



# Fossil Fool Bulletin

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

[Fossilfool.com.au](http://Fossilfool.com.au)

FFB 3:5 • 7 JANUARY 2020

## Call for disaster levy on fossil fuels

*The unprecedented national bushfire crisis has highlighted the urgent need for a National Climate Disaster Levy to pay for the immense impending costs of these ongoing disasters.*

The Australia Institute launched a full-page advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald on January 3, renewing its call for the levy.

Damage from the catastrophic Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria in 2009 occurred largely on a single day and is estimated to have cost Australians over \$7 billion. In contrast, the current national bushfire catastrophe is at least six times as large in area and there is no end in sight.

### \$1 per tonne of emissions

Australia Institute modelling shows that the levy, set initially at \$1 per tonne of embodied emissions from all coal, oil and gas mined in Australia would raise approximately \$1.5 billion per year for a National Climate Disaster Fund.

“The current bushfires are unprecedented. Small businesses and households are facing enormous costs from this ongoing crisis,” said Richie Merzian, Climate & Energy Program Director at the Australia Institute.

“It is misleading and disingenuous to suggest these events are natural because Australia has experienced bushfires before. Firefighters themselves are saying these bushfires are bigger, more intense and more dangerous than anything they have experienced before.

“All the science is telling us that these kinds of climate driven disasters will



## Australia is on fire.

We need to prepare for the mounting cost of climate catastrophes.

### Australia needs a National Climate Disaster Levy on Fossil Fuel Production.

It is time to talk about the cost of climate inaction and who will cover the mounting bill.

Victoria's catastrophic Black Saturday bushfires cost Australians over \$7 billion. The current National Bushfire crisis raging across the country has already burned at least 6 times that area with no end in sight.

For those spared from the direct impacts, the indirect costs to the economy will be even wider felt and even greater in number.

Right now the companies that profit from fuelling the climate crisis are not contributing to covering the cost of the impacts.

A levy of \$1/ tonne on the embodied emissions on all coal, oil and gas mined in Australia would raise around \$1.5 billion in 2020 for climate disaster costs including compensating our firefighters, for more equipment, for grants to households, businesses and communities, and to rebuild essential infrastructure.

**Make fossil fuel companies pay — or else everyday Australians will.**

Add your name > [theaus.in/climatedisasterlevy](http://theaus.in/climatedisasterlevy)



• Continued p2

• P2: Federal govt to support new gas plants

• P3: Whitehaven gets pipeline approved

P5: NEW – positive page to help you feel better!

## Call for fossil fuel levy

• Continued from p1

keep getting worse while we keep pumping heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere.

“Every tonne of coal or gas mined in Australia adds approximately 2.5 tonnes of heat-trapping gas to the atmosphere, making bushfires more frequent and more intense. It’s time the handful of global gas and coal companies operating in Australia made a contribution to paying for the climate disasters they are fuelling.

“A National Climate Disaster Levy would help to begin shifting the economic burden of climate disasters from our at-risk regional communities to the global coal and gas companies that are creating the problem in the first place.

“Industries that face enormous costs as a result of climate change, including agriculture and tourism could then benefit from the national fund assisting with disaster recovery and building resilience.”

### No effect on energy price, coal jobs

Mark Ogge, Principal Adviser at The Australia Institute, said: “A \$1 per tonne levy would have virtually no effect on energy prices or coal jobs, but would be a huge help to everyone being affected by the damage these activities are causing.

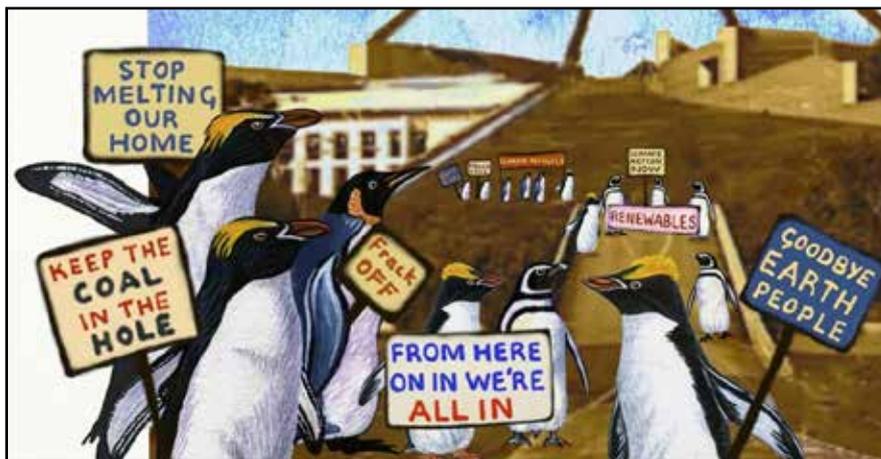
“This policy would help communities to prepare for and recover from natural disasters, but it would also be great for creating jobs and boosting the economy. Industries that face enormous costs as a result of climate change, including agriculture, tourism and manufacturing, would benefit from the fund assisting with disaster recovery and building resilience.

“This is a popular policy, with nearly two out of three Australians supporting it. Polling undertaken for The Australia Institute’s Climate of the Nation 2019 report found that 62% of Australians support the introduction of a fossil fuel levy to pay for the impacts of climate change, with only 21% opposed.”

Mayors from communities affected by the current bushfire crisis across NSW support the proposal. They include: Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore; Bellingen Mayor, Cr Dominic King and Glen Innes Mayor, Cr Carol Sparks.

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## Tell parliamentarians what you think on Feb 4



### Civil Disobedience Penguins ‘On the Steps 2020’

**Activists are headed to Canberra on February 4, the first day of parliament, to rattle the cage of parliamentarians.**

“Their corrupt, profit driven ecocide needs mass mobilisation,” said Annette Schneider. “Let our horrific politicians know we’ve had enough. We’re mobilising the biggest event parliament Canberra has ever seen to greet them on their first day back at ‘work’. It is no one group who is

organising this, but all of us, hopefully led by our children and first nations.

“We need to all come together because just signing petitions has got us nowhere. Our oceans, country, wildlife and food supply are dying and our children are dying too.”

• More information:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/584662955678458/>

<https://www.facebook.com/.../gm.../2590624397882048/...>

## Govt to support two new gas plants

**The federal government has kept up its annual tradition of trying to hide its many climate failures by announcing – two days before Christmas and in the middle of a national bushfire emergency – that it will underwrite two new gas-fired power stations.**

The Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, Angus Taylor, has given initial support for a 130-megawatt gas plant in Queensland, and a 220-MW project in Victoria. The government has also signalled it could fund more coal and gas projects down the track.

Professor Will Steffen, Climate Councillor and Emeritus Professor, ANU Fenner School of Environment & Society, said: “As many Australians choke through an unprecedented bushfire crisis, the Federal Government is supporting new fossil fuel projects that will drive further climate change, worsening bushfires and other extreme weather events.”

“People have lost their lives and homes; much of our irreplaceable natural heritage has been destroyed, and communities are suffering serious economic losses because of these unprecedented bushfires. But the government is still failing to tackle the root cause of this worsening problem.

“Federal politicians have finally acknowledged the influence of climate change on this crisis, but this acknowledgement is meaningless if they keep backing fossil fuel projects instead of delivering the urgent and significant emissions cuts we need,” said Steffen.

Dr Martin Rice, Head of Research, Climate Council, added: “The Federal Government has a shameful track record of attempting to fly under the radar and avoid scrutiny by making climate-related announcements before major holidays. Announcing its support for new fossil fuel projects at Christmas is more of the same tactic.

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## Consultation launched under cover of Christmas

*Environment groups have condemned a decision by Woodside and the WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to undertake community consultation on the giant Browse Basin and North West Shelf LNG project over Christmas, while communities are battling to save homes from bushfires made more severe by climate change.*

Thousands of pages of documents and technical information connected with three significant parts of the Burrup Hub LNG project were released by the EPA for public comment on December 23.

Conservation Council of WA (CCWA) Director Piers Verstegen said the documents confirmed that the Browse Basin proposal was by far Australia's biggest and most climate-damaging fossil fuel project and that the company was trying to avoid public scrutiny by conducting a consultation over the Christmas break.

### Bigger than Adani

"The documents released reveal the combined impact of the projects on the climate will be more than previously estimated, and several times greater than the proposed Adani coal mine in Queensland.

"Per unit of gas, the emissions intensity of Browse Basin gas will be double the average emissions intensity for Australian LNG exports.

"This is totally inconsistent with the public and shareholder commitments that have been made by joint venture partners such as Shell and BP, both of which have committed to reducing the carbon intensity of their global energy portfolios.

"Woodside has recently made a public commitment to net zero emissions by 2050, yet there is no evidence at all in these documents to suggest that will ever be achieved.

"The documents suggest that Woodside's goal is a hollow commitment designed to lull shareholders and investors into a false sense that the company is responsibly dealing with its carbon risk."

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## Whitehaven's mines out of favour

*Farmers have welcomed a scathing Narrabri Council report about Whitehaven's destructive Vickery coal mine planned near Boggabri, which further proves the project has little support locally.*

The council report states, "the Proponent has not demonstrated that the Vickery Project will promote the social and economic welfare of Boggabri and the wider Narrabri Shire nor that it has sufficiently addressed the relevant economic, environmental and social considerations in its proposal."

As a result of the report, Narrabri Shire councillors voted 5-1 in mid-December to inform the NSW Government and Independent Planning Commission that they did not support the Vickery Project.

The report queries the reliability of Whitehaven's projected jobs numbers and notes the lack of trust in the company from the local community at Boggabri.

It also raises concerns about the local water market dominance of Whitehaven's Maules Creek coal mine, and how the impact of water depletion and agricultural displacement will impact future generations.

Boggabri farmer Sally Hunter said, "We're grateful to the council for taking seriously the social damage inflicted by large mining developments and for listening to the local community which has no trust in Whitehaven and does not want this coal mine.

"We've seen how Whitehaven Coal operates its Maules Creek mine like a parasite eating up land and water and draining the lifeblood of our communities. We've seen the contempt with which the local people are treated. We're not prepared to let our communities be chewed up and ruined by another coal mine."

In April 2019, the Independent Planning Commission published an "Issues Report" about the project also citing its impact on social cohesion and inter-generational equity. The Vickery coal mine is currently being considered by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment before being returned to the Independent Planning Commission for consideration, likely in the new year.

In related news, Lock the Gate Alliance has slammed NSW mining compliance framework as "impotent" after

Whitehaven Coal lodged a modification application for its Maules Creek coal mine apparently to get approval for two already-built and highly contentious water pipelines.

### Whitehaven's pipeline ticked off

"This decision by Whitehaven Coal to lodge two applications to modify its development consent for the controversial Maules Creek coal mine seems to be an admission by the company that it did not have approval for construction in the first place," said Alliance spokesperson Georgina Woods.

"The pipelines are already carrying water sourced from nearby farms – outside the mine's approved operation area – to run Whitehaven's parched coal mine. This is happening while farmers in the district continue to suffer due to the extreme drought."

Notice was posted on December 21 by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment of two applications by Whitehaven to modify its approval at Maules Creek. One concerns a "Roma and Brighton Water Pipeline" and the other an "Olivedene Water Pipeline."

Lock the Gate Alliance wrote to the Department of Planning a month ago to alert it that the two pipelines were under construction in breach of the company's development approval. No substantial response has been received from the Department, but Lock the Gate understands that a compliance investigation is underway.

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### Interview: CSG on the Darling Downs

Karen Auty talks about the CSG water that goes into the Chinchilla drinking water supply, the health impacts on gasfield residents, the visits by politicians and government reps who then do nothing to help, the buyouts, the make good agreements, the industry and its private health service plus more.

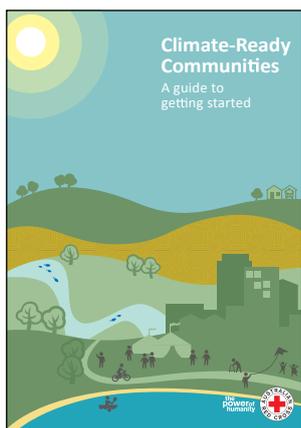
#### Recommended listening!

<https://soundcloud.com/nwpa/karen-auty-interview-150318-in-chinchilla>



## THE FOSSIL FOOL'S POSITIVE PAGE

### Climate change: booklet helps people to adapt



**Climate change is happening and is here to stay. With the poor and vulnerable likely to be hit the hardest, it's essential that communities are supported to adapt to the changing conditions.**

Adapting everything we do to a new and changing climate is a shared responsibility. No one person, group, business or government can do it alone. Yet to date, much of the talk about adapting to a changing climate has happened amongst governments, decisions makers and the business community.

*Climate-Ready Communities: A Guide to Getting Started* has been developed by the Red Cross to take the climate change adaptation conversation from the boardroom table to the kitchen table. It's all about supporting communities to have their own conversation about how the things they value will be impacted by climate change, and what they can do to continue to thrive.

This guide is for anyone wanting to support their community to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change, whether they be individuals, a self-organised community group, local council or community service provider.

• **Download the guide here:**

<https://www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/b5b004b5-e572-4d9d-a1a1-c8fb5d11be5e3/climate-ready-communities-a-guide-to-getting-started.pdf.aspx>



### UK hits renewable milestone; royals announce new prize

***The United Kingdom has announced a watershed moment in its fight against climate change.***

Last year, for the first time since the industrial revolution, renewable power sources generated more of the UK's energy than fossil fuels.

Figures from the UK's National Grid reveal 48.5 per cent of the country's power in 2019 came from renewables, 43 per cent came from fossil fuels and 8.5 per cent came from bio-mass and waste.

#### Earthshot prize launched

The figures took into account energy imported from other countries too and came after several members of the royal family made public statements calling for more action on climate change.

On New Year's Eve, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge announced "the most prestigious environmental prize in history" in an attempt to provide

answers to some of the greatest problems facing the planet.

Inspired by former US president John F Kennedy's lunar 'Moonshot' programme, the 'Earthshot' prize will be awarded to five people every year over the next decade. It will focus on energy, air pollution, fresh water levels and biodiversity, to name a few.

Prince William said humanity faced a stark choice: "Either we continue as we are and irreparably damage our planet or we remember our unique power as human beings and our continual ability to lead, innovate and problem-solve".

His comments came after the Queen used her annual Christmas address to praise new generations for bringing a "sense of purpose to issues such as protecting our environment and our climate".

• **More info:**

<https://earthshotprize.org/>



### Dutch to close coal-fired power plant four years early



**Hemweg power plant.**  
Photo: Vallenfall

***Reuters reports the Dutch government will close one of the five coal-fired power plants in the Netherlands this year, four years earlier than originally planned, to help reach its climate goals.***

The decision follows a 2018 court order instructing the government to ensure greenhouse gas emissions are reduced from 1990 levels by at least 25 per cent by the end of 2020.

As part of a push to abide by the court ruling, the government decided to

shut the Hemweg plant in Amsterdam, owned by Sweden's Vattenfall, in 2020.

The company two years ago said it was willing to shut the plant by 2020 in return for 55 million euros (\$62 million) in damages.

Shutting Vattenfall's plant, built in 1994, would cut CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions in the Netherlands by almost 2 million tonnes, while the Netherlands needs to get rid of 9 million tonnes in order to reach next year's goal.



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## Inside the news

The **Morrison** government has been confronted with the consequences of climate change in a way they never anticipated – since most of them refuse to acknowledge climate science.

**SmoKo** still refuses to discuss climate policy, as he stumbles through numerous gaffes while dealing with the rage of fireground survivors.

He has undermined NSW Premier, **Gladys Berejiklian**, by **alleging she turned down** earlier offers of federal help, which Berejiklian denies (p14). Alongside her, NSW fire chief **Shane Fitzsimmons** was furious that Morrison didn't bother to inform him of the Army reserve call-out, which Fitzsimmons first heard about through the media.

Meanwhile, the devastated residents of **Coburg** told Morrison to get out of town when he came by empty-handed and forced unwilling people – in shock from the loss of their homes – to shake his hand.

His security staff later returned to Coburg and attempted to move the offending citizens on. The **goons tried to shut down a local evacuation centre**. This story has not hit the mainstream media, but **FFB** has validated it.

However, there are cracks appearing in the Coalition as some – such as NSW energy minister **Matt Kean** – speak out about the changes needed to address our climate crisis.

Meanwhile, **Tony Abbott** has been slammed by the audience of a radio show when he stated Australia was “**in the grip of a climate cult**” even as the country burned (p13). Abbott has made himself popular in some locations by actually working with fire-fighters, while in extreme climate denial.

Another prominent Coalition dinosaur, **Craig Kelly**, remains hard at work filling his Facebook page with **denialist** references and whipping up hatred against warmists, greenies and lefties.

**Murdoch** and the **2GB** shock jocks echo him by blaming greenies for the bushfires and there are calls for the Green Party to be de-registered.

It's a hot and bothered country.



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Bulletin**

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# In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 34,580 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

## THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/17/global-engineering-firm-ghd-concludes-work-on-adanis-carmichael-coal-project>

### Global engineering firm GHD concludes work on Adani's Carmichael coal project

*Ben Smee, Guardian, 19/12/2019*

The global engineering and services firm GHD has told staff it has concluded its work on Adani's Carmichael coal project after a 10-year association with the company.

The announcement follows an intense campaign by activists, a movement of engineers to shift their industry away from fossil fuels, and significant internal pressure on management by GHD staff.

It also comes as another engineering firm, Siemens, considers backing out of an Adani contract.

GHD was Adani's first project partner in Australia. It advised the Indian company after it acquired the project from Linc Energy in 2010 and authored the environmental impact statement that erroneously claimed the project would generate 10,000 jobs.

In its email to staff, GHD's executive general manager, Phil Duthie, said the firm's current contractual obligations with the mine had concluded.

The Stop Adani campaign believes the withdrawal of GHD is a massive win for its movement. Campaigners sent more than 80,000 letters to the firm, conducted actions at GHD offices and mobilised the engineering sector and a large segment of GHD's employees.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/wait-and-see-on-adani-talks-in-india/816ad337-79b8-4946-935a-a43eb7974371>

### 'Wait and see' on Adani talks in India

*AAP/Nine News, 19/12/2019*

Will Scott Morrison discuss the Adani coal mine during his upcoming trip to India?

"We'll wait and see," his deputy Michael McCormack told reporters in Sydney on Thursday.

"The PM is going to have a number of talks with Indian counterpart (Narendra) Modi, he's going to be having talks with business leaders.

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/business/townsvilles-mendi-group-wins-15-million-construction-contract-with-adani-for-carmichael-mine/news-story/d61d7ab493247e74205a69c98c1aed13>

### Townsville's Mendi Group wins \$15 million construction contract with Adani for Carmichael Mine

*Madura McCormack, Townsville Bulletin, 21/12/2019*

A well-known Townsville business has secured a multimillion-dollar contract to work on Adani's Carmichael coal mine, with more than 30 local jobs set to be created.

Mendi Group has been awarded a \$15 million contract for civil engineering works at the mine site.

The work will include constructing a series of new roads and resurfacing a series of new roads in and around the mine site in the Galilee Basin.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/this-drying-continent-can-t-afford-adani-s-pipeline-to-12-5-billion-litres-of-precious-water-20191208-p53hvm.html>

### This drying continent can't afford Adani's pipeline to 12.5 billion litres of precious water

*Tony Windsor, SMH, 27/12/2019*

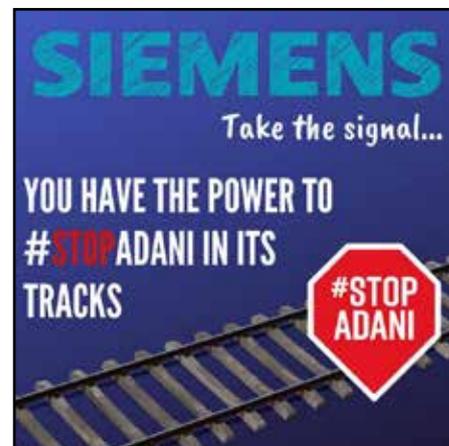
Having lived next to the Liverpool Plains and farmed in that region for many years, I'm only too aware of the ravages of drought and declining water resources on much of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Dry times come and go but one thing is for sure: there is a bigger player in Australia's weather systems than the El Niño siblings – climate change.

Right now, federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley is considering whether to require expert scientific assessment of Adani's massive river pipeline, through which it plans to take up to 12.5 billion litres of water from the Suttor River in Central Queensland.

The key question for the minister is whether she will apply the "water trigger", an element of our national environmental law that I was instrumental in developing during my time in Federal Parliament.

On its face, Adani's river pipeline demands scrutiny. Adani's mine could lead to other large and thirsty coal mines in the Galilee Basin. For such a vast quantity of water extraction to get



*Meme: Galilee Blockade*

waved through by the minister, particularly during a time of drought, would undermine the very purpose of the water trigger and betray the communities she is duty-bound to protect.

It could also set a very bad precedent of allowing mining companies to carve up their projects into smaller pieces to escape scrutiny.

Let's hope Sussan Ley recognises this.

• *Tony Windsor was the independent member for the federal seat of New England from 2001 until 2013.*

## COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/6555830/no-joy-for-nucoal-innocents-after-inquiry-rules-out-doyles-creek-coal-mine-compensation-law/>

### A NSW parliamentary inquiry has rejected a compensation pathway that would cost taxpayers.

*Joanne McCarthy, Newcastle Herald, 26/12/2019*

A NSW inquiry has ruled out passing legislation so that "innocent parties" who bought shares in NuCoal's corrupted Doyles Creek coal mine project near Singleton can claim compensation from the NSW Government.

NuCoal directors who lost millions of dollars in share values when the corrupted Doyles Creek Mine exploration licence was cancelled in 2014 failed to persuade the committee they were "innocent parties" entitled to compensation.

The directors were either aware, or should have been aware, by June, 2009 of public controversy about how the licence was granted before



*Whitehaven Coal had its Maules Creek Mine pipeline retrospectively approved within four days. Illustration: Lock the Gate Alliance*

they invested in Doyles Creek Mining shares, which exchanged for NuCoal shares in February, 2010 when NuCoal was listed on the Australian Stock Exchange, the inquiry found.

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/6558612/mines-late-application-for-water-pipelines-approved-in-just-days/>

### **Whitehaven Coal pipelines to Maules Creek approved by state govt in just days**

*Jamieson Murphy, Northern Daily Leader, 28/12/2019*

A mining company's retrospective development applications for two pipelines have been approved by the state government after just four days.

Whitehaven Coal had already completed two pipelines, which transfer groundwater from nearby farms to the Maules Creek mine, before it sought approval.

Environmental groups and concerned locals are disappointed no opportunity was provided for public feedback on the pipelines, and claim the projects were "rubber stamped".

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/townsville/stanmore-coal-lodges-plans-to-expand-isaac-plains-complex-mine-purchased-for-1-in-2015/news-story/2e2cd7749e6fa0d167023634ba75ce08>

### **Stanmore Coal lodges plans to expand Isaac Plains Complex Mine, purchased for \$1 in 2015**

*Chris Lees, Townsville Bulletin, 06/01/2010*

A coal mine that was bought for \$1 in 2015 ago is planning to expand and with it secure the future of more than 200 jobs and extend the life of the mine.

Stanmore Coal has submitted an application to the Department of Environment and Energy to expand its Isaac Plains Complex Mine, near Moranbah.

In its application, Stanmore said the extension of the open-cut pits would provide access to an extra 8.2 million tonnes of coking coal a year.

Currently Stanmore said its approved operation would last until 2024. If the extension is approved, coal mining could continue there until 2027-28.

## **OIL & GAS LEAKS**

<https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/equinors-environment-plan-to-drill-the-great-australian-bight-has-been-signed-off-by-the-federal-regulator/news-story/21c4be0df8c5d0b329d5216315dd7202>

### **Equinor's environment plan to drill the Great Australian Bight has been signed off by the federal regulator**

*Cameron England, Advertiser, 18/12/2019*

Equinor's controversial plans to drill for oil in the Great Australian Bight have been given the tick by the nation's oil and gas regulator, with the company now hoping to start drilling next Summer.

The Norwegian firm now has two of the four approvals necessary to drill for potentially billions of dollars-worth of oil in The Bight, with the sign-off from the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) a key milestone in the process.

Federal Resources Minister Matt Canavan said he hoped that an energy province to rival Bass Strait could be found.

But environmental groups have flagged that Equinor and the Federal Government should expect protests to escalate.

Equinor will now be required to produce a "facility safety case" focused on the management of the offshore drilling facility, and a "well management operations management plan", which a NOPSEMA spokesman said while smaller than the environment plan, was nevertheless "highly complex subject matter".

Drilling is expected to take 30-60 days, and must take place outside the months of June to September, due to the weather. Equinor has three years to drill, ending in 2022.

Greens SA Senator Sarah Hanson-Young said the "decision was a "pre-Christmas horror show for South Australia" and a "disastrous decision for the fishing and tourism industries.

Senator Hanson-Young said the decision could be reversed by the Parliament via a Private Members Bill she has already tabled in Canberra.

"Every single South Australian member of Parliament, regardless of what political party they are, need to stand up to protect the greatest Australian Bight."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-19/jone-stan-geland-defends-great-australian-bight-equinor-drill-ing/11813832>

## Equinor defends Great Australian Bight drilling plans as fears of an oil spill continue

Malcolm Sutton, ABC, 19/12/2019

A Norwegian oil company granted environmental approval to drill in some of Australia's roughest seas has worked to ease fears about any oil leaks as it continues to clean up a spill about 17,000 kilometres away in the Bahamas.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/gatton-gas-plan-to-keep-prices-down/news-story/2b949ae5b28dfb03c8a66b92bcc02804>

## Gatton gas plan to keep prices down

Matthew Killoran, Courier-Mail, 23/12/2019

A new power station to help keep the lights on in Queensland and NSW will be announced today, as the first of a series of new generation is given the tick.

The gas-fired power plant at Gatton will be underwritten by the Morrison Government and is one of 12 generators short-listed just prior to the election.

No decision has yet been made on a coal-fired power station at Collinsville, championed by some LNP MPs, which was also short-listed.

At 132 megawatts, the Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners gas plant is a smaller generator but can be used to firm up renewable power and can switch on with little notice during peak periods.

The Federal Government is not funding the project, but instead underwriting its debt, so taxpayers will not have to fork out for the construction and any financial exposure is expected to be minimal.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/dec/23/morrison-government-to-under-write-two-new-gas-power-stations>

## Morrison government to underwrite two new gas power stations

Amy Remeikis, Guardian, 23/12/2019

The federal government has announced it will underwrite two new gas-fired power stations, with Scott Morrison saying it may still greenlight coal-fired generation for Queensland and New South Wales.

Even as Australia suffers through a record-breaking heatwave Morrison said the government would continue

to explore all power options and would not be deterred by "lots of shouting noises" and instead would listen to "those quiet still voices".

The energy minister, Angus Taylor, has ticked off on underwriting a 132-megawatt gas plant in Gatton, in Queensland's south-east, with another 220-megawatt gas generator project in Dandenong, Victoria, also passing muster.

The private companies that put forward the proposals, Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners in Queensland and the APA Group in Victoria, now have the go-ahead to continue with the projects if they can secure their own finance.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/scientists-probe-underground-for-gas-in-the-otway-basin-20191220-p53m0c.html>

## Scientists probe underground for gas in the Otway Basin

Benjamin Preiss & Nick Toscano, Age, 21/12/2019

The Andrews government will consider lifting its ban of onshore natural gas drilling next year to tap potentially large quantities of gas in Victoria's Otway Basin for commercial and household use.

Business leaders have been calling for an expansion of gas extraction in Victoria, pitting them against environmentalists who say that expanding the gas sector will drive up carbon emissions.

The latest progress report on Victoria's Gas Program comes as the government prepares to decide whether to lift its moratorium on conventional or natural onshore gas exploration by the end of June next year.

However, the report found that further research is required to determine whether there is a more definite indication of gas supply in the Otway Basin.

The state ban on unconventional drilling including "fracking" – the practice of injecting large volumes of water, sand and chemicals into underground shale rock at high pressure to force the extraction of gas – is banned indefinitely.

<https://www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/story/6548577/decade-in-review-sparks-as-csg-takes-off/>

## Rapid growth in Queensland's coal seam gas industry throughout decade

Melody Labinsky, Q Country Life, 29/12/2019

It was the issue that pitted two of Queensland's biggest economic drivers

against each other.

Agriculture, touted as a pillar of the state during the 2011 election campaign, and the resource industry's next big thing, coal seam gas.

Lock the Gate Alliance Queensland spokesperson Ellie Smith said community groups had pulled together in the past decade to fight the unrelenting march of invasive gasfields across the fertile Western Downs and north to the Bowen Basin.

"The government's own reports show that at least 127 groundwater bores have already drained and that up to 574 more bores are likely to drain due to CSG," Ms Smith said.

"Communities are now joining up to demand stronger protections and cheaper, reliable renewable alternatives to gas in the coming decade."

[https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&-objectid=12296948](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&-objectid=12296948)

## Fight on as multinational oil giant gains go-ahead

Chris Morris, Otago Daily Times, 28/12/2019

International oil giant OMV is turning its sights on southern waters after being given approval to drill in the Great South Basin. But travelling south with its drill rig will be big questions about climate change and human rights.

It is not every day you get the chance to fight a multinational oil giant in your own backyard.

That is the prospect facing Jack Brazil, a spokesman for Oil Free Otago, as he and the other members of the group plot protest action against OMV when it enters southern waters later this summer.

His comments came after the Environmental Protection Agency this week granted OMV consent to drill up to 10 exploration and appraisal wells in the Great South Basin — which lies off the Otago and Southland coastline — by 2030.

A recent Carbon Majors Report, published in 2017, named OMV AG – the Austria-based parent company of OMV's global operations, including OMV NZ – as one of the top 100 companies responsible for 71% of global emissions.



OMV's giant drilling rig, COSL Prospector, has rounded New Zealand's Stewart Island on its way to the Great South Basin. Photo: Contributed

<https://www.odt.co.nz/business/oil-rig-nearing-drilling-site>

### Oil rig nearing drilling site

Chris Morris, *Otago Daily Times*, 04/01/2020

Global oil giant OMV says it could expand its activities off the Otago coast, as a drilling rig and a fleet of support vessels move into southern waters.

It was confirmed yesterday OMV's giant drilling rig, COSL Prospector, had rounded Stewart Island on its way to the Great South Basin.

The rig has sailed down the West Coast from Taranaki in recent days and was yesterday southeast of Stewart Island, heading northeast towards the Tawhaki-1 drill site, located 146km off the coast of Balclutha.

There, waiting to meet it, a fleet of five support vessels has assembled, including Skandi Atlantic and Pacific Runner.

And, as OMV's preparations for drilling ramp up, helicopters have been ferrying crew and supplies from Dunedin out to the vessels at sea.

News of the drill rig's arrival was greeted with hostility by Oil Free Otago yesterday, but welcomed by Cr Andrew Whiley, a spokesman for ProGas Otago.

Oil Free Otago spokesman Jack Brazil said OMV's arrival made a "mockery" of recent decisions to end new oil and gas prospecting in New Zealand.

<https://radio.wosu.org/post/study-natural-gas-led-economic-benefits-and-premature-deaths-region>

### Study: Natural gas led to economic benefits and premature deaths in region

Julie Grant, *Radio WOSU.org*, 12/12/2019

A new study by Carnegie Mellon University finds that in the Pennsylvania-Ohio-West Virginia region, the economic boost from shale gas drilling has been less than the cost of premature deaths caused by pollution from the industry.

The study, published last month in the journal *Nature Sustainability*, found that between 2004-2016, shale development created a regional economic boost of \$21 billion. That's compared with \$23 billion in the costs related to the 1,200-4,600 premature deaths linked to air pollution from the industry.

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/bhp-closes-in-on-deal-for-world-s-first-lng-powered-shipping-fleet-20191229-p53nem.html>

### BHP closes in on deal for world's first LNG-powered shipping fleet

Nick Toscano, *SMH*, 30/12/2019

Australian miner BHP is preparing to award a landmark contract as early as March for the world's first fleet of bulk ships fuelled by liquefied natural gas after reviewing 17 bids from gas producers, shipbuilders and financial institutions.

BHP, the largest charterer of bulk carriers in the world, has revealed it is close to deciding who will win a tender to design and supply LNG-powered ships to transport up to 27 million tonnes of its iron ore exports to Asia.

BHP maritime vice-president Rashpal Bhatti said the introduction of bulk carriers running off LNG rather than diesel would eliminate NOx (nitrogen oxide) and SOx (sulphur oxide) emissions as well reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 25 per cent.

As well as shipping companies, some of Australia's major gas producers including Woodside, Shell and Pavilion were among the companies to have participated in the tender.

• The reporter travelled to Singapore courtesy of BHP.

<https://www.michaelwest.com.au/smithereens-australias-climate-commitments-blown-if-giant-fossil-fuel-projects-proceed/>

### Smithereens: Australia's climate commitments blown if giant fossil fuel projects proceed

Michael West, *MichaelWest.com*, 02/01/2020

As bushfires rage and the demands for action on climate rise, the gas cartel is developing a suite of enormous fossil fuel projects destined to blow Australia's commitments to the Paris Agreement to smithereens.

Adani is just the tip of the slag-heap. In 2020, the war between climate campaigners and the fossil fuel lobby is poised to escalate dramatically as a slew of large fossil fuel projects push towards approval and production.

Battles will rage over each one, battles between farmers and frackers, between activists and lobbyists, between renewables and old energy interests; battles all fuelled by the unfolding tragedies of this summer's bushfires.

Adani is a stalking horse for other projects, for fossil fuel interests of Gina Rinehart and Clive Palmer in the Galilee Basin.

Behind the scenes, a Chinese and Singapore-backed pipeline monopoly, Jemena, is lobbying for government subsidies to build a pipeline from Mt Isa to Gladstone in Queensland.

Should this occur, says analyst Bruce Robertson, it will open up three new provinces to gas fracking: shale gas in the Northern Territory's Beetaloo basin and new coal and coal seam gas (CSG) developments in the North Bowen and Galilee basins.

“There’s the Burrup Hub development on the North West Shelf, the whole Galilee Basin complex – not just Adani but Gina (Rinehart) and Clive (Palmer) too – shale gas fracking in the Beetaloo and more coal and CSG in the North Bowen and Galilee.”

## MINING MAYHEM

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/01/20000-feet-under-the-sea/603040/>

### History’s largest mining operation is about to begin

It’s underwater – and the consequences are unimaginable

*Wil S Hylton, The Atlantic, Jan/Feb 2020*

Mining companies want access to the seabed beneath international waters, which contain more valuable minerals than all the continents combined.

At full capacity, these companies expect to dredge thousands of square miles a year. Their collection vehicles will creep across the bottom in systematic rows, scraping through the top five inches of the ocean floor. Ships above will draw thousands of pounds of sediment through a hose to the surface, remove the metallic objects, known as polymetallic nodules, and then flush the rest back into the water. Some of that slurry will contain toxins such as mercury and lead, which could poison the surrounding ocean for hundreds of miles. The rest will drift in the current until it settles in nearby ecosystems. An early study by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences predicted that each mining ship will release about 2 million cubic feet of discharge every day, enough to fill a freight train that is 16 miles long.

The harms of burning fossil fuels and the impact of land-based mining are beyond dispute, but the cost of plundering the ocean is impossible to know.

Jeff Drazen of the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative, said: “We’re about to make one of the biggest transformations that humans have ever made to the surface of the planet. We’re going to strip-mine a massive habitat, and once it’s gone, it isn’t coming back.”

• 7,000 word article describes in detail the challenges and environmental hazards of ocean mining.

## CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://e360.yale.edu/digest/the-global-price-tag-for-100-percent-renewable-energy-73-trillion>

### The global price tag for 100 percent renewable energy: US\$73 trillion

*Yale Environment 360, 20/12/2019*

A global effort to transition to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050 would cost nations \$73 trillion upfront — but the expense will pay for itself in under seven years, according to a new report from researchers at Stanford University. The study also found that the shift to a zero-carbon global economy would create 28.6 million more full-time jobs than if nations continue their current reliance on fossil fuels.

The report, published in the journal *One Earth*, presents detailed roadmaps for how 143 countries that account for 99.7 percent of all global greenhouse gas emissions could successfully transition to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/climate-denial-energy-in-depth\\_n\\_5df7eff6e4b0ae01a1e59371](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/climate-denial-energy-in-depth_n_5df7eff6e4b0ae01a1e59371)

### Fossil fuel giants claim to support climate science, yet still fund denial

*Paul D Thacker, Huffington Post, 25/12/2019*

Most energy companies now acknowledge that burning fossil fuels is warming the planet. And yet many continue to fund disinformation about industry’s role in climate change and its harm to human health.

In the latest example, documents and recordings reviewed by *HuffPost* show that the Independent Petroleum Association of America has spent almost \$2 million a year for the last two years on Energy In Depth (EID), a “research, education and public outreach campaign” that regularly attacks scientists whose research is critical of industry. The campaign has received financial backing from 14 different oil and gas companies including Shell, Occidental Petroleum, BP, Chevron and Halliburton.

EID has posted several pages attacking the research of Harvard scholars Naomi Oreskes and Geoffrey Supran, calling their published study that showed Exxon Mobil misled the public on the dangers of climate change “incomplete” and “activist.” In another example, EID points to Exxon Mobil-funded research to undermine the scholars’ studies.

“When science threatens their interest, they attack or attempt to undermine

it,” said Oreskes, a professor of history of science. “And when they can’t do that, they attempt to discredit the scientists who produced it.”

Although fossil fuel companies now claim to support climate action, they continue to misrepresent scientific work in order to protect profits and protect themselves from liability or responsibility, said Geoffrey Supran, a Harvard research fellow.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/weather/there-s-definitely-a-warming-trend-you-can-t-not-see-it-our-year-of-wild-weather-20191230-p53nld.html>

### There’s definitely a warming trend. You can’t not see it: Our year of wild weather

*Peter Hannam, SMH, 31/12/2019*

Dust storms, diving dam levels, heatwaves and fish kills marked both the start and finish of 2019 for NSW, with the eruption of mega bushfires and incessant smoke haze adding to the year-end’s woes.

For Sydney, 2019 will go also down as the city’s hottest in 161 years of Bureau of Meteorology records. It was also its driest year since 2005 - during the height of the Millennium Drought - said Ben Domensino, a meteorologist at Weatherzone.

Domensino said climate change caused by increased emissions of greenhouse gases increased the odds of getting the extreme temperatures that have marked 2019.

“There’s clearly a warming trend,” he said. “You can’t not see it.”

<https://www.ecowatch.com/climate-change-worst-disasters-2019-2642927054.html>

### Climate disasters in 2019 cost billions, report finds

*Cassie Kelly, Ecowatch, 30/12/2019*

Climate Change is getting costlier and deadlier. A new report from British charity Christian Aid found that 15 of the world’s largest natural disasters in 2019 – including wildfires, hurricanes, typhoons and more – had links to a warming world. All 15 of those disasters cost more than \$1 billion in damages, and seven of them cost more than \$10 billion each.

Record rainfall in the spring caused more than \$12.5 billion in damages throughout the midwest and southern U.S. due to flooding. On the flip side, a dry summer and record heat waves, which spurred massive wildfires in California, cost more than \$25 billion in damages.

Developing nations are experiencing the worst loss. More than 1,300 people lost their lives to Cyclone Idai in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi in March. Another 1,900 were killed in Northern India from June to October when monsoon flooding hit record levels. And 673 people were killed during Hurricane Dorian, which many regard as the worst natural disaster to ever hit the Bahamas.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-02/2019-was-australias-hottest-and-driest-year-on-record/11837312>

## 2019 was Australia's hottest and driest year on record

Kate Doyle, ABC, 02/01/2019

The data is in and 2019 has topped the Bureau of Meteorology's (BOM) charts for average and maximum temperatures as well as the lowest annual rainfall across the country.

It will come as no surprise to those suffering through this horror fire and heatwave season that the conditions leading up to it were the worst on record.

BOM will comment when its official report comes out next week, but the numbers speak for themselves.

Australia's annual mean temperature was 1.52 degrees Celsius above the 1961-90 average of 21.8C – well above the previous hottest year (2013) at 1.33C.

Also, the daytime temperature record was smashed, with the average maximum temperature of 30.69C coming in 2.09C above the 1961-90 average.

The previous record, set in 2013, was 30.19C.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/03/we-are-seeing-the-very-worst-of-our-scientific-predictions-come-to-pass-in-these-bushfires>

## We are seeing the very worst of our scientific predictions come to pass in these bushfires

Joëlle Gergis, Guardian, 03/01/2020

As a climate scientist, the thing that really terrifies me is that weather conditions considered extreme by today's standards will seem sedate in the future. What's unfolding right now is really just a taste of the new normal.

At this point I could restate all the lines of scientific evidence that clearly show the links between human-caused climate change and the intensification of extreme weather conditions not just in Australia, but all over the world.

To avoid sounding like a broken record, instead I will say that as a lead author on the forthcoming Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment report of the global climate due out next year, I can assure you that the planetary situation is extremely dire.

It's no exaggeration to say my work as a scientist now keeps me up at night.

Cynics might say that our government seems to be taking advantage of the fact that we are a remarkable people willing to do whatever it takes to defend our incredibly unique nation. But the longer we leave things on a national policy level, the worse things are going to get.

Failing to adequately plan for the known threat of climate change in a country like Australia should now be considered to be an act of treason.

The scientific community has been trying to warn the government of the need to plan to adapt to climate change for at least a decade. In fact, the world's first global conference on climate change adaptation was hosted here in Australia, on the Gold Coast in 2010.

We have already squandered over a decade debating climate policy in Australia. All the while, the clear reality of a rapidly destabilising planet accelerates all around us.

There genuinely is no more time to waste. We must act as though our home is on fire – because it is.

• *Dr Joëlle Gergis is an award-winning climate scientist and writer based at the Australian National University.*

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/australia/comment-australia-is-committing-climate-suicide/ar-BBYArA-P?ocid=sl>

## Comment: Australia is committing climate suicide

Richard Flanagan, MSN News, 05/01/2019

Australia today is ground zero for the climate catastrophe. Its glorious Great Barrier Reef is dying, its world-heritage rain forests are burning, its giant kelp forests have largely vanished, numerous towns have run out of water or are about to, and now the vast continent is burning on a scale never before seen.

The images of the fires are a cross between "Mad Max" and "On the Beach": thousands driven onto beaches in a dull orange haze, crowded tableaux of people and animals almost medieval in their strange muteness.

And yet, incredibly, the response of Australia's leaders to this unprecedented national crisis has been not to defend their country but to defend the coal industry, a big donor to both major parties – as if they were willing the country to its doom. While the fires were exploding in mid-December, the leader of the opposition Labor Party went on a tour of coal mines expressing his unequivocal support for coal exports. The prime minister, the conservative Scott Morrison, went on vacation to Hawaii.

In no small part Morrison owes his narrow election victory earlier this year to the coal-mining oligarch Clive Palmer, who formed a puppet party to keep the Labor Party – which had been committed to limited but real climate-change action – out of government. Palmer's advertising budget for the campaign was more than double that of the two major parties combined. Palmer subsequently announced plans to build the biggest coal mine in Australia.

Morrison made his name as immigration minister, perfecting the cruelty of a policy that interns refugees in hellish Pacific-island camps, and seems indifferent to human suffering. Now his government has taken a disturbing authoritarian turn, cracking down on unions, civic organizations and journalists. Under legislation pending in Tasmania, and expected to be copied across Australia, environmental protesters now face up to 21 years in jail for demonstrating.

"Australia is a burning nation led by cowards," wrote the leading broadcaster Hugh Riminton, speaking for many. He might have added "idiots," after Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack blamed the fires on exploding horse manure.

Such are those who would open the gates of hell and lead a nation to commit climate suicide.

Morrison may have a massive propaganda machine in the Murdoch press and no opposition, but his moral authority is bleeding away by the hour. On Thursday, after walking away from a woman asking for help, he was forced to flee the angry, heckling residents of a burned-out town. A local conservative politician described his own leader's humiliation as "the welcome he probably deserved."

• *Richard Flanagan won the Man Booker Prize for "The Narrow Road to the Deep North." His latest novel is "First Person."*

## FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2019/12/19/protest-kirribilli-house-pm/>

### Protesters set up camp outside missing Scott Morrison's official residence

*New Daily, 19/12/2019*

Ten people including a NSW Greens MP were arrested Thursday after climate protesters launched a "camp-out" at Scott Morrison's Sydney prime ministerial residence.

Greens MP David Shoebridge was among activists outside Kirribilli House on Thursday demanding urgent action amid unprecedented bushfires.

NSW Police said nine adults and a child had been arrested for disobeying a police direction to move on.

The Prime Minister is reportedly on a family holiday in Hawaii, although his office has repeatedly refused to confirm where he is.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/tim-flannery-climate-group-funding-ex-fire-chiefs-going-it-alone/news-story/fd55e5bd69cc54288e071d07808438c9>

### Fire chiefs' climate group a pet 'project' of activist Tim Flannery

*Brad Norington, Aus, 17/12/2019*

Climate activist Tim Flannery is the force behind a band of former state fire and emergency chiefs accusing Scott Morrison of abandoning bushfires across the nation and demanding an immediate end to the burning of fossil fuels.

The Australian has confirmed Emergency Leaders for Climate Action – 29 ex-fire chiefs led by former NSW Fire and Rescue commissioner Greg Mullins – is funded by Professor Flannery's crowd-funded Climate Council as an official "project".

A source close to the Climate Council claimed it was "largely a vehicle for Tim Flannery". He added, however, that the decision of fire chiefs to accept support as a Climate Council "project" was significant and could not be underestimated because of their authority in the community as experienced firefighters who had witnessed worsening weather conditions.

"These fire chiefs are not muppets, they are hardly activists," he said. "They've made a deliberate decision to take a stand because they see conditions are getting serious."

Mullins said on Tuesday it was "no good saying we're only a small emitter" of carbon dioxide pollution and it

was "simply not true" when Australia ranked 17th in the world, and was the world's No 5 emitter when coal exports were taken into account.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/labor-stop-chasing-the-blue-collar-regional-mirage-your-future-is-in-the-cities-20191216-p53kde.html>

### Labor, stop chasing the blue-collar regional mirage, your future is in the cities

*Daniel McNamara, SMH, 27/12/2019*

Labor copped a wipeout in blue-collar regional seats in the 2019 federal election. Several of these seats were lost, while others that Labor still holds look vulnerable next time.

A feature of these results was the erosion of Labor's primary vote to Pauline Hanson and Clive Palmer, who in turn fed preferences to the Coalition. The largest swings against Labor occurred in the seats that are home to Australia's coal export industry, in north Queensland and NSW's Hunter Valley. The controversy over the Adani mine was clearly a major factor in these seats.

This was no doubt front of mind for Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese as he toured regional Queensland this month, taking the opportunity to express his support for coal exports.

Like Albanese, other senior members of shadow cabinet including Jim Chalmers, Richard Marles and Joel Fitzgibbon have been making accommodative noises towards the coal industry, as part of a pitch aimed at winning back blue collar voters in the regions.

Global trends across Western democracies suggest Labor is, to use a technical expression, pissing into the wind. If it wants to win government again it needs to acknowledge a structural change in politics worldwide. It needs to look beyond the regional working class for votes.

Labor's leaders are quixotic to think that a few messaging tweaks will be enough to reverse this trend. It hasn't worked anywhere else and it's unlikely to work here.

Regional areas with a resources-focused economic profile are likely to be especially hostile territory for Labor in the coming years. Adani is far from a one-off. The elephant in the room is that carbon emissions from Australia's coal and gas exports dwarf the entirety of our domestic emissions across all sectors.

Now for the good news for Labor, if it chooses to listen. Centre-left parties around the world are winning power by building coalitions of voters who predominantly live in cities and their surrounding suburbs, span a range of income brackets from the precariat to the middle class, tend to work in the broad and expanding services sector, and are increasingly culturally diverse and university-educated.

In 2019, Labor, the Greens and moderate independents enjoyed swings to them in previously safe urban Liberal seats. There are plenty of Liberal-held seats in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide which are ripe for the picking because their voters are alienated by the Liberals' drift into right-wing populism. The Australian Electoral Commission classifies 90 out of 151 seats as metropolitan. Winning the lion's share of these, along with a smattering of progressive-leaning seats outside the big cities, is a viable pathway to government.

Make no mistake, Labor has a lot of work to do to get match fit for this new contest. For inspiration, it should look to New Zealand Labour, which has been resurrected from the brink in large part by the personal popularity of Jacinda Ardern. Australian Labor systematically struggles to produce such leaders.

Labor has a choice. It can spend the coming years fruitlessly chasing the mirage of the lost regional working class. Or it can position itself for the future through a city-led strategy, in the mould of its successful centre-left peers internationally. If it doesn't move fast, it could soon find its position in the electoral landscape redundant.

• *Daniel McNamara worked for the ALP national secretariat during the past two federal election campaigns.*

<https://www.michaelwest.com.au/the-clean-energy-finance-corporations-love-hate-relationship-with-the-coalition-part-1/>

### The Clean Energy Finance Corporation: Lazarus with a triple bypass

*Anthony Klan, MichaelWest.com, 29/12/2019*

The \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation has survived years of merciless attacks from the Coalition, including two attempts to abolish it and underhanded "mandate" changes which threatened to render it useless. Now it has become a darling of PM Scott Morrison, is under the control of Angus Taylor – and is staring at one of the biggest crossroads of its existence. Anthony Klan's two-part

investigation uncovers some questionable investments, a string of satisfied Liberal donors, a Coalition with a fossil fuel problem and a Macquarie Banker at almost every turn.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/kean-tasks-chief-scientist-to-ensure-nsw-not-left-behind-on-green-energy-jobs-20191228-p53nbx.html>

### **Kean asks for plan for NSW to lead green economy**

*Caitlin Fitzsimmons & Michael Koziol, SMH, 29/12/2019*

The NSW government has commissioned the state's chief scientist to prepare a blueprint for a radically decarbonised economy that will lay the groundwork for the state to become a leader in clean energy exports and green technology.

NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean said the move will ensure NSW is not "left behind" in the move to renewable energy, amid criticism that the federal Coalition government has not done enough to combat climate change.

Kean said he had a good reaction when he spoke up on climate change earlier in December, saying that «no one could deny» the link between the bushfires and global warming.

"I can't tell you how many Liberals came up to me and just said 'thank God, we've been so scared to speak up on this issue'. This should not be a partisan political issue," Kean said. "I was delighted to see even Barnaby accepts we need to move to a low emissions future, which is why he's called for nuclear but the reality is there are cheaper, safer ways to deliver reliable energy, than large-scale nuclear. Also, why would you move to nuclear if you don't believe in climate change?"

Kean recently visited a nuclear reactor in Belgium owned by the huge French energy company Engie. He was told the company wouldn't build any new nuclear power stations because renewables were "cheaper, more reliable and evolving exponentially".

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/our-future-depends-on-it-young-libs-unveil-climate-change-action-plan-20191230-p53njr.html>

### **'Our future depends on it': Young Libs unveil climate change action plan**

*Alexandra Smith, SMH, 02/01/2020*

The NSW Young Liberals are demanding the federal government make sweeping policy changes to tackle the "extraordinary challenges presented by human induced climate change".

In a significant move that puts them at odds with Prime Minister Scott Morrison, his branch of the Young Liberals say their generation's future depends on an overhaul of government policy.

NSW Young Liberal president Chaneg Torres said the governing body of the party's youth wing voted unanimously at its December meeting to push for new climate change policies.

The Young Liberals say they want a "practical, market-based means for Australia to cut its emissions by 30 per cent of Kyoto levels by 2030" while providing market certainty to keep energy prices low.

Key changes they propose include a taxation policy with green asset write-offs, a national household solar panel program and a "market signalling scheme to promote certainty in the energy sector".

The government should also repeal federal and state bans on nuclear energy and investigate nuclear power as well as consider the "under-utilised potential of hydro power", the Young Liberals say.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2020/01/02/michael-pascoe-murdoch-climate/>

### **How Murdoch's myrmidons murdered climate policy**

*Michael Pascoe, New Daily, 02/01/2020*

"The Murdoch media, determined to remove the Labor government at any cost, mounted a savage war on the science of climate change and the structural reforms that needed to be undertaken," wrote former Labor Treasurer Wayne Swan in a 2017 article and reprised this week on Twitter.

It's an important insight as it suggests an answer to the mystery of the Murdoch media's rabid climate denialism in Australia – a campaign by our biggest newspaper company that has both enabled and goaded the troglodyte end of the Coalition to make Australia a world leader in fighting carbon reduction, in worsening our changed climate.

Without the on-going Murdoch campaign promoting climate disinformation and sheer lunacy, it's hard to imagine any government being able to persist with its cynical twisting of emissions policy, never mind outright lies.

If all major Australian media played the climate issue straight, a denialist government couldn't survive.

But that has been the point of the Murdoch campaign – political power, not economics, not science, not even the pseudo-science it promotes.

The tragedy of the Murdoch echo chamber is that it has come to ensnare its readership as well as its editors. Coalition members and voters are the core of that readership

When *The Australian* printed a surprisingly straight report of the latest consensus climate concerns, readers' comments were strongly critical of the story, but readers' comments after a whacky denialist rave were strongly supportive. Murdoch media have been captured by the monster they created.

Murdoch media campaign has been highly successful, making Australia one of only two major countries where action to limit climate change is a left-versus-right issue. Internationally, Australia works with the likes of Saudi Arabia and Brazil to sabotage necessary emissions reductions.

That's the cost of Murdoch's myrmidons installing the political leaders and governments of their master's choice.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jan/03/tony-abbott-former-australian-pm-tells-israeli-radio-the-world-is-in-the-grip-of-a-climate-cult>

### **Tony Abbott, former Australian PM, tells Israeli radio the world is 'in the grip of a climate cult'**

*Graham Readfern, Guardian, 03/01/2020*

The Israeli public broadcaster has come under fire from angry listeners after broadcasting an interview with Tony Abbott in which he said the world was "in the grip of a climate cult".

During the interview, recorded on 15 December while his home state of NSW was fighting terrifying bushfires, Abbott denied that carbon dioxide was driving global warming. The interview was broadcast on New Year's Eve.

Abbott said: "While we still seem to be in the grip of a climate cult, the climate cult is going to produce policy outcomes that will cause people to wake up to themselves."

After claiming, incorrectly, that a focus on emissions reduction in Australia had caused blackouts and rising power prices, Abbott said: "Sooner or later, in the end, people get hit over the head by reality."

The host of the show, Israel Public Broadcasting Corporation foreign editor Eran Mor-Cicurel, interjected part-

way through the interview, pointing out Australia had been hit by fires and disasters “happening again and again”.

Mor-Cicurel asked Abbott if he was “denying that fact we are in the process of global warming and global change”.

Abbott responded that while there was “no doubt that climate has changed”, previous warming events had happened before the industrial revolution.

Abbott’s points are contradicted by every major science academy in the world, as well as the expertise of government science agencies in Australia.

Mor-Cicurel told *Guardian Australia* the radio network had been reporting regularly on Australia’s bushfire crisis and was not aware of Abbott’s views before the interview.

He said: “Personally I was surprised [by Abbott’s views on climate change]. I did not expect a former prime minister of Australia to be so blunt about environmental issues in the middle of an environmental crisis in Australia.

“When we put it to air, people were terribly angry at us for airing such extremist views, especially from environmental organisations that were annoyed that we had given the stage to these kinds of views.”

Abbott was prime minister from September 2013 to 2015. He lost his Sydney seat of Warringah at the 2019 general election.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/scott-morrison-starts-bushfire-repair-with-states-after-weekend-of-confusion-20200105-p53p0s.html>

**State Liberals vent anger at ‘disconnected’ Morrison over bushfires**

*Alexandra Smith, David Crowe & Chris Barrett, SMH, 05/01/2020*

A senior NSW government minister has accused Prime Minister Scott Morrison of trying “to tear down” Premier Gladys Berejiklian to “save himself” over his response to the bushfire crisis.

Amid tensions over a lack of consultation on the deployment of 3000 Australian Defence Force reservists, the minister said on Sunday: “We have seen her on TV each night standing shoulder-to-shoulder with [NSW Rural Fire Service chief] Shane Fitzsimmons.

“But what we haven’t seen are the visits, support and leadership she has shown away from the cameras without any fanfare.

“So you can imagine how gutted we all felt when Scott Morrison returns from holidays and tries to throw her under a bus to save himself.”

Another senior Liberal MP said: “I think there is disbelief at how disconnected Morrison is. This has been a knee-jerk political response. The best thing he can do is keep quiet and keep out of the way.”

Morrison blamed “breakdown” among defence personnel for the confusion over the mammoth military intervention after state fire leaders revealed they had learnt of the move “informally” or through the media.

The tensions over consultation and co-ordination undermined the federal and state responses to the fires at a time when Morrison was on the defensive over his decision to go on holiday before Christmas and his release of a social media video on Saturday night to promote his response to the fires.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-06/nsw-bushfires-two-people-unaccounted-for-says-rfs/11843060>

**Two NSW residents unaccounted for after horror weekend of fires**

*ABC, 06/01/2020*

Two people are unaccounted for in southern New South Wales as crews continue to assess the damage caused by devastating bushfires on the weekend.

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said NSW was in “uncharted territory”. The Premier and commissioner strongly rejected Prime Minister Scott Morri-

son’s comments over the weekend that Australian Defence Force assistance was rejected.

“The answer is simply no,” Fitzsimmons said.

“There has been no offer of assistance that I’m aware of that we haven’t accepted.

“If these rumours or these messages keep going around, I would simply ask [what] was the offer of assistance that we rejected? Because I’m certainly not aware of any.”

Berejiklian said her Government had “left no stone unturned” when it came to securing resources for firefighting efforts.

Over the weekend, Morrison told the media he offered naval assets to NSW for emergency evacuations but the State Government rejected the offer.

When this claim was put to Berejiklian by journalists, she responded: “Not true, not true.”

This morning, NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance took aim at those politicising the bushfire crisis, telling them to “shut up”.



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