

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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CSG sickness: hospital admissions soar as gasfields expand across Darling Downs

The rapid expansion of the coal seam gas industry in Queensland's Darling Downs has been accompanied by a startling rise in hospital admissions, according to a newly published scientific paper.

The author concludes the negative health impact in the area points to inadequate environmental monitoring and regulatory failure by Queensland government agencies.

The paper was published in the peer-reviewed *International Journal of Environmental Studies* on January 8.

Dr Geralyn McCarron found that acute hospital admissions for circulatory and respiratory diseases increased by up to 142% between 2007 and 2014. During the same period, pollutants reported by the CSG industry and known to cause cardiopulmonary illnesses rose by up to 6000%.

"Acute circulatory admissions increased 133% and acute respiratory admissions increased 142%," Dr McCarron said.

"CSG emissions increased substantially over the same period: nitrogen oxides (489% to 10,048 tonnes), carbon monoxide (800% to 6800 tonnes), PM10 (6000% to 1926 tonnes), volatile organic compounds (337% to 670 tonnes) and formaldehyde (12 kg to over 160 tonnes).

Unchecked gas expansion into agrarian area

She said the unchecked expansion of unconventional gas companies into what was previously an agrarian area of the Darling Downs has led to the

generation of extra emissions attributable to a single industry.

"Despite appeals from health professionals to improve oversight, state and federal regulatory bodies have failed to act," she said.

Dr McCarron's paper was welcomed by the Western Downs Knitting Nannas Against gas and Lock the Gate Alliance.

Govt, gasco's silent

Government departments and the gas industry have remained silent.

In 2013 the Australian Medical Association warned that the health impacts of CSG had not been adequately researched, and effective regulations that protect public health were not in place.

The same year, Queensland Health did a limited investigation into health complaints of Darling Downs residents.

The report was unable to link reported health effects exposure to CSG pollutants. However, it acknowledged that there was 'some evidence that might associate some of the residents' symptoms to exposure to airborne contaminants arising from CSG activities.'

Queensland Health recommended that the regulator, the Department of the Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) monitor overall CSG emissions and the exposure of local communities to those emissions.

"Despite this, DEHP determined that they found no cause to expand monitoring, thereby blocking Queensland Health's recommendation that overall gasfield emissions and the exposure of the community to those emissions be monitored. The rejection by the regu-



A coal seam gas flare on the Darling Downs. Photo: Lock the Gate

lator of these recommendations is of serious concern," Dr McCarron said.

The CSG industry self-reports pollution figures to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment's National Pollution Inventory.

Toxic anomalies

Dr McCarron noted many anomalies in the figures. For example, Santos consistently failed to report formaldehyde emissions while QGC, performing similar activities reported up to 219 tonnes per year. Toxins reported by Arrow in one year were not reported in previous or subsequent years.

"Although reporting is a statutory requirement, data are self-calculated (estimated, not measured) and are

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P 5: Fossil fools in the media with links to the original stories**

Gasfield residents fall ill during roll-out • continued from p 1

not reported below a threshold. It is difficult to know how such reporting could be audited. It is plausible that emissions have been substantially underestimated," she said.

"Currently, production facilities act with the assumption that emitted pollutants will be dispersed in the surrounding air to 'safe' levels – 'dilution is assumed to be the solution to pollution'.

"Since there is an unexplained rise in hospitalisations for health conditions associated with exposure to CSG emissions coincident with the expansion of the industry, it is questionable whether this management strategy is effective," she said.

Dr McCarron said air monitoring has been infrequent, ad hoc, episodic and reactive.

"Often, air monitoring did not occur until weeks after the local community reported extreme pollution events such as intense flaring. Monitoring and reporting practices for air quality appear inadequate to protect public health," she said, pointing to regulatory failure.

The full range of factors underlying the escalating hospitalisation of Darling Downs' residents for acute respiratory and circulatory conditions is unknown, but the statistics are significant.

Nannas, Lock the Gate call for action

The paper was welcomed by the Western Downs Knitting Nannas. Spokesnanna Karen Auty said, "Residents in the Chinchilla-Tara area have complained, repeatedly, to the Queensland government agencies and gas companies for years about the impacts they have experienced since the roll-out of the industry. "The response has always been woefully inadequate and totally lacking in their duty of care with regards to public health."

Ms Auty said it now appears that the government's own records vindicate the concerns of residents.

"I can only hope that our government will accept their responsibility and move quickly, and with integrity, to address these issues."

Vicki Perrin from Lock the Gate Alliance said, "This important research must prompt the QLD Government to undertake 24hr real-time air quality monitoring in and around gasfields. The people living there deserve open and transparent information.



Dr GERALYN MCCARRON

Ms Perrin said gas companies must be required to report, not just to estimate, all their harmful emissions.

"Independent oversight and resourcing is urgently needed to help protect people's health and prevent further harm.

"The level of Government ineptitude exposed here is staggering. The Queensland Environment and Heritage Protection Department didn't have the data yet ignored Queensland Health's recommendation.

Utter failure in duty of care

"The QLD Government has utterly failed in its duty of care, leaving locals to be guinea pigs in the gasfield experiment."

Dr McCarron said communities in the Darling Downs have been exposed to significant pollution associated with the rapid and extreme industrialisation by the gas industry and with toxins directly attributable to that industry, and called for an urgent investigation.

• Queensland Health and the DEHP's Department of Environment and Science declined to comment. The gas industry peak body APPEA did not respond.

Dr McCarron's paper can be found here:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00207233.2017.1413221>

International Journal of Environmental Studies

Air Pollution and human health hazards: a compilation of air toxins acknowledged by the gas industry in Queensland's Darling Downs

Geralyn McCarron

Pages 1-15 | Published online: 08 Jan 2018



Coal expansion will add to major impacts in Hunter Valley, says LTG

The NSW Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) has been called on to reject NSW Planning's recommendation to increase the size of the already massive Hunter Valley Operations South coal mine and final void.

"The proposed expansion of this mine will exacerbate the cumulative impacts of mining in the mid Hunter, which have now reached a saturation point," said Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Nic Clyde.

"The people, water sources and biodiversity in this area cannot survive any additional permanent impact or increased levels of noise and air pollution.

"This proposed expansion would leave a large void that in the Department's own words would result in water that is 'unusable'.

"The NSW government urgently needs to reform mining policy in NSW to require mining companies to backfill voids and properly rehabilitate land. This policy has existed in the United States since the 1970s.

"To add insult to injury, a year ago, it was revealed that Muswellbrook and Singleton need a 50 per cent reduction in air pollutants to meet new national standards. Adding more coal mining to this region is taking air quality in the wrong direction," said Clyde.

Below: Hunter Valley mine and power station. Photo: Beyond Coal and Gas.



Tensions rising in Nth Qld as locals say protesters will be 'clipped'

Tensions appear to be rising in North Queensland as protesters have kept up a series of actions blocking coal facilities in the region.

The *Townsville Bulletin* reported today (January 15) that a property south-west of Bowen has been bought for protesters to use as a base for their fight against Adani.

A police source told the *Townsville Bulletin* the trust which bought the land is related back to activist group Frontline Action on Coal.

Police monitoring rural property

"We're monitoring it (address) the best we can but there's no way to get a good sight on it," the source said. "It has a sign on the gate that has a number that council, government and police have to ring."

A resident, who wished to remain anonymous, said people had moved on to the property before Christmas.

The resident said no one could access the property.

"They have a big chain on the gate and a big combination lock," the resident said.

"You have to report there and if you want to go in you have to make an earlier appointment."

Yesterday the *Townsville Bulletin* spoke with two protesters near the bush camp on the Bogie River near Collinsville.

The two men rejected accusations that threats of violence were made by pro-

testers at the Abbot Point coal wharf last week.

Inspector Steve O'Connell from the Mackay Police District said he was unaware of any threats of violence being made against Adani staff or port staff at Abbot Point last. Insp O'Connell said one 71-year-old man who was arrested made threats to police officers at the site.

"As far as I know the other people (protesters) were fine," he said.

"Go home – get a job"

Townsville MP Scott Stewart said he respected people's right to protest but it had to be lawful.

Opposition spokesman for Mines and Burdekin MP Dale Last, said the protesters should "go home, finish their degrees and get a job".

The *Townsville Bulletin* ran stories last week quoting Whitsunday councillor Mike Brunner saying that protesters were going to get a "clipping", in a veiled threat.

QRC chief Ian Macfarlane urged North Queenslanders to stand up to activists. Adani told said the protesters were "foolish, negligent and violent" despite police confirming there had been no violence.

Read about it (subscriber only):

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/a-continued-bid-to-derail-adanis-165-billion-coal-mine/news-story/85fda4c-da0145ccfcf74ce9092d85be2>

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/protesters-vow-to-continue-their-campaign/news-story/5506ac-3b72e0792e221e6f4b45ac37b0>

Adani: it's not over yet – analyst

Julien Vincent, writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, said the "Carmichael coal project still makes up half the book value of the parent company, Adani Enterprises. Admitting defeat would be halving the value of the company and doubling its debt to equity ratio overnight.

"Adani will push this project until no other funding options remain. It has said it can build the rail line without the NAIF loan."

Meanwhile, Adani announced that Toowoomba company Wagners had won the tender to build Adani's private FIFO airstrip in the Galilee Basin.

Wagners were pleased with the deal but said they won't begin work until a start date is received from Adani.

A Townsville business man has lodged a complaint to the Qld Crime and Corruption commission over Townsville Council's decision to bankroll the airstrip with around \$18.5m.

Adani has been warned it should lock in refinancing its Abbott Point coal terminal soon to safeguard credit ratings on its debt. The company needs about \$326m.

Adani is expected to be able to refinance but failure to do so would be a near-term risk for the terminal.

The news this week

The *Newcastle Herald* said the **Wilpinjong coal mine** has used an exemption under the new regulations to avoid assessment for a massive extension. The extension will leave an unremediated "hyper-saline" lake with a surface area of more than 520 hectares that will take 300 years to reach equilibrium.

A 79-year old Miles landowner says his retirement has been ruined by **Arrow Energy**. Mr Rees can't sell his property to fund a retirement home because it is in a gasfield. Wells are not due to be drilled for some years, so no compensation is yet payable. Mr Rees and his wife say they have been trapped in their situation for 12 years with no end in sight.

The **Minerals Council of Australia** has had a busy week. The MCA continues to push for a **HELE coal power station**, claiming that a survey shows 68% of Australians support it.

The MCA has commissioned a report that claims miners pay their fair share of **taxes** by combining both tax and royalty figures. Critics say a **royalty** is not a tax, but a payment to Australians for the use of their resources.

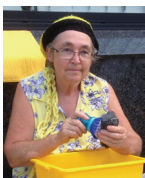
MCA is also launching an '**education campaign**' targeting urban dwellers who they believe are driving a push-back against mining developments.

And, still busy, the MCA has given the government a **pre-budget wish list** that includes nuclear power stations, tax cuts and easier approvals.

Some of the MCA's ambitions might well stay in the world of dreams.

Cole Latimer wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, "The man who once famously called for 50 nuclear reactors across Australia, Ziggy Switkowski, says 'the window for gigawatt-scale nuclear has closed'."

David Uren wrote in *The Australian* that the MCA "might as well bay at the moon as call for the construction of a high-efficiency, low-emissions coal-fired power station in Australia. It is not going to happen short of the provision of a government guaranteed contract, and there is no political consensus for that."

**NANNA FELICITY'S
GAS
REPORT**


I'm writing from my brother's place at Booleroo Centre, in South Australia. We've made our way across a third of Australia, through hoards of wild goats, some kangaroos and a few emus: the goats just stand with their back to the highway, ignoring traffic. The kangaroos stand at the roadside and start crossing as you get near them.

One pair of emus that were obviously going to cross the road waited until we pulled up – as if there was a pedestrian crossing they were waiting to use, then they just sauntered across.

It was sad to see so many feral goats in country where feed is so scarce, and the trees all had that cut-off level at the bottom, at goat height. There was a fair bit of road-kill – 95% kangaroos – BIG ones!

Diversity of this country

So why am I writing this in the Gas Report? It just brought to mind the diversity of this country – through the monotony of travelling endless miles, every 50 kms or so the country changed.

Different types of timber: short, tall, none at all. Mostly red soil, sometimes bare, the purple and ochre-red hills in the distance, soon passed.

There is a LOT of country, but we need to protect it – to not turn it into a slag heap like those visible in the mining towns along the way such as Broken Hill. We need not to poison the precious water with produced water from gas wells: water that is so important to many farming industries.

Some of those we passed were obviously using artesian water to irrigate. Poison the Great Artesian Basin, and these industries will die. Allow Santos to go ahead with plans to put 850 gas wells in the Pilliga Forest, and there will be massive loss.

So, Nanna is taking a well-earned couple of days off, but it's a working holiday, as usual. Whilst visiting relatives who conveniently group themselves together in handy locations, I will also be 'knitting' with the brave lone Adelaide Nanna (Nanna Pinkie) outside the Santos office in Adelaide, then dropping in on one of the Limestone Coast Nannas at Southport in the

Road trip shows country needs protection: no more slag heaps

Santos must not be allowed to produce CSG-toxic water in the Pilliga



Bill Ryan cuts the cake at the 100th-week knit-in in Sydney. Photo Colin Ryan

South east.

So – back to the month's happenings. Early in the month about 60 Knitting Nannas from around NSW joined the Sydney Nannas for their 100th Knit-in at Martin Place in Sydney, with others making up a crowd of around 100 people.

We had a few speakers, a well-known one being Alan Jones. He comes from the Acland area in Queensland, and knows the devastation that coal mining can bring to a community. Others spoke, and we were entertained by a wonderful band.

Bill, the Aged WW 2 Veteran who 'locks on' to protest against mining, was there, with son Colin. Liverpool Plains farmers were also represented, and people from the Pilliga who want to protect that area.

The Adani front

There have been a few wins on the Adani front. In a bid to be re-elected, Annastacia (Qld Premier) made a few promises that she thought would encourage votes for her party. Whilst not going so far as to say the attempted mine would be cast out altogether, she has made it clear that Queensland will not be party to the billion dollar loan our dear Prime Minister has promised.

In the meanwhile, the main construction company, Downer, has pulled out, after many lock-ons at their gates all around Australia.

The coal from the Carmichael mine was to be carted off though the Great Barrier Reef to India, but India doesn't want it. Many parts of India that relied on coal-fired power are now producing

cheaper solar and wind energy, and have woken up to the illnesses caused by close proximity to coal fired power stations.

But for all that, our criminal Federal Government is still pushing the myth of 'Clean Coal', and how we NEED to open more coal mines and sell off our country to China and India.

They want to continue to sell cheap natural gas overseas at no profit to Australia, and put in new wells to mine expensive gas for domestic use, at the higher cost to our domestic consumers (you) and our farmlands and unique natural forests.

So – what to do in the New Year? If everyone gets out there, and says to the government: "We don't want our Great Artesian basin poisoned. We don't want our wonderful forests, full of unique flora and fauna (our koalas and pygmy possums, Pilliga mice ...) wiped out", they will have to take notice.

**No new mines!
Renewable energy!
Care for the people, not
the rich mining barons!
Protect the Pilliga.**

Wake up Australians! Your country needs you!!! If you want your children to see trees in countryside, not mines; if you want your children to have a chance to see koalas in the wild; if you want clean air and water for your children and grandchildren, now is the time to stand up, before it's too late!

– Felicity Cahill

Reprinted from *Drake Village Voice*

In the news this week:

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 19,373 words of news for your convenience. Click on the [links](#) to view the full articles. (\$) = subscription may be required

THE ADANI SAGA

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/adani-cops-the-brunt-of-anti-coal-activists-while-other-companies-go-about-their-business/news-story/3b5b-faa4f09c7c536f7c8b871f99d894>

Adani cops the brunt of anti-coal activists while other companies go about their business

Sam Bidey, Townsville Bulletin, 08/01/2018

Cr Mike Brunner, a former coal miner and union representative, said many mining companies had been happy to lie low and go about their business while Indian miner Adani bore the brunt of environmental activists' global campaign against coal mining...

Police have confirmed a Public Safety Response team may again be deployed in Bowen should activists execute new plans for more protests.

A Townsville-based team has been budgeted but for now officers are sent from Brisbane for specialist crowd management and protest activity. \$

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/matter-of-time-before-protester-biffs/news-story/67ec507f83b1493832dbd69d89eaa4b1>

"Matter of time" before protester biffs

Domani Cameron, Townsville Bulletin, 09/01/2018

As anti-coal activists prepare to travel north to begin protest action against Adani from this weekend, Whitsunday councillor Mike Brunner said he expected locals and contractors would not stand for interruptions.

"It's quite possible that a few of them (protesters) are going to get a clipping," he said. "If you've got people from all over Australia working (in Bowen) then I seriously think someone may get a clipping."

Burdekin MP Dale Last and Queensland Resources Council chief executive officer Ian Macfarlane have called for North Queenslanders to stand up against the protesters. \$

<https://www.echo.net.au/2018/01/coal-protesters-block-rail-line-near-bowen/>

Coal protesters block rail line near Bowen

Echonet Daily, 09/01/2018

Two protesters from Front Line Action on Coal are currently blocking Aurizon's coal railway near Bowen, calling



Youth worker Natan Schlomo and physics student Lilli Barto obstructing Aurizon's coal railway near Bowen, Qld. Photo: Frontline Action on Coal

on the Queensland Government to rule out funding for Aurizon.

They have prevented any coal trains getting to Adani's Abbot Point coal terminal by locking their arms inside a steel barrel filled with concrete on the train tracks since 7:15am today.

<http://www.afr.com/business/mining/coal/adani-warned-to-refinance-its-australian-port-or-face-rating-cut-20180109-h0fj7>

Adani warned to refinance its Australian port or face rating cut

Ruth Carson & Perry Williams, Australian Financial Review, 09/01/2018

An Australian deep water port linked to one of the world's biggest planned coal mines should lock in refinancing within six months of a loan maturing in November to safeguard credit ratings on its debt, according to S&P Global Ratings.

Adani Abbot Point Terminal Pty in Queensland, controlled by Indian billionaire Gautam Adani, has to refinance about \$326 million of the loan due in November, S&P said. The credit assessor currently has a BBB- credit score and stable outlook on the port's rated debt securities.

Moody's Investors Service expects Adani to be able to refinance the loan but says that failure to do so would be a near-term risk for the terminal.

Adani's management could also choose to deploy cash the port holds to slash its debt.

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/editorial-stop-adani-part-of-global-coal-fight-and-nq-jobs-are-at-stake/news-story/5da222a63727b61a5d8fbc-c799130cfb>

Editorial: Stop Adani part of global coal fight and NQ jobs are at stake

Townsville Bulletin, 08/01/2018

It is a fight against coal and Adani is the campaign's global target.

The basis of the argument is not just that Adani should quit its mega Carmichael mine in the Galilee basin.

It's that the world should stop extracting and using coal. Full stop.

It is a global ideological war being fought in the North and our region's prosperity is at stake. \$

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/mining-and-resources/adanis-mega-mine-its-not-over-yet-20180109-h0fh1q.html>

Adani's mega mine: it's not over yet

Julien Vincent, Sydney Morning Herald, 10/01/2018

So is that it then? Is it over? Don't count on it...

Remember: the Carmichael coal project still makes up half the book value of the parent company, Adani Enterprises. Admitting defeat would

be halving the value of the company and doubling its debt to equity ratio overnight.

Adani will push this project until no other funding options remain. It has said it can build the rail line without the NAIF loan.

After all, here we are at the start of 2018 still talking about the prospect of allowing the largest thermal coal mine in Australia to proceed, heavily subsidised by the taxpayer, opposed by over 70 per cent of people who know about the project, in a context of the thermal coal trade in structural decline and in the middle of a climate crisis.

[http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-10/adani-\\$18m-private-airstrip-asked-to-be-investigated-ccc/9318742](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-10/adani-$18m-private-airstrip-asked-to-be-investigated-ccc/9318742)

Adani mine: Department asked to investigate council's \$18m for private FIFO airstrip

Rhea Abraham, ABC, 10/01/2018

The Local Government Department has been asked to investigate a north Queensland council's decision to fund \$18 million for a private airstrip in the Galilee Basin for fly-in, fly-out workers at Adani's proposed Carmichael coal mine.

The Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) has made the request in response to a complaint from Townsville businessman Philip Batty about the council's plans.

In his complaint to the CCC, Mr Batty alleged Toowoomba-based construction company Wagners was awarded the tender to develop the airstrip without due process by council.

But Wagners co-founder John Wagner said the company had won the tender directly from Adani, not the two councils involved with the project.

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/adani-protesters-block-aurizon-train-access-to-adanis-abbot-point-coal-terminal/news-story/0d0c34e5e31da59c0f8260a3d8359c23>

Adani protesters block Aurizon train access to Adani's Abbot Point coal terminal

Andrew Backhouse, Townsville Bulletin, 09/01/2018

A spokesman for Front Line Action on Coal said it was taking the action because the Queensland Labor government was considering rail operator Aurizon's bid for a Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility loan.

Whitsunday councillor Mike Bruncker yesterday warned Adani activists it was only a matter of time before contractors and locals confront protesters in Bowen.

"It's quite possible that a few of them (protesters) are going to get a clipping," he said. "If you've got people from all over Australia working (in Bowen) then I seriously think someone may get a clipping." \$

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/arrogant-activists-block-railway-line/news-story/db9b2ecbb32f1fdcab87411776e2f871>

'Arrogant' activists block railway line

Domani Cameron, Townsville Bulletin, 12/01/2018

Police had to use a jackhammer to break up a cement-filled drum coal activists attached themselves to on a rail line at Bowen on Tuesday.

Frontline Action on Coal activists, whom the organisation named as Natan Shlomo, 24, and Lilli Barto, 24, both from NSW, were charged with trespass, interference with a rail structure and obstructing police. They will also be charged with placing an object in the path of a train.

Police have now arrested 45 activists since protests in Bowen in September, when more than 100 people gathered. Of those 45, Insp O'Connell said about 75 per cent were from the southeast corner and interstate with two-thirds had yet to have their court dates.

There have also been 138 move-on directions and 23 infringement notices issued. \$

<https://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/wagners-wins-contract-adani-airport-construction/3308837/>

Wagners picked to build Adani airstrip at megamine

Tom Gillespie, Toowoomba Chronicle, 12/01/2018

Toowoomba construction materials company Wagners will build a major airstrip near the proposed Adani coal mine to transport fly-in, fly-out workers.

CEO Cameron Coleman confirmed the business was the winner of the tender for the private airstrip in the Galilee Basin.

But Mr Coleman said the contract wasn't in effect until Wagners received a start date from Adani.

<https://www.dailymercury.com.au/news/adani-protesters-locked-to-coal-loader-hanging-fro/3308861/>

Adani protesters locked to coal loader, hanging from a tree

Campbell Gellie, The Daily Mercury, 12/01/2018

Anti-Adani protesters are plaguing the operations at Abbot Point Coal terminal and Aurizon's coal railway

with two people locking themselves to equipment and hanging from trees.

On Thursday night four protesters locked themselves to coal loading equipment at the coal terminal just outside of Bowen.

<http://www.smh.com.au/queensland/adani-fires-back-at-foolish-violent-protesters-after-abbot-point-coal-terminal-shut-down-20180112-p4yyg4.html>

Adani fires back at 'foolish, violent' protesters after Abbot Point coal terminal shut down

Toby Crockford, Sydney Morning Herald, 12/01/2018

Adani has hit back at protesters who locked onto a live conveyor belt at the Abbot Point coal terminal in north Queensland, describing their actions as "foolish, negligent and violent".

Management of the terminal also said the activists were "extremely fortunate to not have been seriously injured or killed" and only survived because staff spotted them during an inspection.

"Activists entered an area where a conveyor belt operates remotely without workers being nearby," the activist group said in a statement.

"The machine was stopped using standard industrial safety procedures. Afterwards, workers entered the area to look at the stopped machine, as they would do on any given day.

All five protesters were charged with interfering with operations of a port, high-risk activity, trespass, disobeying direction and obstructing police. They were all due to appear at the Bowen Magistrates Court on February 13.

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/council-slams-airstrip-complaints/news-story/3bcff439041066351345690cb55256cb>

Council slams airstrip complaints

Domani Cameron, Townsville Bulletin, 13/01/2018

Townsville City Council has slammed complaints made against their investment in the Galilee Basin's airstrip as being politically driven and inaccurate.

The council's decision to spend up to \$18.5 million on the airstrip has come under fire with local businessman Philip Batty complaining to the Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland.

However a council spokesman dismissed Mr Batty's claims the airstrip's contract with Wagners did not follow a procurement process and said it was a contractual matter between the company and Adani.

Mr Batty said his complaints were not politically driven.

“Jenny (Hill) has been quoted as saying, ‘we will own the airport,’” he said. “If that deal (is) we will get \$90 million spending \$18.5 million I’ll support it until the cows come home but we need to know that that’s the case.” \$

COAL ROCKS

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/gvk-hancock-in-protesters-sights-after-renewed-interest-in-alpha-and-kevin-corner-mines/news-story/77d74905a7bffb5ac245a3164aedb62>

GVK Hancock in protesters’ sights after renewed interest in Alpha and Kevin’s Corner mines

Exclusive, The Courier-Mail, 07/01/2018

Queensland Greens Senator Andrew Bartlett yesterday put GVK Hancock and the State Government on notice that they were in protesters’ sights.

“Gina Rinehart and Queensland Labor should prepare for their offices to be blockaded and flooded with calls of protest, and get ready to cop wide-spread public criticism if they continue to push their coal barrow,” he warned.

But the Queensland Resources Council and Federal Minister for Resources and Northern Australia Matt Canavan slammed the protesters’ tactics and Senator Bartlett’s “irresponsible” comments.

“It’s a sad day when the first action of a newly appointed Senator is (to) deny hardworking Queensland men and women the opportunity of highly paid jobs,” QRC chief executive Ian Macfarlane said.

“More alarming, though, is the suggestion by the Greens Senator that activists break the law and blockade offices. This is disgraceful behaviour.”

Rockhampton-based Senator Canavan said it was important to stand up to the “bullying and threatening behaviour” of activists.

“It is clearly irresponsible for an elected member of Parliament to be advocating the kind of conduct that leads to people breaking the law.” \$

<http://www.theherald.com.au/story/5156455/open-cut-coals-legacy-of-hypersaline-lakes/>

The Herald’s Opinion: Questions over the leaving of ‘final voids’ in Hunter open-cut coal mines

Newcastle Herald, 09/01/2018

Should a 25 per cent increase in a mine’s production be classed as “a relatively minor expansion”?

Well, it is as far as the NSW Department of Planning and Environment is concerned, in a report recommend-

ing Coal & Allied be able to lift production at its Hunter Valley Operations South mine from 16 million tonnes to 20 million tonnes a year.

More controversially, however, Coal & Allied has proposed a series of changes to the final void it intends to leave behind when mining is finished: – a “hypersaline” (the department’s description) lake with a surface area of more than 520 hectares that will take 300 years to reach equilibrium.

With its social licence under increasing threat, the coal industry should take every opportunity it can to minimise its environmental footprint, and not only in terms of carbon emissions. These saline lakes are a legacy the region does not deserve.

<http://www.theherald.com.au/story/5158511/environmental-groups-call-for-us-style-regulation-for-australian-mining/?cs=305>

Coal mining peak body defends use of final voids amid calls for US-style regulation in Australia

Ian Kirkwood, Newcastle Herald, 10/01/2018

The coal industry’s peak body has defended the continued use of final voids in NSW coal mining, playing down a push to have US-type rehabilitation laws replicated here.

NSW Minerals Council chief executive Stephen Galilee said the US requirement cited by Lock The Gate related to different mining conditions, including shallower reserves, and the comparison was not valid.

Lock The Gate’s rehabilitation specialist, former Rio Tinto global adviser Rick Humphries, said that allowing mining companies to leave saline or hypersaline final voids meant the legacy impacts were borne by the public, rather than the mining companies and their shareholders.

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/a-future-without-coal-fired-power-stations-is-inevitable-20180110-h0g47v.html>

A future without coal-fired power stations is inevitable

Peter Martin, Sydney Morning Herald, 10/01/2018

Age, heat and the steady encroachment of renewables are destroying the only advantages coal-fired power stations ever had.

When Treasurer Scott Morrison stood up in Federal Parliament and waved around a lump of coal in a stunt unworthy of his office, he said coal was an important part of ensuring a “more certain” energy future.

But he was speaking about the past.

Coal-fired power stations didn’t used to get critically hot as often as they do now. The February 2017 heatwave that took out 2438 megawatts in one day in NSW might have once been a once-in-500-year event. Now it’s a once-in-50-year event and perhaps soon a once-in-five-year event. ...

When temperatures in control rooms get as high as 50 or 60 degrees the electronic control systems buckle and the boilers leak. Failures are inevitable, although unfortunately not predictable.

<http://www.theherald.com.au/story/5160550/power-station-coal-supplier-at-centre-of-new-row-over-mine-transparency/>

Wilpinjong coal mine has sidestepped a ‘rigorous’ new framework for coal exploration leases

Joanne McCarthy, Newcastle Herald, 11/01/2018

The NSW Government’s response to corrupted coal exploration licence scandals has failed on one of its first tests after an Upper Hunter mine used an exemption and sidestepped a new assessment process, critics say.

Peabody Energy’s Wilpinjong coal mine between Denman and Mudgee has used an exemption under the new resource exploration framework to apply for an exploration licence over more than 1600 hectares of land east of Wollar village, based on the new lease area being an extension of the existing Wilpinjong mine.

The exemption allows Wilpinjong to avoid assessment by a new advisory body established after Independent Commission Against Corruption hearings into corrupted Upper Hunter coal mine exploration lease processes at Doyles Creek and Mount Penny.

But Wollar Progress Association president and environmental activist Bev Smiles said the application exposed a gaping loophole in the new framework which would have its greatest impact on the Hunter because of the concentration of existing mines.

Wollar Progress Association, which launched the case, is arguing the most recent mine extension approval is invalid. Wilpinjong mine was first approved in 2006 and has been the subject of repeated, controversial modifications. It produces 14 million tonnes of coal per year and is one of the highest annual coal producers in the state.

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/worse-than-liddell-another-coalfired-power-plant-develops-conniptions-20180110-h0g9y4.html>

'Worse than Liddell': Another coal-fired power plant develops conniptions

Peter Hannam, Sydney Morning Herald, 11/01/2018

One of the nation's largest coal-fired power stations has had six failures of one of its units in the past three weeks, placing added strain on the power grid and prompting a call for fossil fuel plants to be set the same reliability standards being considered for renewable energy suppliers.

Loy Yang A station, owned by AGL, had its latest "trips" late on Tuesday evening and then two hours later at 1.10am on Wednesday, instantly shedding 230 megawatts and 161 megawatts of output respectively.

Added to the concerns about Loy Yang A was a fire that broke out not far from the plant on January 6 during a heatwave.

<https://www.themorningbulletin.com.au/news/dirty-tag-plaguing-industry-employing-thousands-in-3308707/>

'Dirty' tag plaguing industry employing thousands in CQ

Campbell Gellie, Morning Bulletin, 12/01/2018

Mining is not a dirty word, the Minerals Council of Australia maintains, but the industry continues to feel the pinch as young people turn up their noses at big pay packets and choose careers in greener fields.

University enrolments in mining-related courses have been on the decline in Australia since 2014 and despite an increase in commodity prices over the past two years it is showing no signs of slowing down. [Tertiary Education Council's executive director Gavin Lind said] "It is not all about working underground or with big machinery, it is an industry that is embarking on very interesting automation, data science and robotics."

Mackay Conservation Group co-ordinator Peter McCallum said the industry had itself to blame focussing on profits over its responsibility to the environment.



'Locked in' for years

Miles landholder 'locked in' to land for years.

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<https://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/two-train-shutdown-scheduled-at-curtis-island-lng-/3306749/>

Two-train shutdown scheduled at Curtis Island LNG plant

Tegan Annette, Gladstone Observer, 10/01/2018

The Australia Pacific Liquefied Natural Gas plant said in a notice to the Australian Energy Market Operator it would close one train on March 8 - 23 and the other on April 14 - 29 [for routine maintenance work].

<https://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/jobs-toowoomba-csg-company-has-50-spots-going-2018/3306549/>

Toowoomba company needs to fill 50 jobs in 2018

Tom Gillespie, Toowoomba Chronicle, 09/01/2018

Toowoomba oil and gas company Easternwell needs to increase its workforce by more than 50 employees to keep up with demand for services in the coal seam gas sector.

<https://www.dalbyherald.com.au/news/locked-in-for-years/3307434/>

'Locked in' for years

Brooke Duncan, Dalby Herald, 11/01/2018

For 79-year-old Ben Rees, an economist and Miles landowner, the legal process that could lead to gas works by Arrow Energy on his property started 12 years ago.

Mr Rees said there was no way to know how long the approval process would take, and it had left him and other landholders with an uncertain future for years.

"All old people like me and my wife, we've been deprived of our respectable retirement years because... once they take a lease of the resource development over this country no one would buy it, so you're locked in," Mr Rees said.

"Who wants to come out and buy a property in a gas field? That's what it amounts to. People like us can't move on."

<https://www.perthnow.com.au/news/traffic/fire-after-lng-tanker-crash-in-pilbara-ng-b88709022z>

Fire after LNG tanker crash in Pilbara

AAP, PerthNow, 09/01/2018

The crash [between two trucks] happened 20km south of Nanutarra on the North West Coastal Highway on Monday just before 8.30pm and resulted in a rupture of the LNG tanker, which has caused it to discharge gas.

One of the trailers from the tanker truck detached and caught on fire, while the other trailer remains attached and was venting gas, which had initially made it too dangerous to approach.

The tanker truck was believed to have been carrying approximately 31 tonnes of gas.

<https://www.ruralweekly.com.au/news/liverpool-plains-farmers-oppose-csg-pipeline/3305866/?ref%3Dhs=hootsuite>

Northwest Plains farmers oppose CSG pipeline

Candyce Braithwaite, Rural Weekly, 08/01/2018

Fourth-generation farmer Simon Fagan has been fighting to stop the development of the coal seam gas industry in the Northwest Plains area for six years.

Mr Fagan's property sits on the proposed route [APA pipeline route].

"The pipeline is one part of it we are concerned about," Mr Fagan said.

"At the forefront of our concerns is the establishment of coal seam gas in New South Wales, which we are strongly against.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/comment-and-analysis/cooking-the-books-on-climate-change-policy-20171229-h0ba0h.html>

Cooking the books on climate change policy

Eryk Bagshaw, Sydney Morning Herald, 08/01/2018

Two reports released on the same day, from the same government department with two very different sets of findings.

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The Turnbull government's climate change policy review would have you believe we are well on our way to reaching our international commitment of a 26-28 per cent reduction by 2030.

Only problem is we are not.

Omitted from the final public presentation are spreadsheets the department quietly released on a separate database a week before Christmas that shows Australia will be at least 140 million tonnes above its target by 2030 at the current rate of growth.

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/2018-the-end-of-the-resources-boom-as-falling-commodity-prices-bite-20180107-p4yyaa.html>

2018 'the end' of resources boom as commodity price drops bite

Jennifer Duke, Sydney Morning Herald, 08/01/2018

The government has forecast the end of the mining boom, with 2018 marking the tipping point for when producers will see export earnings heading south.

In fiscal 2017, the resources and energy sector is tipped to see record high exports earnings. But this is expected to be short-lived.

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/business/australians-support-hitech-coalfired-power-stations-to-deliver-reliable-energy/news-story/6af12d9eb9a127eba7af4f8916c0e860>

Australians support hi-tech coal-fired power stations to deliver reliable energy

John McCarthy, The Courier-Mail, 07/01/2018

The Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) survey of 1300 people showed 68 per cent of Australians supported new-generation coal power through high efficiency, low emissions (HELE) coal-fired generation.

Wood Mackenzie's Shirley Zhang said, "Coal power could be reduced to a marginal fuel when commercial energy storage takes over its role as a more economic peak-shaving service provider. But this could take decades." \$

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/mining-and-resources/miners-pay-their-fair-share-of-tax-if-you-count-royalties-report-20180108-h0f0qh.html>

Miners pay their 'fair share' of tax if you count royalties: report

Nassim Khadem, Sydney Morning Herald, 09/01/2018

The Australian mining industry paid \$185 billion in federal company tax and state and territory royalties between 2005-06 and 2015-16, according to a report produced by Deloitte Access Economics for the mining

lobby.

The report was prepared for the Minerals Council of Australia.

But Deloitte Access Economics' Minerals Industry Tax Survey 2017 does not address the fact that some miners' profits are not taxed in Australia because they channel millions through marketing hubs in Singapore.

The report says while some commentators have argued that royalties are not a tax, and therefore should not be included in ratios aimed at assessing the tax liabilities of the minerals sector, "to argue that royalties are not a tax is also to argue that the PRRT, MRRT, or the originally proposed RSPT, are not taxes either – despite all of them having 'tax' in their names".

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jan/11/minerals-council-of-australia-kicks-off-coal-power-campaign-despite-bhp-threat>

Minerals Council of Australia kicks off coal power campaign despite BHP threat

Amy Remeikis, The Guardian, 11/01/2018

The Minerals Council of Australia will continue hawking the benefits of coal-fired technologies, despite resources giant BHP threatening to pull out of the organisation over previous campaigns.

The lobby group says it is hoping to counteract "misinformation from urban activists".

A spokesman for the council said it was moving ahead with its campaign to "show what mining means to Australians and the benefits of an innovative, responsible, successful and sustainable mining industry to our nation", despite BHP's concerns.

MCA said its campaigns aimed to educate the public on the importance of the industry, singling out urban dwellers.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/opinion/david-uren-economics/coal-still-underwrites-development-of-our-planet/news-story/162037ead8cfc07cf1326b70d984610>

Coal still underwrites development of our planet

David Uren, The Australian, 11/01/2018

Donald Trump is considered a hero by those who believe the coal industry would have a brilliant future if only the obstruction of climate-change zealots could be overcome...

The IEA laments the failure of carbon capture and storage technology to achieve the kind of commercial advance over the past decade that has been won by fracking, solar panels and

electric vehicles. Carbon capture is the only technology that resolves coal's disadvantage with emissions...

The Minerals Council of Australia might as well bay at the moon as call for the construction of a high-efficiency, low-emissions coal-fired power station in Australia. It is not going to happen short of the provision of a government guaranteed contract, and there is no political consensus for that. Even in the US, President Trump has found this impossible to deliver. \$

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/minerals-council-of-australia-focus-on-power-cost-not-climate/news-story/15be0e5cc6f7d5dce84519c5a0d6d4d>

Minerals Council of Australia: Focus on energy cost, not climate

Matt Chambers, The Australian, 11/01/2018

The Minerals Council of Australia has called on Malcolm Turnbull to prioritise electricity cost and reliability over emissions reduction, in a submission to the federal government that underlines differences between its position on climate change and that of its biggest member, BHP Billiton.

In the submission, the MCA stepped up its calls to end a ban on nuclear power in Australia to further debate, which is in line with BHP's policy of promoting the use of nuclear fuel, renewables and batteries.

And, still on energy policy, it repeated calls for latest generation so-called high-energy, low emissions coal plants and those with carbon capture and storage options to be eligible for investment by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

Outside of energy policy, the MCA has called for urgent reform of industrial relations, corporate tax and streamlining of state environmental approvals processes. \$

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/miners-dig-in-to-overturn-nuclear-power-ban/news-story/104e9dd6376e3d3ff6c98e014d6e1b35>

Miners dig in to overturn nuclear power ban

Renee Viellaris, The Courier-Mail, 11/01/2018

The Minerals Council of Australia, which represents some of the country's most influential miners, will today reinvigorate the debate for nuclear power, plus pressure the Government to invest in new generation coal-fired power stations.

The MCA believes the ban can be reversed with a single amendment to the Environment Protection and Biodiver-

sity Conservation Act 1999 by removing words — “a nuclear power plant”.

The MCA also urges the Government to overhaul GST payments to states by rewarding those, such as Queensland and Western Australia, which dig up and sell their resources. Despite moratoriums and bans on exploration in Victoria, that state is a major beneficiary of cash from states that invest in the sector. \$

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/climate-change-josh-frydenberg-concedes-australias-carbon-emissions-rose-in-2017-20180111-h0gmtp.html>

Climate change: Josh Frydenberg concedes Australia's carbon emissions rose in 2017

Nicole Hasham, Sydney Morning Herald, 11/01/2018

Environment and Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg concedes Australia's greenhouse gas emissions rose last financial year, after more than a decade of political warring over climate policy failed to curb dangerous emissions growth.

Data released last month shows Australia's annual emissions rose by 0.7 per cent in the year to June 2017, to 550 million tonnes of carbon dioxide./ Speaking on ABC Radio on Thursday, Mr Frydenberg was repeatedly pressed to admit Australia's emissions rose last year, and eventually conceded “that is true”.

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/australia-has-missed-the-boat-on-nuclear-power-20180111-p4yyeg.html>

Australia has 'missed the boat' on nuclear power

Cole Latimer, Sydney Morning Herald, 11/01/2018

The Minerals Council of Australia has called for the country's prohibition on nuclear power to be lifted. But both critics and supporters see little future for large-scale nuclear power in Australia's energy mix.

The man who once famously called for 50 nuclear reactors across Australia, nuclear physicist and NBN chairman Ziggy Switkowski, says “the window for gigawatt-scale nuclear has closed”.

Warwick Grigor, the former chairman of Uranium King, mining analyst, and a director of uranium miner Peninsula Energy, agrees.

“I think nuclear energy is great, but we've missed the boat in Australia, no one is going down that path in the foreseeable future,” Mr Grigor told Fairfax Media.

Australian Conservation Foundation nuclear free campaigner Dave Sweeney said talk of nuclear power was “a dangerous distraction” from the steps that needed to address the energy and climate challenges facing Australia.

An ANSTO spokesman said the country currently did not have enough skilled personnel to safely operate a nuclear energy industry.

<https://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/greens-defend-plan-to-block-cq-coal-mines-despite-/3308001/>

Greens defend plan to block CQ coal mines despite criticism

Leighton Smith, Gladstone Observer, 11/01/2018

Local LNP politicians Capricornia MP Michelle Landry and Senator Matt Canavan, former Labor MP for Mirani Jim Pearce were joined by One Nation leader Pauline Hanson and Queensland Resources Council Chief Executive Ian Macfarlane in sternly rebuking [Greens Senator Andrew] Bartlett's and the conservation movement's anti-coal agenda yesterday.

Senator Bartlett responded: “Even the banking and finance sector knows that new coal projects cannot be profitable without special favours from government and cannibalising jobs and profits from existing projects elsewhere.”

“The coal mining sector is wilfully making climate change worse and its short term boom and an inevitable bust cycle is harming our communities in Central Queensland who deserve better from our Government. They need reliable, long term jobs and politicians who put their needs before the interests of big business.”

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GasCo sponsorship: is taking money from Santos a sellout?

Nanna Louise Somerville posted to Santos Tour Down Under on Facebook: they had this exchange:

“Hi Louise, Just a quick message regarding your post on our wall. We respect your right to voice your opinion. Santos is a valued partner of the Tour Down Under – not only with their sponsorship investment but their engagement and commitment to our community programs. Thanks, Santos TDU Digital Team.”

Thank you Santos Tour Down Under for your private reply to my message. I totally support the bicycle race and the healthy lifestyle your annual event promotes in our community.

Soft bribery, dirty money

Unfortunately the sponsorship money you are accepting from Santos is dirty money. This method of societal “soft bribery” is used by many of these unconventional gas companies to win over people in community groups that are needy of sponsorship.

Santos gives vast amounts of money

to sporting teams, sporting events and other community-minded programs thereby infiltrating a known need by these organisations. Once you begin receiving their money you feel indebted to them and after some time rely on that continued support.

Poisoning land and water

Organisations want Santos' money but are sadly unaware of the damage these companies are doing to rural communities where families, farmers and your wilderness areas are subjected to poisoning of land and depletion and poisoning of water sources e.g. bores, aquifers and our precious Great Artesian Basin.

To extract gas Santos must de-pressure and de-water aquifers which lowers the water table and renders it too low for vegetation to reach or farmers to reach with their bores for watering crops and livestock.

The unlisted thousands of litres of chemicals poured down each well forever contaminates these water sources that we need to grow food to feed future bicycle riders and athletes.

Money made on the back of destruction

It is entirely unethical to accept money made on the backs of swathes of forest and fauna being destroyed by this industry. The toxicity left behind in bore water makes it worthless and the legacy left behind is just not worth the process of gas extraction.

I hope you look into what Santos actually do other than tap and sell unconventional gas. Our Australian children deserve a better future. Please explore what QGC, Origin and others have done in the Tara gasfields near Chinchilla, Queensland.

Best wishes to Guy Sebastian who is a fantastic performer, the bicycle riders and to all involved in your event.