prices have fallen by up to 50 per cent and a forecast shortfall has turned into a potential surplus as Malcolm Turnbull's threats to restrict exports led Queensland's big LNG plants to divert gas to domestic markets, the consumer watchdog says.

Yet prices are not as low as they should be, and the embattled Gibson Island fertiliser plant in Brisbane and many other commercial gas users are still facing closure because of high prices.

<https://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/gas-market-still-suffers-after-curtis-island-lng-s/3289907/>

Gas market still suffers after Curtis Island LNG sacrifices

Tegan Annett, *Gladstone Observer*, 14/12/2017

AUSTRALIA'S gas market is yet to adapt to changes caused by the \$70billion development of three LNG sites at Curtis Island.

In the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's second inquiry into gas supply arrangements, it said LNG producers had contracted 42 petajoules (PJ) of gas under long-term gas supply agreements to domestic buyers for 2018.

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/13122017/fracking-health-infant-birth-weight-study-air-water-stress-natural-gas>

Fracking Study Finds Low Birth Weights Near Natural Gas Drilling Sites

Sabrina Shankman, *Inside Climate News*, 13/12/2017

Babies born near hydraulic fracturing sites are 25 percent more likely to have a low birth weight than those born only a few kilometers away, a new study of more than 1 million births in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale region concludes.

The study, published Wednesday in



the journal *Science Advances*, provides some of the most compelling data to date linking the process of hydraulic fracturing to negative health effects. It found that babies born within 3 kilometers of fracking sites were less healthy than those born farther away, and that babies born within 1 kilometer saw the largest effects.

"We have pretty good evidence of a causal effect of health outcomes and fracking—not just a correlation," said lead author Janet Currie, a professor of economics and public affairs at Princeton University.

"We think that given the pattern of results that we see, it's more likely to be air pollution than water," she said. That's because the impacts are so localized. Air pollution tends to dissipate as it gets further from the source, much like the health impacts that Currie and her co-authors found.

In addition to the public health implications of the study, Currie said she thinks there are policy implications. Because the effects the study documents are so localized—after 3 kilometres they essentially disappear—Currie said decisions about where to place wells could have a big impact. "It could mitigate the health effects," she said.

<http://www.skynews.com.au/news/national/nt/2017/12/12/inquiry-calls-for-3-year-nt-fracking-study.html>

Inquiry calls for 3-year NT fracking study

Sky News, 12/12/2017

Environmental studies spanning up to three years must be conducted before fracking extraction of gas begins in the Northern Territory, an inquiry says.

The independent hydraulic fracturing inquiry draft final report was released on Tuesday with 120 recommendations for the Gunner government, which continues to feel federal pressure to lift its onshore gas ban.

Inquiry chair Justice Rachel Pepper said it was not her role to recommend whether Labor should end its moratorium

on the controversial shale gas extraction method, but to advise on how to mitigate the risks to an acceptable level if it did.

A final report will be delivered to the government in March.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-12/nt-fracking-draft-report-handed-down/9252208>

NT fracking inquiry: Risks of mining for shale gas could be reduced, report finds

Sara Everingham, ABC, 12/12/2017

The Northern Territory's inquiry into hydraulic fracturing has found that with more "robust and rigorous" regulation, the risks of fracking can be mitigated.

But the inquiry panel's draft final report also recommends that before any production takes place, the Government must conduct baseline groundwater studies, which could take two to three years to complete.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-13/fracking-nt-should-get-on-with-job-lift-moratorium-matt-canavan/9253418>

Fracking: NT Government should 'get on with the job' of lifting moratorium, Matt Canavan says

Neda Vanovac, Dijana Damjanovic, and Mitchell Abram, ABC, 13/12/2017

The Northern Territory should "get on with the job" of lifting its hydraulic fracturing moratorium now that it has a draft report on the industry which says the risks can be mitigated, says the Minister for Northern Australia.

Northern Australia Minister Matt Canavan said on Wednesday that the sooner the onshore fracking industry could get going in the NT, the better.

He said it could potentially boost the NT economy by \$17 billion and create 10,000 new jobs over an unspecified time period.

<http://www.ntnews.com.au/business/independent-inquiry-into-fracking-of-onshore-gas-in-the-northern-territory-releases-final-draft-report/news-story/208a3c4bce99fc03757e0e9c47cc0072>

Independent inquiry into fracking of onshore gas in the Northern Territory releases final draft report

NT News, 13/12/2017

THE Independent Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing of Onshore Unconventional Reservoirs in the Northern Territory has released its draft Final Report.

Inquiry chair Justice Rachel Pepper said: "The recommendations have been developed to mitigate risks identified during the course of the

Inquiry relating to water, land, air, public health, Aboriginal people and their culture, and the unique social and economic conditions of the Territory."

<http://www.ntnews.com.au/business/nt-fracking-given-cautious-green-light/news-story/32e231b28fb4da4a45260b75e0502589>

Territory Government poised to lift fracking moratorium next year following release of NT fracking inquiry's draft final report

NT News, 13/12/2017

THE Territory Government is poised to lift its fracking moratorium next year following the release of the NT fracking inquiry's draft final report.

It has taken 10 months, 105 public hearings, 29 community forums, 500 submissions and \$3 million for the inquiry to make its draft recommendations.

The 855-page report was released on Tuesday afternoon with little warning to Government or stakeholders.

Under the recommendations, costs of putting in place a new regulatory regime would be borne by the gas industry.

<http://www.afr.com/business/energy/gas/northern-territory-fracking-recommendations-sobering-for-gas-industry-20171212-h03ky1>

Northern Territory fracking recommendations sobering for gas industry

Angela Macdonald-Smith, Australian Financial Review, 13/12/2017

Northern Territory gas explorers are holding onto hopes that vast quantities of onshore gas may be unlocked after a government-ordered scientific inquiry found that the risks of fracking can be reduced to "acceptable" levels.

In the Beetaloo Basin, a traditional custodian for land Raymond Dixon called on the NT Chief Minister Michael Gunner to protect the region from gas development.

"We are concerned that flooded gasfields can spread poisons over our pastoral lands, important cultural areas and destroy the drinking water of thousands of local people," Mr Dixon said.

<http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/5112345/community-vows-to-vehemently-oppose-gas-pipeline/?cs=159>

Community vows to 'vehemently oppose' APA gas pipeline at Coonamble meeting

Jamieson Murphy, Northern Daily Leader, 12/12/2017

MORE than 400 people from properties and communities along APA's

News this week ... from previous page

proposed coal seam gas pipeline route, have vowed to “vehemently oppose” Santos’ Pilliga project and to block the pipeline “at any cost”.

<http://www.theland.com.au/story/5117802/gas-pipeline-a-snakes-head/?cs=4951>

Building Pilliga pipeline just the beginning

Daniel Pedersen, The Land, 14/12/2017

THE pipeline APA is attempting to build across the Pilliga is simply the snake’s head for development of coal seam gas wells by gas multinational Santos, say figures in what is a growing body of protestors.

Coonamble businessman David Chadwick said Member for Barwon Kevin Humphries was right behind Santos and that presented a clear picture that The Nationals were simply disregarding community opinions.

WASTE & NUKES

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-11/nt-epa-approves-waste-storage-facility-salt-mine-in-central-aus/9247964>

Waste storage facility gets approval from Northern Territory EPA

Claire Campbell, ABC, 11/12/2017

A controversial hazardous waste storage facility and salt mine planned for Central Australia has been given the tick of approval by the NT’s Environment Protection Authority.

If built, the Chandler facility would be the first repository of its kind in Australia and the nation’s largest hazardous waste surface storage facility, storing up to 9 per cent of Australia’s 5.6 million tonnes of hazardous waste. The company behind the proposed facility, Tellus Holdings, wants to build about 120 kilometres south of Alice Springs.

But the nearby Indigenous community of Titjikala — about 15 kilometres from the proposed site — remains divided about the benefit and risks of such a project.

Some residents fear the toxic waste could leak and poison the land and its water supply, whereas some support the project, its proposed job creation for Aboriginal people and the paving of the dirt road between Alice Springs and Titjikala.

The project is still subject to NT Government approval and the company would not give any indication of when construction would be likely to start.

<https://www.power-technology.com/features/time-nuclear-turnaround-australia/>

Is it time for a nuclear turnaround in Australia?

Julian Turner, Power-Technology.com

The Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) is demanding the repeal of legislation that has effectively banned nuclear power in the country since the late 1990s. Julian Turner talks to Daniel Zavattiero, executive director of uranium at MCA, about the role of nuclear generation in Australia’s future energy mix.

The Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) argues that times have changed and that Australia’s policy on nuclear energy must change along with it if the country is to stop losing significant global investment, scientific collaboration and competitive advantage to the likes of China and India.

Specifically, MCA is calling for a repeal of section 140A(1)(b) of the EPBC Act, which it claims would allow global entrepreneurs to develop and commercialise new, innovative technology in Australia.

FFB

Stop gas rort, don’t blame farmers

The ACCC’s report on wholesale gas supply shows the way to reduce domestic gas prices is to reduce exports, not to sacrifice more Australian land to fracking and coal seam gas, says Lock The Gate.

“The report shows that with some reduction in gas exports, supply has increased and prices have started coming down. But there’s more work to do to make sure Australian businesses aren’t being ripped off by big gas companies, which export most of their gas offshore, creating a shortage here,” Lock the Gate’s Naomi Hogan said.

“The Turnbull Government needs to finally take real, long-term action on limiting gas exports, instead of just talking about it and hoping the gas companies play along. Changes are urgently needed to ease the stress the gas exporters have exerted on manufacturers now.

“Too many Australian farmers are being forced to live in a gasfield, threatening land and water, all so the gas can be exported overseas.

“Even though Australia is one of the largest gas producing countries, Australian businesses are being starved of gas, routinely paying prices higher than Australian gas landed in Japan.

“It’s a disgrace that while the international market is oversupplied with gas, Australians are being told we have to live with a tight market and see our gas sucked for export.

“Onshore unconventional gas is expensive to extract and would only keep gas prices high for Australians.

“We’d have enough affordable gas for Australian businesses without having to frack more land, if we stopped exporting so much of it.

“We can meet our energy needs without sacrificing agriculture by getting gas exports under control and by developing renewable energy with storage,” Ms Hogan said.

The AEMO website shows in real time the movement of gas across the East Coast Gas Market. For months, gas from the Bass Strait in Victoria has been transported north to the QLD export terminals. See:

<http://gasbb.com.au/>

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