



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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FFB 3:3 • 10 DECEMBER 2019

NSW government agencies ignore Chief Scientist's gasfield recommendations

A damning public hearing held last week by the NSW Legislative Council inquiry into the implementation of the Chief Scientist's recommendations on coal seam gas has revealed the state is unaware and unprepared for the damage of coal seam gas production.

Described as a "train wreck", the inquiry heard from senior representatives of government agencies, including the EPA and the Industry Division of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

Department representatives were unable to answer a series of questions from the NSW Opposition and Independent MLC Justin Field about the implementation of recommendations the Chief Scientist said were necessary to manage the environmental risks of the industry five years ago.

Field told the *Northern Daily Leader*, "I would say from the evidence we heard, that the government has not fully implemented the recommendations.

"Many of them haven't implemented fully and others they have walked away from entirely.

"In her report, the Chief Scientist said the recommendations were required before the industry could process safely.

"They've failed to deliver and now there are big questions around whether the regulation framework for coal seam gas is sufficient."

Field said the government had walked away from four of the recommen-



*A gas flare in the Pilliga.
Photo: Muzz Dreschler*

dations, including the suggestion to establish a standing expert advisory body on coal seam gas.

"They've walked away from what I see as a key recommendations, with no explanation," Field said.

Five years on, govt drops the ball

Lock the Gate Alliance NSW Coordinator Georgina Woods said, "Five years on, the NSW Government has completely dropped the ball on implementing their promised world-class regime

for coal seam gas, putting farmers and water at risk.

"The NSW Government is leaving farming communities in the North West of the state exposed to unforeseen and irreversible loss or contamination of water resources and other environmental and health impacts from the CSG industry.

"The agencies that appeared today were unable to answer basic questions about the way coal seam gas is managed in New South Wales. It was very clear that major recommendations made by the Chief Scientist have not been implemented.

"The biggest gaps include failure to provide a three-tiered environmental insurance scheme, failure to establish a standing expert committee, and failure to develop systems that can detect cumulative impacts of the industry on precious water resources.

"There are 12 legacy coal seam gas licences languishing over the farmland, towns, and precious water resources of the drought-stricken North West that have never been through the Government's new system for assessing areas for gas exploration.

"The hearing demonstrates that New South Wales is unprepared for the damage of coal seam gas five years after the people of the state were promised that damage could be managed. No one even knows what has become of those promises.

"There is still time to stop the Narrabri gas project."

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• P2: Business Chamber falls for old gas trick

• P3: Women honoured for protecting country

P4: Palmer's mine an environmental crime

Business chamber falls for “oldest trick in gas industries’ playbook”

A new report commissioned by the NSW Business Chamber arguing strongly in favour of new LNG import terminals wrongly suggests Australia will be experiencing gas shortages by 2025.

Written by consulting group Energy-Quest, the report ‘Running on Empty’ suggests NSW needs to develop the high cost Narrabri Gas Project and LNG import terminals to avoid future gas shortages.

The NSW Business Chamber has backed up the report with a press release claiming gas shortages are coming, and calling on the NSW government to: ‘rapidly approve the Narrabri Gas Project, subject to Planning Commission endorsement; support the proposed LNG import terminals at Port Kembla and Newcastle; and begin a program of upgrades to ageing gas pipeline infrastructure across the state.’

Bruce Robertson, gas analyst with IEEFA, says this is not the first time NSW consumers have been threatened with shortages.

A tactic for unpopular projects

“The gas industry has consistently argued there will be gas shortages as a tactic to gain approval for unpopular projects,” says Robertson.

Robertson says in 2014 AGL claimed NSW consumers would face gas shortages by 2016 if their Gloucester Gas Project was not quickly approved.

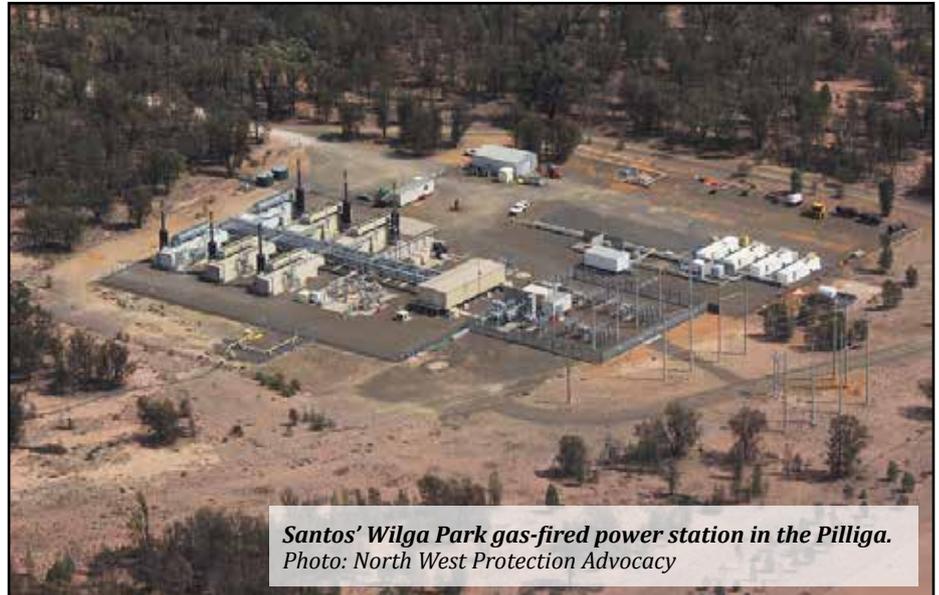
“The Gloucester Gas Project did not proceed, and no gas shortages ensued,” says Robertson.

“Australia has abundant gas for everyone, and yet the gas companies would have us believe we are running out.

“The gas companies’ latest ruse is to coerce the NSW Business Chamber into supporting its failing industry.

“It’s purely a tactic to get unnecessary, costly, high emitting LNG import terminals approved to further line the pockets of gas companies at the expense of Australian consumers’ energy bills.”

Australia is the world’s second largest exporter of LNG. 70% of Australian east coast gas is sold on the export



*Santos’ Wilga Park gas-fired power station in the Pilliga.
Photo: North West Protection Advocacy*

market leaving just 30% to supply the domestic market.

Gas companies are proposing to build four LNG import terminals around the nation to supplement supply, whilst also insisting Santos’ high cost gas Narrabri Gas Project is needed.

“If LNG import terminals are built, Australia will be exporting Australian gas and then re-importing it for domestic supply to consumers at higher costs due to the expensive liquefaction, re-gasification and shipping costs involved,” says Robertson.

“Expensive import terminals will embed high cost gas into our energy system and line the pockets of the gas industry.

“The NSW Business Chamber is ensuring the destruction of its members’ businesses by supporting the gas industries’ plans to develop high cost gas for domestic markets while exporting Australia’s low-cost gas overseas.

“It is lamentable that the NSW Chamber has fallen for the oldest trick in the gas industries’ playbook.”

Business Chamber fails on vision

Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Georgina Woods said the Council’s narrow focus on expensive gas from Narrabri failed to provide a vision for sustainable industry supplied by low-cost and inexhaustible renewable energy.

“Santos is an architect of the gas price crisis and it is in that company’s interests for gas prices to stay high enough to crash the state’s manufacturing industry,” she said.

“Coal seam gas produced at Narrabri would entrench the pattern of high-cost, low-yield and unreliable gas supplies. What manufacturing needs in NSW is a bit of vision and an industry plan for switching to cheap and reliable renewable energy.

Woods said opening up the north west of NSW to coal seam gas production would risk damaging the Great Artesian Basin and other aquifers relied on by farming communities, particularly during this time of severe drought.

“Farmers and communities in the north west do not deserve to be sacrificed for the profits of big gas companies and neither does our manufacturing industry,” she said.

“The NSW Business Chamber needs to look ahead to how its members can access the reliable low-cost energy that renewables can provide.

“It needs to tell the Government to support switching industry to cheaper, sustainable energy to bring down costs and safeguard our precious groundwater.”

Women honoured for protecting Yeerillie country from uranium mining projects



Left to right: Shirley Wonyabong, Vicki Abdullah and Lizzie Wonyabong, recipients of the Australian Conservation Foundation's Peter Rawlinson award. Photo: contributed

Bottom of page: Yeerirrie uranium country. Photo: Cameco

Tjiwarl Western Goldfields women Shirley Wonyabong, Elizabeth Wonyabong and Vicki Abdullah have been awarded the Australian Conservation Foundation's (ACF) prestigious Peter Rawlinson Award for their incredible efforts to protect country and culture from uranium mining at Yeerirrie for nearly 50 years.

The women have been congratulated by The Conservation Council of WA (CCWA) and Nuclear Free WA.

CCWA Director Piers Verstegen said the pressure on indigenous people to agree with mining was enormous and the three women had shown incredible

courage and determination in defending their country and culture from uranium projects.

"The little-known story of these amazing women can serve as an inspiration to all Australians.

"Their cultural obligation to look after country has involved an incredible act of perseverance and determination in the face of significant hardship, and at times, great personal cost. We can all draw inspiration from their story and their success.

"Over a period lasting nearly five decades, Shirley, Elizabeth and Vicki have successfully resisted proposals that

would have had profound impacts on their land, culture and community.

"The tireless work of these amazing women has helped overcome plans from at least three separate companies to mine the Yeerirrie uranium deposit on their cultural lands which are part of the Seven Sisters songline.

"In the process of defending country and culture the Tjiwarl women have given strength and courage to their own community and many others. This prestigious national award recognises those efforts and supports them to continue in this important work."

From country to courtroom

For the past eight years, the Tjiwarl women have hosted hundreds of people from all over the world on an annual month-long walk through their country in protest to the Yeerirrie mine proposal – Walking for Country.

Their efforts have also taken them to WA's highest courts. In a landmark legal case, the Tjiwarl woman and the Conservation Council of WA challenged environmental approvals for uranium mining at Yeerirrie in an extraordinary legal bid to prevent the extinction of wildlife and protect Aboriginal lands.

The mining proposal by Cameco was rejected by the WA EPA due to the likelihood of extinction of a number of species. However, approval was issued by an Environment Minister during the Barnett Government. It would have involved a 9 km open mine pit, clearing of 2,400 hectares of native vegetation, using 8.7 million litres of water per day and generated 36 million tonnes of radioactive mine waste.

The court case to overturn the approval was ultimately unsuccessful but the mine plan continues to be stalled and the Tjiwarl women have vowed not to give up their fight.

Established in 1992, the Rawlinson Award, is given annually in memory of ACF Councillor Peter Rawlinson – a zoologist, lecturer in biological science and environmental campaigner.

The award was conferred on the women at ACF's annual general meeting in Melbourne last week.



Palmer's mine an environmental crime

Lock the Gate Alliance analysis has revealed Clive Palmer's Galilee Coal Project mega mine would extract an estimated 780 billion litres of groundwater during its 30-year lifespan – more than one and a half times the amount of water in Sydney Harbour.

Waratah Coal last month applied for a mining licence for the project, formerly known as China First.

It was the company's first move in relation to the mine in six years, with federal approval granted in 2013.

If it goes ahead, the mine would also produce 40 million tonnes of thermal coal per annum and destroy much of the nearly 8,000-hectare Bimblebox Nature Refuge, which protects important habitats in Central Queensland's Eastern Desert uplands region. Owners of the Bimblebox Refuge have announced a legal challenge to the mine.

Huge de-watering operation

Water expert Tom Crothers said the amount of groundwater to be pumped out for mine dewatering operations was huge.

"A water take of this scale would have an irreparable impact on those aquifers beneath the Galilee Basin," he said.

"This would have a significant impact on local farmers and communities who rely on these groundwater resources for their livestock and domestic supplies – particularly during drought conditions.

"Worryingly, the Galilee Coal Project is just one of many more potential mega mines planned for the Galilee.

"Combined, they will drain a mammoth amount of water from beneath the basin."



A meme circulating on Facebook references the Monty Python skit 'Mr Creosote'. The designer is unknown.

Late last year, the Galilee Subregion Bioregional Assessment looked at seven of the proposed coal mines in the basin, and concluded their cumulative water impacts would likely affect up to 6,285 kilometres of Queensland streams, and groundwater across 1.4 million hectares.

Multiple threats to graziers

Galilee Basin landholder Bruce Currie said local graziers were under threat on multiple fronts.

"First there was Adani, which we are still battling tooth and nail," he said.

"Now we are forced to fight Clive Palmer and his mega mine.

"We strongly object to the Galilee Basin being opened up for get-rich quick polluting thermal coal at the expense of communities, regional towns and graziers, many who have farmed on their properties for generations.

"The Palaszczuk Government must reject this mining licence application

and send Clive and his mine packing. This is an environmental crime against humanity."

Water loophole exposed

Clive Palmer's mine looks likely to benefit from a special loophole in mining laws which has recently been exposed.

A recent Court of Appeals decision concerning the unrelated New Acland Stage 3 Coal Mine near Toowoomba found groundwater impacts of mines could not be considered by the Land Court in certain cases, including older mining applications like the Waratah Coal proposal.

This means that currently any objection or Land Court challenge to the Waratah Coal project will not be able to consider issues related to the amount of groundwater drawdown it will cause.

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Whitehaven trucks water to Maules Ck mine

Now that Whitehaven Coal cannot get water from the Namoi River for their Maules Creek mine (due to the worst drought in history) they are trucking groundwater to the mine from farms over 12kms away.

Photo: Leard Forest Research Node.

Whitehaven, the nation's largest dedicated coal miner, has slashed its coal forecasts at its Maules Creek mine in north-western NSW by up to 2 million tonnes.

The miner said 'weather events' and a shortage of skilled labour will reduce production to a range of 10-11 million tonnes, down from 12-12.5 million tonnes for the year.

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Secondary boycott laws threaten liberty

A new report from The Australia Institute has shown that potential Government plans to outlaw so called 'secondary boycotts' would require significant legislative reform, could threaten the implied freedom of political communication in the Australian Constitution and ignores a long history of consumer choice protests in Australia.

"Attempts to outlaw consumer choice amount to a clamp down on freedom of expression and personal liberty in Australia," said Ben Oquist, Executive Director of The Australia Institute.

"Historically, secondary boycotts have been used in Australia in relation to important issues such as the sale of steel to Japan during World War II and in opposition to apartheid in South Africa.

"Today, consumer freedom is critical for Australia's market economy to function efficiently. All Australians – whatever their political persuasion – should be able to advocate for and against products and companies of their choice.

"Matt Canavan's previous call for Queenslanders to desert Westpac should be protected. David Littleproud should be free to continue to advocate for boycotts of Aldi and Coles over milk prices and George Christensen's proposed ban on Ben and Jerry's ice-cream should be allowed in a free country.

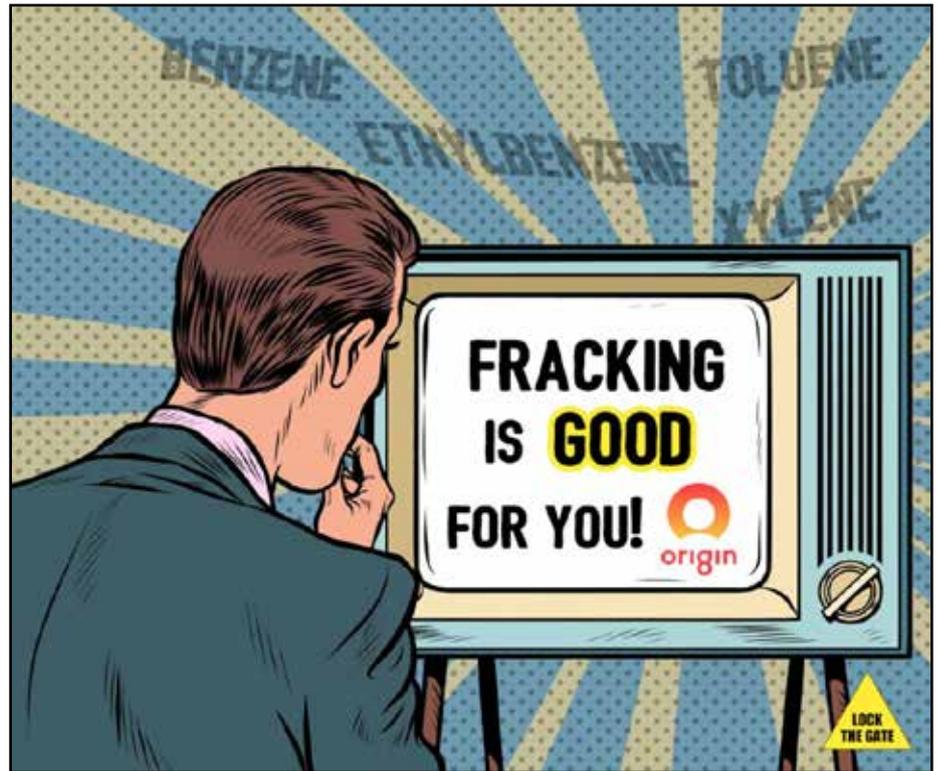
"The fact that Government MPs call for boycotts themselves shows us that they are an essential part of the political debate.

"Outlawing consumer protests in the way the Government has suggested will more than likely require the creation of entirely new offences and/or the removal of a range of consumer protections from the Competition and Consumer Act.

"Such wholesale redrafting of the rights to communication and protest in Australia would be an unfortunate overreaction and an affront to the free speech on which Australian democracy is built."

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Origin's fact-free spin campaign



Gas fracking company Origin is attempting to salvage the image of its controversial and contested Beetaloo fracking project by launching a public relations campaign that "would be laughable if it wasn't fracking with people's land and lives," according to Protect Country Alliance.

Origin claims to use 'facts' to garner public support for its dangerous drilling operations in the NT – but the facts on the ground speak for themselves, said spokesperson Lauren Mellor.

"Despite what the company claims, there are numerous examples of where its gas exploration activities have gone terribly wrong. Company whistleblowers, landholders hosting Origin's activities, and evidence of actual harm all attest to the dangers of its Beetaloo fracking proposal."

"In 2010 Origin admitted it was responsible for a frack up when dangerous BTEX – a mixture of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene – chemicals were spilled into the environment and farmers' water sources were contaminated in Queensland.

"Origin's PR claims are easily refuted by actual evidence.

"As local and national opposition to its fracking plans mount the company knows its image is in real trouble, and is attempting to salvage that with a glossy but fact-free spin campaign.

"But Origin can't hide from the fact that Beetaloo region pastoralists and Native Title holders are on the record saying they have not been consulted, or consented to, its fracking plans."

Newcastle Waters Native Title Holder and Mudburra Traditional Owner Ray Dixon said, "Origin is not doing the right thing with Traditional Owners – it's bypassing proper consultation and being disrespectful and dishonest in its dealings with our communities, and now its customers.

"What's going to happen to our land and for the future? Origin are starting to frack right through wet season just upstream of us. Origin is not going to fix our water if they leave us with a problem. We're the ones who will suffer."

Mellor said, "Origin can't spin its way out of its corporate image problems. That requires real consultation, genuine engagement with communities and to act on the science showing harm from fracking activities."

"Origin must end this furphy of a fracking PR campaign and end its plans to frack the Territory."

• ***Download copy of a shareholder information booklet challenging Origin's claims about its Beetaloo fracking project, distributed by concerned shareholders and Traditional Owners at its recent company AGM:***

https://d3n8a8pro7vymx.cloudfront.net/lockthegate/pages/6353/attachments/original/1571977993/Origin_Q_A_digital.pdf?1571977993

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



Inside the news

Climate change forecasts over the last 50 years have proved to be **correct** (p10-11) and the continuing bushfire nightmare demonstrates what scientists have been warning us about since the 1970s.

Fossil Fool Bulletin takes this personally, having recently been forced to evacuate **FFB's** bushland HQ for two nights, and now finding **FFB's** only asset, a house in a Northern Rivers village, is in the path of yet another **terrifying mega-fire**.

The political response has been dismal, with **Smoko Morrison** refusing to discuss climate change while sending a few thoughts and prayers. Meanwhile, **Labor** wastes time criticising the **Greens** for something they didn't do a decade ago and **Anthony Albanese** sets out on a **coal love-fest** in central Queensland.

Nobody recognises the **opportunity for leadership** towards a low-carbon economy. Instead, climate factions becoming more bitterly opposed to one another while emissions continue to rise.

Coal miners are furious about what they see as being vilified for the nature of their work. The major parties have done nothing to reassure mine workers (all 37,800 of them, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics) with plans for a **just transition** to jobs in renewables.

But this week, in New South Wales where 85% of the population lives within 50km of the coast, **6.8 million people** are directly impacted by bushfires and the health impacts of smoke (p11). Six people have died and over 800 homes burned.

It is profoundly disappointing to see 'opposition' politicians going all-out for more of the same, grasping for the votes of 37,800 coal mine workers while millions of other people suffer from the **escalating disaster** of global heating.

Even if the **fossil fuel** industry is shut down tomorrow, the damage will continue for decades.

But let's keep exporting coal and gas to keep a few people happy – particularly the top 1% who love to count their billions flowing from coal, oil and gas. Who cares if the rest of us **burn**?



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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 17,000 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links to view original articles.](#) (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-06/adani-native-title-claim-wangan-jagalingou-galilee-basin-court/11770936>

Traditional owners driven apart by Adani issue unite to fight Queensland Government

Josh Robertson, ABC, 06/12/2019

Traditional owners who were split for years over Adani mining their ancestral homelands say they have joined forces to fight the Queensland Government over its opposition to their land rights claim.

Wangan and Jagalingou (W&J) representatives have publicly united to condemn the state's decision to contest their bid, lodged 15 years ago, for native title in central Queensland's Galilee Basin, which includes parts of the Adani mine.

A 10-day Federal Court trial is underway in the nearby town of Clermont.

Adrian Burragubba, who was forced into bankruptcy over legal challenges to Adani, said that all of the W&J were "now faced with a common enemy and that is the state that wants to take away our rights".

Patrick Malone, who had been at odds with Burragubba by supporting the successful land use deal with Adani, said he thought "as a native title group, we've moved on from Adani".

"We're all on the same page and we want the same outcome ... recognition of our native title and our native title rights," he said.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/seimens-staff-warned-after-latest-stop-adani-move/news-story/30d9f3089c74c87a1a90cd-6d7915e002>

Seimens staff warned after latest Stop Adani move

Steven Wardill, Courier-Mail, 06/12/2019

A top technology firm has warned staff not to wear anything that identifies their employer in public after being repeatedly targeted by "Stop Adani" activists.

Global giant Siemens yesterday issued a company-wide email to staff vowing not to be bowed by protesters and committing to continue working with the controversial miner.



Minna Featherstone, Tom Cotter and Simon Ennew locked on to machinery and a gate to immobilise work on Adani's Carmichael rail line on December 9. Featherstone was later arrested. Photo: FLAC

The email, counselled staff about the need to remove any item that identified them as a Siemens employee outside their office, after protesters published the names and personal contact numbers of several workers.

It comes after Stop Adani activists protested at the firm's Brisbane headquarters on Tuesday and presented staff with flyers denouncing the Galilee Basin project.

The company, which has long lauded its own green credentials, has also battled a staff revolt over its alliance with Adani, with several documents leaked to the protesters.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/dec/07/queensland-ordered-to-release-secret-report-on-black-throated-finch-conservation>

Queensland ordered to release secret report on black-throated finch conservation

Ben Smees, Guardian, 07/12/2019

The Queensland information commissioner has ordered the state government to publicly release an independent report it commissioned – then largely ignored – into Adani's black-throated finch conservation efforts.

Both the state Department of Environment and Science and Adani had

attempted to block the release of the report, which was compiled by an independent panel of experts "to obtain the best scientific advice", arguing it should remain secret.

The Australian Conservation Foundation has been told it should have the document in 20 days, but its release could still be blocked or extensively delayed by Adani, which has developed a pattern of objections and appeals to the release of government-held information about its Carmichael project.

Adani is in the drawn-out process of appealing a similar decision – demanding the release of documents relating to plans for the Townsville and Rockhampton councils to pay for an airport to be built at the mine site – in the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Adani claims it no longer needs the airport – which was to be built by Queensland firm Wagners – for the scaled-down version of the Carmichael mine.

But it continues to fight the release of a "term sheet" that contained secret details of the deal, struck with Townsville and Rockhampton councils, for them to fund the construction in exchange for the cities being named fly-in fly-out hubs for the project.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/matt-canavan-challenges-anthony-albanese-top-voice-adani-coal-support/news-story/706bea5f-09b47a7798a56f6c6222fe1e>

Matt Canavan challenges Anthony Albanese to voice Adani coal support

Olivia Caisley, Aus, 09/12/2019

Resources Minister Matt Canavan has challenged Labor leader Anthony Albanese to say he supports the Adani coal mining project during tour of central Queensland this week.

Speaking to Sky News on Monday Senator Canavan said the trip presented a test for Albanese and the Labor Party.

“They say now they support the export of coal,” he told Sky News. “I haven’t heard Anthony Albanese say three simple words: ‘I support Adani.’”

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-05/galilee-basin-farmers-object-to-palmer-mine/11764540>

Clive Palmer’s Galilee mine would use 770 billion litres of groundwater, but farmers can’t use that in Land Court

Jamima Burt, ABC, 05/12/2019

Lawyers representing landholders in the footprint of the proposed Waratah Coal mine say a recent court decision has stopped them from objecting to it in the Queensland Land Court on the basis of the mine’s groundwater use.

Waratah Coal, owned by Queensland billionaire Clive Palmer, is the proponent behind the Galilee Coal and Rail Project which was approved, with conditions, by the Federal Environment Department in 2013 and promises to mine 40 million tonnes of thermal coal each year.

The objection to the mining lease application will not be able to focus on the use of 768 billion litres, or 768 ggalitres, of groundwater over its 30-year lifespan of the proposed mine, equating to one-and-a-half times the volume of Sydney Harbour.

Sean Ryan, principal solicitor at the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO), which is representing the farmers, said a decision by the Queensland Court of Appeal had set a precedent that stopped landholders from objecting to some mine proposals on the basis of groundwater concerns.

Ryan said the case would now argue the mine’s Environmental Authority application should be refused on 11 grounds, including that the mine would cause environmental harm and not be ecologically sustainable.

It has also lodged 12 grounds for objection to the company’s mining lease application saying it would cause adverse environmental, social and, economic impacts.

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/whitehaven-coal-cuts-production-forecasts-due-to-bushfire-smoke-drought-20191205-p53h96.html>

Whitehaven Coal cuts production forecasts due to bushfire smoke, drought

Nick Toscano, SMH, 05/12/2019

Coal mining giant Whitehaven has been forced to slash its coal production forecasts at its biggest mine due to the impact of the ongoing drought and smoke from bushfires in New South Wales.

Whitehaven, the nation’s largest dedicated coal miner, on Thursday slashed its coal forecasts at its Maules Creek mine in north-western NSW by up to 2 million tonnes, to a range of 10-11 million tonnes down from 12-12.5 million tonnes for the year. The company said the weather events have added to the company’s struggle to find enough skilled workers in the region.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-09/moranbah-dust-level-coal-mining-air-quality-concerns/11773522>

Moranbah heavy airborne dust levels prompt calls for better testing

Tim Shepherd, ABC, 09/12/2019

The Queensland Opposition has backed calls for chemical analysis of airborne pollution in the mining town of Moranbah in central Queensland, where dangerously high levels of dust are being recorded.

The Department of Environment and Science (DES) declared wood smoke to be one of the most likely causes, but admits it cannot say for certain because particle monitoring in the town was inconclusive.

But locals think nearby mines could be to blame, saying virtually no homes in Moranbah have wood-burning fireplaces.

University of New South Wales respiratory physician Guy Marks said detailed information would be required to confidently point to specific emission sources.

Professor Marks said in an environment with a range of emission sources, chemical analysis would be the most accurate method of determining contribution.

<https://www.afr.com/policy/energy-and-climate/soul-patts-meeting-shut-down-over-coal-20191206-p53hod>

Soul Patts meeting shut down over coal

Eloise Fowler, AFR, 06/12/2019

Chairman of Washington H Soul Pattinson, Robert Millner, shutdown the listed fund’s annual general meeting on Friday after shareholders and proxy voters quizzed him on the company’s coal mining investments.

Questioners pressed Washington H Soul Pattinson to justify its major position in New Hope Coal after the company’s poor performance and its contribution to increasing global emissions via its coal production.

“What we’ve got is one degree of warming, and climate change is already exacerbating natural catastrophes and extreme weather events and damaging people’s health in Australia and overseas,” one shareholder told Millner.

Millner replied: “Well, stop population growth.”

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/delay-in-origin-plant-repairs-reheats-summer-power-fears-20191202-p53g2y>

Delay in Origin plant repairs reheats summer power fears

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 02/12/2019

A delay to repairs at an Origin Energy gas power station in Victoria has re-escalated worries about electricity supplies over the peak summer months just as energy buyers and producers called for “cool heads” to prevail if power cuts do occur.

Origin said on Monday its Mortlake power station, which has been out of action since July 8 due to an electrical fault, would now come back online only on December 30, 10 days later than originally advised.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/117954105/protectors-say-oil-museum-in-omv-new-plymouth-car-park-a-parting-gift>

Protesters say ‘oil museum’ in OMV New Plymouth car park a parting gift

Christina Persico, Stuff, 05/12/2019

Protesters who spent three days barricading OMV’s New Plymouth office have been moved on by police and had their “Museum Of Oil History” dismantled.

Early on Thursday about 30 remaining protesters quickly put up a “museum” installation in the company’s car park as a “parting gift” from their protest.

OMV said, “The actions this morning to further prevent our people going about their lawful business is now also impacting our team’s ability to oversee the security of natural gas supply, which New Zealanders rely on in their homes and businesses every day.

“OMV absolutely respect the right to protest but we are asking Greenpeace to respect the rights of our local team to go about their lawful business safely and without harassment.”

Before being dismantled, two “smoking oil barrels” - actually using water vapour - flanked the entry to the “museum”, which included a 1970s wrecked Mercedes sprayed pink, a four-metre oil derrick, and a 1980s petrol pump.

The pre-constructed art installation also included some provocative tongue-in-cheek exhibits such as a petrol seabird which “narrowly escaped the Rena oil spill off Tauranga” and the ancient fax machine “used to send the first exploration permit in New Zealand”.

They were protesting OMV’s plan to drill off the coast of Taranaki and the Great South Basin.

<https://www.afr.com/chanticleer/origin-energy-takes-fracking-fight-online-20191205-p53hb8>

Origin Energy takes fracking fight online

Chanticleer, AFR, 05/12/2019

Origin Energy has had enough.

Having watched anti-fracking activists dominate the online conversation around its Beetaloo gas exploration project in the Northern Territory, the energy giant has launched its own digital and social media campaign to take its message directly to the broader community.

There’s no doubt chief executive Frank Calabria and his team are frustrated with what the company sees as a series of misrepresentations about the project from a noisy and determined group of activists.

But he insists this is not about a fight between Origin and the activists. Rather, Calabria says this is an example of what he believes the business community needs to do more regularly – proactively and constructively telling its story.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/curbing-emissions-from-the-lng-industry-20191205-p53hb8>

Curbing emissions from the LNG industry

Jennifer Hewett, AFR, 05/12/2019

Australia’s role as the world’s largest LNG exporter is complicating the Morrison government’s claim that the country’s carbon emissions are going down.

The latest figures from the Department of Energy and Environment do show a decline in emissions, if minuscule, in the last financial year. This modest improvement was helped by the large increase in renewable generation and the effect of the drought translating into reduced emissions from decimated stock numbers.

But ever-rising LNG production means emissions in that industry are also steadily increasing

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/boost-to-east-coast-gas-takes-pressure-off-adgsm-review-20191205-p53h55>

Boost to east coast gas takes pressure off ADGSM review

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 05/12/2019

Gas supply on the east coast gas market has dramatically loosened up thanks to record production, bringing down domestic prices and weakening the case for federal government intervention, according to a leading research consultancy.

Production of gas on the east coast, which has been plagued by high prices for the past few years, rose to a record 500 petajoules in the September quarter.

This record was driven by an all-time high in coal seam gas production and imports by pipeline from the Northern Territory, Adelaide-based EnergyQuest said in its latest report on Thursday.

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/6528518/csg-inquiry-a-train-wreck-for-govt-after-questions-go-unanswered/>

CSG inquiry in to Chief Scientist recommendations a ‘train wreck’ for govt, after questions go unanswered

Jamieson Murphy, Northern Daily Leader, 06/12/2019

An inquiry in to what action has been taken to make the coal seam gas industry safe has been described as a “train wreck for the government”.

The parliamentary inquiry grilled state government officials, questioning how they had implemented the 16 recommendations made by the NSW

Chief Scientist five years ago to allow the coal seam gas industry to operate safely.

In its written submission to the parliamentary committee, the NSW government stated it had “completed” 14 of the recommendations, with the remaining two “in progress”.

However, independent politician Justin Field said public servants were “unable to answer some of the most basic questions”.

“I would say from the evidence we heard, that the government has not fully implemented the recommendations,” Field said.

Field said “all questions related to EPA action on the ground were taken on notice”.

“From my perspective, the government was unable to answer the most basic questions, and that raises concerns about coal seam gas and the Santos project,” Field said.

The inquiry was delayed by about a month, when in an unprecedented move, public servants refused to appear before the committee.

HYDROGEN HYPE

<http://www.mpnews.com.au/2019/12/03/start-on-latrobe-valley-hydrogen-supply/>

Start on Latrobe Valley hydrogen supply

Keith Platt, Mornington Peninsula News, 03/12/2019

Work has officially started on a plant in the Latrobe Valley to extract hydrogen gas from brown coal which will be tuned into liquid at Hastings for export to Japan.

The liquification plant now being built in Bayview Road, Hastings is scheduled to be completed by June 2020.

Construction of a ship to transport the liquefied hydrogen is underway in Kobe, Japan.

The plant to extract hydrogen gas from brown coal is being built at the AGL Loy Yang mine

The state and federal governments have each contributed \$50 million towards the \$400m Japan–Australia Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain Pilot Project being undertaken by a consortium of Japanese companies.

The one-year trial is designed to demonstrate “brown coal gasification and gas-refining, hydrogen liquefaction, shipbuilding and operation of a specialised liquefied hydrogen carrier,

and identification of a future commercialisation pathway for the commercial phase of a hydrogen supply chain”.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/04/extinction-rebellion-protesters-to-be-held-in-jail-for-at-least-two-weeks-after-being-denied-bail>

Extinction Rebellion protesters to be held in jail for at least two weeks after being denied bail

Ben Smees, *Guardian*, 04/12/2019

Three Extinction Rebellion members will remain in custody for more than two weeks, after they were denied bail by a Queensland magistrate.

Members of the activist group said they believed the decision in the Cleveland magistrates court to refuse bail was “a Queensland first” and out of step with other similar cases.

Police arrested two men who climbed on to an Aurizon coal train on Tuesday and blocked freight heading to a coal loader owned by New Hope Group. They also arrested a woman who claims she was at the scene liaising with media on behalf of Extinction Rebellion.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/crime-and-justice/extinction-rebellion-activists-released-on-bail-after-supreme-court-application/news-story/2fc53c4de7c42092e0366967dff513>

Extinction Rebellion activists released on bail after Supreme Court application

Alexandria Utting, *Sunday Mail*, 07/12/2019

Climate protesters arrested for blocking a coal train heading to Brisbane have been sensationally released after a last-ditch Supreme Court bail application was made to free the group. Three activists were on Tuesday remanded in custody after being denied bail by a Cleveland Magistrate after what criminal lawyers have described as a “political” move.

Extinction Rebellion protesters Jack Oswald, Ryan “Spoons” Mitchell and Emma Dorge were charged with a range of offences arising from the blocking of a train at Lytton, which was en route to Port of Brisbane.

Brittany White, of Fuller and White Solicitors, who appeared pro bono in the Supreme Court for the group during the urgent bail application heard late on Friday said the fact they were denied bail in the magistrates court with such little criminal history was “highly unusual”.

Supreme Court judge David Boddice agreed, releasing the group on bail on



Police cracking down on anti-mining protests in Melbourne “set a tone of violence from the outset”, according to a scathing report by independent legal observers.

Photo: East Melbourne Climate Alliance

Friday on the condition they have no contact with each other.

Mitchell was also required to move from his home address by Wednesday as he is allegedly living at a property believed to be Extinction Rebellion’s headquarters.

The group will return to court on December 19.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/legal-observers-find-police-set-tone-of-violence-at-anti-mining-protests-20191206-p53hq1.html>

Legal observers find police ‘set tone of violence’ at anti-mining protests

Benjamin Millar, *Age*, 06/12/2019

Police cracking down on anti-mining protests in Melbourne “set a tone of violence from the outset”, according to a scathing report by independent legal observers.

Voluntary observers posted at the picket of October’s International Mining and Resources Conference – Australia’s largest mining event – have detailed a range of concerns about police tactics used to quell the protest.

A 45-page report, co-authored by Anthony Kelly, executive officer of the Flemington and Kensington Legal Community Centre, claims police were unnecessarily aggressive during arrests, made unlawful use of police powers and entered the three days of protest from October 29 to 31 with an “antagonistic” attitude.

Victoria Police has strenuously denied the allegations, maintaining officers responded appropriately to a situation in which protesters attempted to block entrance to the event and conference

attendees reported being jostled, yelled at and even spat upon.

Kelly said police had used crowd control techniques and force designed for reacting to riots rather than protests.

Kelly said he believed Victoria Police has moved away from a “negotiated management” approach to policing protests, instead taking a more confrontational “strategic incapacitation” approach.

The MALS report contains 11 recommendations including an immediate restriction on use of police horses in crowd control, further training on use of capsicum spray in crowded spaces, and better protection for legal observers and media covering protests.

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/04/climate-models-have-accurately-predicted-global-heating-study-finds?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Climate models have accurately predicted global heating, study finds

Dana Nuccitelli, *Guardian*, 05/12/2019

Climate models have accurately predicted global heating for the past 50 years, a study has found.

The findings confirm that since as early as 1970, climate scientists have had a solid fundamental understanding of the Earth’s climate system and the ability to project how it will respond to continued increases in the greenhouse effect. Since climate models have accurately anticipated global temperature changes so far, we can expect projections of future warming to be reliable.

The research examines the accuracy of 17 models published over the past five decades.

“We found that climate models – even those published back in the 1970s – did remarkably well, with 14 out of the 17 model projections indistinguishable from what actually occurred,” said Zeke Hausfather, of the University of California, Berkeley, and lead author of the paper.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2019/12/06/sydney-mega-bushfire/>

'Mega blaze': Several fires join to cover an area bigger than greater Sydney

New Daily, 06/12/2019

Three major bushfires burning north of Sydney have united to create what has been called a “mega blaze” that has so far burnt more than 300,000 hectares of land.

The new mega blaze was formed when the Gaspers Mountain fire in the Hawkesbury region merged with the Little L Complex blaze and the Paddock Run fire near Singleton, both in the Hunter.

ABC weatherman Graham Creed pointed out that if “85% of NSW population lives within 50 kilometres of the coast, that means 6.8 million people are under some level of threat of direct impact or health issues related to bushfires”.

RFS commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said, “We can’t overstate the effect that this profound drought is having ... on the flammability of the fuel,” he said.

“You are seeing fires start very easily and they are spreading extremely quickly and they are burning ridiculously intensely.”

The NSW Rural Fire Service said on Friday that more than 680 homes had already been destroyed by bushfires this season, and six people had died.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-09/analysis-exported-emissions-from-fossil-fuels/11752012>

Should Australia's fossil fuel exports be counted in its share of global carbon emissions?

Josh Gordon, ABC, 09/12/2019

By our estimate, in 2016 Australia’s fossil fuel exports (including coal, LNG, crude oil and liquefied petroleum gas) contained approximately 1,160 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. This was more than double Australia’s domestic emissions of 552 million tonnes.

Add the two together and it turns out Australia’s emissions made up about 3.6 per cent of the global total.

• *The story explains how international carbon emission are accounted for.*

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/wa-environmental-watchdog-clears-way-for-emissions-rise-20191209-p53154>

WA environmental watchdog clears way for higher emissions

Brad Thompson, AFR, 10/12/2019

Western Australia’s environmental watchdog expects the state’s greenhouse gas emissions to rise in the short to medium term after it walked away from controversial carbon-neutral project approval guidelines.

The WA Environmental Protection Authority’s new draft approval guidelines for major projects in the resource-rich state scrap the net-zero emissions threshold unveiled in March. The earlier guidelines were opposed by industry, which said they were a threat to LNG projects worth tens of billions of dollars.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/dec/07/leading-scientists-condemn-political-inaction-on-climate-change-as-australia-literally-burns>

Leading scientists condemn political inaction on climate change as Australia 'literally burns'

Lisa Cox, Guardian, 07/12/2019

Leading scientists have expressed concern about the lack of focus on the climate crisis as bushfires rage across New South Wales and Queensland, saying it should be a “wake-up call” for the government.

Climate experts who spoke to Guardian Australia said they were “bewildered” the emergency had grabbed little attention during the final parliamentary sitting week for the year.

Sarah Perkins-Kirkpatrick, a climate scientist with the University of NSW’s Climate Change Research Centre, said she was “surprised, bewildered, concerned” that the emergency had prompted little discussion from political leaders this week.

“Here we are in the worst bushfire season we’ve ever seen, the biggest drought we’ve ever had, Sydney surrounded by smoke, and we’ve not heard boo out of a politician addressing climate change,” she said.

“They dismissed it from the outset and haven’t come back to it since.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government-push-to-strip-fake-charity-of-its-tax-breaks/news-story/868f6d3fa8dcbfd31d0ad71747559ea>

Push to strip 'fake charity' of its tax breaks

Renee Viellaris, Sunday Mail, 08/12/2019

Environmental warrior Greenpeace faces being stripped of its tax deductibility status as Morrison Government MPs label it “a fake charity” that supports law-breaking activists.

Greenpeace’s focus on political activism and its championing of Extinction Rebellion has sparked behind-the-scenes pressure on ministers to abolish its lucrative taxpayer-funded concessions.

It comes as Cabinet Minister Matt Canavan declared that “free speech doesn’t necessitate free funding”.

Queensland LNP Senator James McGrath has asked Assistant Minister for Finance, Charities and Electoral Matters Zed Seselja “as a matter of urgency” to review why Greenpeace holds deductible gift recipient status (DGR), which allows donations by taxpayers to be refunded at tax time.

• *The story goes on to criticise Greenpeace, but in a history of the organisation it wrongly states Greenpeace named its flagship the MY Steve Irwin. The vessel actually belongs to Sea Shepherd.*

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/albanese-says-australia-should-continue-to-export-coal-20191208-p53hyp.html>

Albanese says Australia should continue to export coal

David Crowe, SMH, 09/12/2019

Labor leader Anthony Albanese has backed the case for Australian coal exports amid a divisive debate on shutting down the trade to act on climate change, arguing it would be wrong to damage the industry and its workers.

Albanese said Australia’s priority should be to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under strong global agreements but that this would not be achieved by stopping coal exports.

The Opposition Leader said other countries would fill the gap left by any halt to Australian coal exports.

Albanese spoke of the link between climate change and the heightened risk of bushfire.

“You can’t link any specific event, but what you can look at is the trends – and the trends are very clear,” he said.

“Bushfire season is getting longer and it’s getting more severe.”

But he said this was not an “academic argument” and should lead to a debate about the most effective way to reduce emissions.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/lazy-symbolism-labor-fights-back-at-greens-on-coal-exports-20191209-p53iaf.html>

'Lazy symbolism': Labor fights back at Greens on coal exports

David Crowe, SMH, 09/12/2019

Labor’s environmental wing has accused the Greens of a “cynical and destructive” attack on the party’s position on climate change after Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese backed the case for continued coal exports.

In a heated dispute over climate change action, the Labor caucus members and the party’s environmental network lashed out at the Greens for claiming Mr Albanese valued coal “more than human life” because he would not back an export ban.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/dec/10/albanese-plans-coalmine-visit-on-first-queensland-tour-as-labor-leader>

Albanese plans coalmine visit on first Queensland tour as Labor leader

Amy Remeikis, Guardian, 10/12/2019

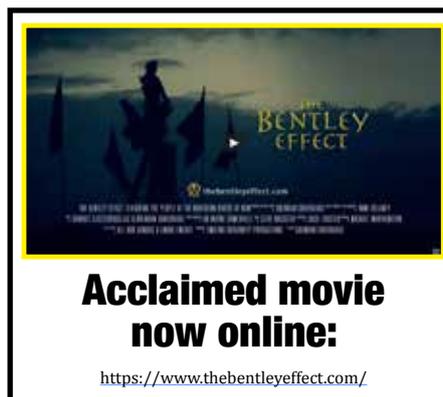
Labor is doubling down on its efforts to woo back the communities it lost at the last election, with Anthony Albanese aiming to tour a coalmine as part of his first official tour of Queensland since becoming leader.

Albanese will leave for Barcaldine in western Queensland, considered the spiritual birthplace of the Labor party, on Tuesday morning. It will be the first stop in a regional tour intended to win the state back after its historically low polling result in May.

Mining towns Emerald, Rockhampton and Gladstone top the list, and Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Gympie will round out the four-day tour.

While in Emerald, Albanese will attempt to tour a mine, as well as meet mine workers.

The author of this Facebook meme is unknown.



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