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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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Equinor pulls out of Bight



Photo: Greenpeace Australia Pacific

Norwegian oil company Equinor announced on February 25 it will abandon plans to drill in the Great Australian Bight because it is “not commercially competitive”.

“This is an incredible win for people power and nature – after years of relentless campaigning by coastal communities, Indigenous traditional owners, surfers, the seafood industry, tourism operators and other local businesses,” said David Ritter, CEO of Greenpeace Australia Pacific.

“Never doubt the power and determination of the Australian people.”

Equinor took over BP’s exploration licence to drill in deep waters 372km south of the Ceduna coast, but is now the latest fossil fuel company to pull out of drilling for oil in the Great Australian Bight.

This follows BP’s withdrawal in 2016, Chevron’s exit in 2017, and Karoon Gas in 2019. Santos, Murphy Oil and Bight Petroleum still have plans to drill there.

“The only way to protect coastal communities and the Great Australian Bight’s unique marine life is to rule out drilling permanently,” Ritter said.

“The world’s climate cannot afford to open disastrous new oil frontiers.

Extreme oil projects must be stopped

“Extreme oil projects like this have no place in Australia’s waters, and Greenpeace will continue to fight to protect Australia’s wild whale sanctuary.

“The Australian government should now impose a permanent moratorium on oil drilling in this precious marine wonderland.”

The move was also welcomed by Wilderness Society.

“The Wilderness Society welcomes Equinor’s decision to responsibly withdraw from the marine wilderness that is the Great Australian Bight.

“It’s been a while coming, but the right decision is the right decision

and we have no doubt that the hundreds of thousands of people that have supported the campaign to Fight for the Bight will be both delighted and relieved to hear this news”, said Wilderness Society South Australian Director, Peter Owen.

“We’ve worked tirelessly alongside the community to ensure that the Bight can be protected from irresponsible fossil fuel exploitation.

“Four major oil companies have now left the Bight since the Fight for the Bight began. It’s clear that drilling the Bight is not a sensible proposition.

“Opening up a new high-risk frontier oil field when we are hurtling towards catastrophic climate change is madness.

“We are now calling on the Australian Government to listen to the people and permanently protect the unique waters of the Great Australian Bight from drilling for good,” said Owen.

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• **P2: Gasco’s write the rules in NT**

• **P3: Aussie summers: Long, hot nightmares**

• **P4: Taylor produces roadmap to disaster**

Gasco's write the rules in NT

New Australia Institute analysis shows NT fracking emissions under the NT Government's own Fracking Inquiry's high production scenario would be worse than the emissions of Australia's coal fleet across the National Energy Market (NEM) in 2030, and require more offsets each year than have ever been issued in Australia to date.

Key findings:

- Government documents released under FOI show annual emissions from fracking for gas in the NT could be as large as 22% of Australia's current annual emissions
- This would be more carbon emissions than from all coal power stations expected to then be running in the NEM
- The analysis also shows that the offsets required to offset NT fracking lifecycle emissions under the larger production scenario would be larger each year than all Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) ever issued by the Australian Government (74 MtCO₂e)
- This follows previous analysis that found offsetting just the emissions produced in Australia would cost billions of dollars to offset every year. The NT Government has committed to offsetting all emissions.

Offset promises must be honoured

The Australia Institute has called on the NT Government to confirm it will keep its commitment to properly implement the Fracking Inquiry's recommendation that fracking can only go ahead if all fracking emissions are offset. This includes using credited Australian Government offsets, Accredited Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs).

"If fracking goes ahead in the NT it will simply be throwing further fuel on the fire of global warming that is already driving dangerous climate change including increasing in extreme heat in the Territory," said Tom Swann, senior researcher at the Australia Institute.

"Darwin is projected to have up to around 300 days per year over 35 degrees under a high emissions scenario within the lifetime of today's Territorians. If this eventuates it would be catastrophic for tourism and agri-



A fracking operation in Australia. Photo: Lock the Gate

culture and make large swathes of the Territory essentially uninhabitable.

"The cost of offsetting the NT fracking emissions under these scenarios would be massive because the amount of heat-trapping gas it would pump into the atmosphere is massive.

"This is why the Government's own Fracking Inquiry found potential fracking emissions "unacceptable," and why many of Australia's leading scientists have called for a permanent ban on fracking on fracking in the NT."

Gas lobby's regulations

Meanwhile, landholder groups have condemned the Gunner Government's proposal to allow oil and gas lobby group APPEA to assist in drafting the laws and regulations governing gas company land access.

Testimony from the Protect Country Alliance warns the Petroleum Act Amendment draft Bill grants the gas lobby extraordinary influence to shape new laws for land access arrange-

ments, and prevents other stakeholders from consultation or input.

"The Bill, in its current form, unfairly favours the fracking companies when it comes to land access and fails to even outline minimum standards to protect landholders, as required by the Pepper Inquiry recommendations," Protect Country Alliance spokesperson Lauren Mellor said.

The Bill misses the clear intention in Justice Pepper's Fracking Inquiry Final Report that, "There must be a statutorily enshrined land access agreement prior to any onshore shale gas activity on any Pastoral Lease."

"It's really quite extraordinary. Instead of putting the details of the new laws for fracking land access into the Bill, the Government Department is arguing for the laws to be drafted as regulations behind closed doors, with the involvement of fracking lobby group APPEA," Ms Mellor said.

"Many other stakeholders will not have the opportunity for any input in

Aussie summers: long, hot nightmares

The Australian summer is getting longer and winter is getting shorter, due to global warming, according to new research from the Australia Institute Climate & Energy Program.

The Australia Institute analysis uses Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) data to track changes in daily temperatures that mark the beginning of each season over the sub-tropical and temperate parts of the country where most Australians live.

Key findings:

In the two decades 1999-2018, compared to the mid-twentieth century benchmark:

- Summer temperatures were experienced for a full 31 days longer than the benchmark, and
- Winter temperatures were experienced for 23 days (over three weeks) less than the benchmark.
- In most recent years (2014-18) the trend has continued, leading to Australians experiencing summers that were twice as long as winters.
- All Australian capital cities experienced longer summers and shorter winters.

Some regional areas of Australia such as Port Macquarie NSW, are experiencing even more dramatic changes to the length of seasons, and are now

seeing seven more weeks of traditional summer temperatures compared to the 1950s and 60s.

“Temperatures which were considered a regular three month summer in the 1950s, now span from early to mid-November all the way to mid-March,” said Richie Merzian, Climate & Energy Program Director at the Australia Institute.

“Following the hottest summer on record, it commonplace to hear older Australians claim summers aren’t what they use do be. And they are right.

“Our findings are not a projection of what we may see in the future. It’s happening right now. Summer have grown longer even in recent years, with the last five years facing summers twice as long as their winters.

“Place such as Port Macquarie in NSW, which suffered devastating fires early in the fire season, are now experiencing seven more weeks of summer compared with the 1950s and 60s.

“As the length of the bushfire summer season extends, the window to enforce bushfire management strategies, typically in winter, shrinks.

“Global heating is already making Australian summers a longer and more dangerous ordeal than they used to be. Extreme heat events are the most fatal of all natural hazards and have been

responsible for more deaths in Australia than all other natural hazards put together.

Economic & lifestyle impacts

“Extended summers will have significant impacts on Australia’s tourism, construction and mining sectors, as well as impacting the everyday lives of Australians. When it comes to agriculture, extended summers can damage crops and exhaust livestock.

“Australia is currently experiencing an average of 1 degree of global warming and summers have extended by around a month. The Australian Government’s current emission reduction targets are aligned with 3 to 4 degrees of warming, which leaves young Australians facing ever lengthening summers with significant consequences.

“According to numerous modelling exercises, including those commissioned by the federal government, it is in Australia’s national interest and economic interest to put in place a strong policy to reduce emissions. The Australian Government’s current policies only serve to further fuel the climate crisis.”

• Download the report here:

<https://www.tai.org.au/sites/default/files/P834%20Out%20of%20Season%20%5BWEB%5D.pdf#overlay-context=content/australian-summer-now-over-one-month-longer>

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Gasco’s write the rules; landholders report bullying and intimidation

• Continued from p2

this process, and parliament would be denied scrutiny of any legislative amendments.

“We are calling on the members of the Legislative Scrutiny Committee to hold the Gunner Government to account and call for this Bill to be redrafted.

They can ensure the Pepper Inquiry recommendations are implemented in full, instead of allowing APPEA to interfere in a secret drafting process with the Department and Minister’s office.”

Rod Dunbar, owner of Nutwood Downs cattle station near Daly Waters made a presentation to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee about pastoralist concerns with the secretive land access reform process.

He said, “The amount of pressure being put on our family by gas companies including Origin Energy and Hancock Prospecting, aided and abetted by representatives of the Department of Primary Industries, is appalling.

“No landholder should have to go through the bullying and intimidation we’ve experienced.

Power imbalance leaves farmers exposed

“The NT Government’s proposed Petroleum Act amendment Bill does nothing to address the power imbalance between landholders and gas companies. In fact, it could risk weakening existing provisions for

compensation and quiet enjoyment of our property.

“I do not accept that only certain stakeholders will be consulted on the actual detail of the land access provisions. I

“t’s absolutely inappropriate that the gas lobby could be sitting down with the government to write the rules for gaining access to our properties, yet that is what is being proposed here.

“They haven’t even got the laws in place yet and I’m already being harassed for access.

“Under common law I have a right to quiet enjoyment on my property.

“I will keep fighting for a right to say no to fracking, to protect this land and the water resources.”

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Angus Taylor's roadmap to disaster

Greenpeace and The Australia Institute say energy minister Angus Taylor's 'technology roadmap' to reduce emissions is going in the wrong direction.

Their response comes as Taylor announced a move towards more fossil fuels – including hydrogen produced from coal and gas – and the withdrawal of support for renewables such as wind and solar.

CCS smokescreen for fossil expansion

“It is disappointing the government intends to continue using unsuccessful technologies like Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) as a smokescreen for the expansion of high-polluting fossil fuel production in Australia,” said Richie Merzian, Climate & Energy Program Director at the Australia Institute.

“The Minister has claimed an indicator of the success of a technology is private sector interest alongside government investment. By this definition, using Carbon Capture and Storage to generate clean coal has been extremely unsuccessful.

\$1.3 billion in government investment has not delivered a single commercial CCS facility for coal.

“Any technology roadmap to address climate change should be limited to zero emission technologies, such as making ‘green hydrogen’ using water and renewable energy.

“A roadmap without a destination does not make sense. Every Australian state and territory, comparable economies like the UK and Canada, and neighbours like New Zealand and Fiji, all currently have a net zero emissions by 2050.

\$1.3 billion in government investment has not delivered a single commercial Carbon Capture and Storage facility for coal

“Technology uptake will be essential to reducing emissions and setting goals is important, but Australia won't get there without meaningful policies. It is encouraging to see the lithium industry mentioned, as Australia is already the world's largest lithium ore exporter. However, the Australian economy will miss most of the value unless our lithium industry moves up the value chain into refinement and battery manufacturing.

“The Howard Government used the promise of technology as the fig leaf to reject meaningful policy and reject the Kyoto Protocol, and all it did for Australia was keep emissions high and burn our international credibility. This Government risks repeating the same mistake.

“The technologies to reduce emissions in most sectors of the economy already exist and what is actually missing and needed from the federal government is a strong commitment to dramatically reduce emissions beyond 2030.”

Greenpeace: delaying tactics

Nikola Casule, Head of Research and Investigations at Greenpeace Australia Pacific said:

“Images of koalas burned alive are still so fresh in our minds, yet the federal

government just keeps kicking the climate can down the road with another tactic to ignore coal as Australia's top source of emissions.

“This roadmap is going entirely in the wrong direction. The technology to solve today's problems is available now and already powering the country in the form of clean, reliable and affordable renewable energy and storage.

“Huge global economies like Germany and the United Kingdom are already well on their way in making the transition to renewables, leaving the Australian federal government lagging behind.

Global climate action blocked

“If this is the plan Taylor intends on taking to the world stage, Australia can once again be expected to be seen as a global blocker of climate action.

“Using delay tactics like this instead of accelerating the shift to renewable energy is yet another example of the fossil fuel lobby having too much influence over the federal government.

“The government must stop putting the interests of the fossil fuel industry ahead of the interests of Australians.

“The federal government has no plan to drastically reduce emissions to keep Australian families safe from the worsening impacts of climate change.

“In the wake of one of the biggest climate disasters our country has ever seen, what Australian communities need now is strong leadership on phasing out coal, oil and gas as the primary cause of climate change.

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Have you read the lies today?

Extinction Rebellion activists targeted News Corp – the Murdoch newspaper empire – by blockading deliveries from the company's printing presses last week.

People locked themselves to drums of concrete while others held banners, preventing delivery trucks leaving the factory for a few hours in the early morning.

The Murdoch media is the leading platform for climate denialists and fossil fuel promoters.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's speech-writer is a former Murdoch employee.

Photo: Extinction Rebellion

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



Inside the news

Novel Coronavirus, or **COVID-19**, took over the news cycle this week. This corresponded with a marked drop in news about the **fossil fuel furore**.

FFB had to go searching for even one story about **Adani**, finding that Australian chief Lucas Dow gave an optimistic report to the **Bowen Basin Mining Club** (p6). Just imagine the clinking of glasses and ingestion of fine food at this event for mining high-flyers and compliant media reps. Once again, **FFB's invitation** went missing in the mail.

NSW Nationals' leader, John Barilaro, told the *Daily Terrorist* that "**mining uranium is a Nationals policy**". People who still believe the Nationals represent farmers and rural/regional residents be prepared: if there's a uranium deposit near you, the Nationals want you to suck up the fear and welcome a radioactive pile in your area (p8-9).

The Nationals are **clients of the mining industry**, they don't give a damn about their agricultural constituents – be it coal seam gas, coal, oil or uranium, it must be exploited without concern for the people nearby.

Oh, and they want lots of dams too, but the water is not for the family farm – only for **Big Cotton** and **Big Mines**.

Anyone hoping for effective climate action from **Labor** will be disappointed, as **Anthony Albanese** continues to snuggle up to mining communities, saying Australia will **export coal for decades** (p9-10). He should be offering miners a 'just transition' plan to renewables, but with Labor's **Joel Fitzgibbon** joining forces with climate denier Liberal **Craig Kelly**, it appears Labor is as hopelessly divided as the Coalition.

COVID-19 saw pollution levels drop dramatically over industrial regions of China, and is making **Australian gas producers** nervous (p8). China has shut down many industries to try and contain the virus. As it has now escaped into the Australian population, amongst scores of other countries, the impact on fossil fuel producers will ripple out.

COVID-19 will **dominate** news for weeks to come.



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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 23,580 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links to view original articles.](#) (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.australianmining.com.au/news/adani-to-transition-to-producer-in-2021/>

Adani to transition to producer in 2021

Vanessa Zhou, *Australian Mining*, 28/02/2020

Adani Mining chief executive Lucas Dow has stressed that the Carmichael mine and rail project in Queensland is “well and truly under way” to deliver first coal next year.

Dow, speaking at the first Bowen Basin Mining Club luncheon of 2020 this week, said business opportunities for contractors would flow in the coming months.

Dow also said that Adani was the sixth largest solar producer in the world.

“Coal-fired generation capacity in the Asia Pacific region is set to grow by more than 80% by 2040,” Dow said.

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.afr.com/companies/mining/fraud-bribery-claims-rock-coal-mining-20200224-p5430m>

Fraud, bribery claims rock coal mining

Liam Walsh & John Kehow, *AFR*, 24/02/2020

Allegations of fake analysis of coal samples have erupted in Australia’s mining and testing industries.

Brisbane-based laboratory giant ALS on Monday said it had started an investigation into matters involving a “small” number of clients and suspended four staff at its coal testing unit.

The allegations involve changes to measures of how much energy coal would generate when burned in power stations, allegedly so the coal would appear to be better quality than it was.

A former commercial general manager at miner Terracom has started litigation alleging that his old company and ALS were involved in such a scheme.

In court documents, he also accused Terracom and commodities trading giant Noble of being involved in bribery with Chinese and Korean shipments.

Terracom told the sharemarket on Monday afternoon that it had taken the allegations “extremely seriously”, and the claims were raised after the employee was made redundant.



It's a dirty business! Photo: Galilee Blockade

Testing was done independently at three stages: when coal arrives at port, on board and by Japanese and Korean customers when the ship arrives at its destination.

The laboratories were in Gladstone and Newcastle.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-25/silicosis-and-black-lung-cases-rise-queensland-workers/11998404>

Cases of mine-dust lung disease and silicosis increasingly found in Queensland coal mine workers

Jemima Burt & Rachel McGhee, *ABC*, 25/02/2020

The total number of diagnoses of mine-dust lung disease (MDLD) in Queensland has now reached 133 cases since 1984 – up from 102 in February last year.

The potentially fatal diseases are caused by long-term exposure to high concentrations of dust generated during mining and quarrying activities.

Experts have said the rise could be due to improved diagnostic and reporting strategies, but that modernisation of coal mining methods may have also contributed to increased dust levels.

Queensland President of the CFMEU Mining and Energy, Stephen Smyth, said most of the recent cases came from current mine workers, meaning new detection systems are working.

“We’ll continue to see the rise in mine-dust lung disease,” he said.

Robert Cohen is a clinical professor of environmental and occupational

health sciences at the University of Illinois in the United States.

Dr Cohen said there are two possible reasons for the recent resurgence of the disease.

“One [reason] is that it was rediscovered rather than re-emerging. I don’t believe the disease was ever eradicated – I think we stopped looking for it.

Dr Cohen said advances in mining technologies could also explain the increase in diagnoses.

“As technology has improved we have these massive machines that generate these huge amounts of coal production but they also generate huge amounts of dust,” he said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-03/proposed-industrial-manslaughter-law-unjust-says-law-society/12018340>

Law Society slams proposed industrial manslaughter legislation for senior mine employees as ‘harsh and unjust’

Jemima Burt, *ABC*, 03/03/2020

The Queensland Law Society has described industrial manslaughter laws proposed by the State Government, designed to address fatalities in the resources sector, as “harsh and unjust”.

The law was introduced to Queensland three years ago, but the mining industry was exempt. But now it has been proposed by the Mines Minister as part of the broader Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020.

It would carry a 20-year maximum sentence for employers and senior safety officers at coal mines where workers are killed on the job.

But the proposal may have some way to go with mining companies, the Queensland Law Society, and the mother of an injured mine worker who have labelled the law as excessive.

Anne Smith has worked with the Queensland Mining sector for 30 years and has four family members in the industry.

Dr Smith said her perspective as a mother of a seriously injured mine worker was what drove her submission to the committee.

She said she was also fearful that the laws would make post-incident safety investigations less effective.

“One of the possible serious outcomes, if this legislation is implemented, could be the culture of transparency and of freely sharing information as it relates to safety will diminish, and cooperation in the event of an accident investigation would likely decrease.

“As the mother of a seriously injured coal mine worker, if I believed for one moment that this proposed legislation would reduce major accidents and deaths in the coal mining sector you would not be hearing from me. But I fear it will add an extra burden and stress to those already working in a high risk industry.”

She said she was also of the opinion that the 20-year maximum sentence was excessive, almost as long as the sentence for murder.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-27/gas-giants-misled-governments-acc-boss-rod-sims-says/12004254>

Gas giants misled governments and it is costing Australian jobs, ACCC boss says

Stephen Long, ABC, 27/02/2020

The head of Australia’s consumer watchdog has slammed the gas industry, accusing it of misleading governments into approving massive gas export projects that have led to soaring power prices, killing off companies and jobs.

Despite being the biggest exporter of gas in the world, Australia is looking to import large quantities of gas to cope with a looming domestic shortfall

“A lot of the things that Australian governments, politicians, were told when those projects went ahead, turned out

not to be true,” Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) chairman Rod Sims told ABC News in an exclusive interview.

“So I think the gas industry as a whole certainly has to carry a lot of blame for the mess.

“The gas companies assured governments that the local market would be fine, that prices wouldn’t go up. And that turned out not to be the case.”

“Often self-interest dominates what companies tell governments,” Sims said.

But the gas industry lobby group APPEA categorically rejected the ACCC chairman’s criticisms.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/sustainability/nsw-s-csg-inquiry-finds-most-recommendations-ignored-20200227-p544xj.html>

NSW’s CSG inquiry finds most recommendations ignored

Peter Hannam, SMH, 27/02/2020

A parliamentary inquiry into the coal seam gas industry in NSW has found two of 16 recommendations for the controversial industry have been implemented, more than five years after the Chief Scientist made them.

Key omissions included the failure of the Liberal-Nationals government to recover funds from industry to pay for its own regulation. Taxpayers had so far had to pay some \$20 million, with the tab rising at the rate of \$3.75 million a year, the inquiry’s final report found.

Similarly, the government had failed to implement the Chief Scientist’s recommendation that it consider introducing a “robust and comprehensive policy of appropriate insurance and environmental risk coverage”.

Unusually, the report did not carry a dissenting view despite the presence of two Liberals and one National MP on the eight-member panel.

The two recommendations fully implemented were one that ensures CSG personnel were subject to “ongoing mandatory training and certification” and the government develop a plan to manage “legacy matters associated with CSG”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/feb/27/scathing-report-into-nsw-coal-seam-gas-regulation-could-create-new-hurdles-for-santos-project>

Scathing report into NSW coal seam gas could create new hurdles for Santos Narrabri project

Anne Davies, Guardian, 27/02/2020

Santos’s coal seam gas project near Narrabri could face further obstacles after a parliamentary inquiry delivered a scathing assessment of the state government’s progress in implementing recommendations to regulate coal seam gas extraction.

A NSW legislative council inquiry found that 14 of 16 recommendations from the 2014 report by the chief scientist have not been implemented in full. Half were found to have not been implemented at all.

This included recommendations for a world-class single regulatory regime for CSG extraction in NSW, developing an environmental data portal, making the Environmental Protection Agency the lead regulator of the industry, developing clear rules on access to farmers’ land and rules around compensation, and developing a system to consult with communities.

The findings are likely to increase support for a legislative moratorium on coal seam gas across in NSW which was proposed by independent MP Justin Field last year. He plans to put it forward again in March.

<https://www.katherinetimes.com.au/story/6650038/nation-casts-its-fuel-hungry-eyes-over-the-nts-shale-gas/>

Nation casts its fuel-hungry eyes over the NT’s shale gas

Chris McLennan, Katherine Times, 26/02/2020

Australia’s decision to back gas as a “transition fuel” between coal and renewable energy makes no sense, Climate Councillor and former head of BP Australasia, Greg Bourne, says.

Bourne has weighed in the debate about the switch in national energy policy which focuses heavily on the onshore gas industry being pursued by the NT Government.

“Burning another fossil fuel doesn’t do our climate change credentials much good,” he said.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison earlier this month identified gas as key to the future energy needs of Australia as it moves towards wind and solar energy.

His view was supported by Australia’s chief scientist Dr Alan Finkel.

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<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-29/beetaloo-basin-gas-field-could-jeopardise-paris-targets/12002164>

How the Beetaloo gas field could jeopardise Australia's emissions target

Jane Bardon, ABC, 29/02/2020

Deep in Central Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, the Mimal rangers are proud to be on the front line of Australia's fight to reduce climate change-causing emissions.

The Mimal rangers are one of 29 Indigenous groups paid by the Federal Government and private companies to prevent 1.2 million tonnes of greenhouse gases being released from wildfires across Northern Australia each year.

But the rangers' emissions reduction work is expected to be cancelled out almost 100 times by a new massive gas industry starting in the Northern Territory.

The CEO of Mimal Land Management, Dominic Nicholls, said the number "beggars belief".

"The financial impact of having to deal with those emissions would put that whole project at high risk, I would have thought," he said.

The gas industry has estimated the Beetaloo Basin, an enormous shale gas resource 400 kilometres south of Darwin, contains enough energy to power Australia for 200 years.

Both the Federal Government and the Northern Territory's Labor Government are enthusiastic about the potential of developing the basin.

But according to documents obtained under Freedom of Information by Background Briefing, developing the Beetaloo could threaten Australia's ability to meet its Paris targets.

Northern Territory officials later warned the Federal Government the development could create three times the amount of greenhouse gas emissions originally expected.

"[We are] looking at somewhere between 39 million tonnes to 117 million tonnes a year in carbon offsets," they said in email correspondence summarising a meeting to discuss how the emissions could be offset.

The 117 million tonnes of greenhouse gas would be equivalent to 22% of Australia's current annual emissions.

If the development produced emissions at that rate, it would be the equivalent to more than seven times the emissions from the decommis-



NSW Nationals' leader, John Barilaro, says: "mining uranium is a Nationals policy." Photo: 2GB

sioned Hazlewood coal-fired power station, formerly the worst power station in Australia for emissions.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/virus-sparks-scarborough-lng-delay-fears-20200302-p545zc>

Virus sparks Scarborough LNG delay fears

Peter Ker, Elouise Fowler & Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 03/03/2020

Woodside and BHP's \$US11.4 billion (\$17.4 billion) Scarborough liquefied natural gas (LNG) project could be delayed, analysts say, as the coronavirus roils oil markets and exacerbates an existing glut of LNG.

BHP believes oil and gas will be worse affected by the virus than commodities like copper and iron ore given a certain amount of consumption was permanently lost, rather than merely delayed, by the travel restrictions imposed during early efforts to contain the virus and subsequent disruptions to discretionary travel around the world.

The virus' hit to demand has exacerbated the glut of LNG in Asian markets which has weakened prices.

A Woodside spokesperson said the company was still expecting to make a decision on Scarborough around mid-year.

NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/anna-caldwell-why-the-nsw-nationals-want-to-go-nuclear/news-story/b92a6fc937a927e35e6a44a06eff654f>

Why the NSW Nationals want to go nuclear

Anna Caldwell, Daily Telegraph, 27/02/2020

The nuclear noise is getting louder. This column can reveal that within the next week, a NSW parliament committee is set to hand down a report on nuclear mining and power generation which was on Thursday looking to be "highly positive" and "quite bullish" in its recommendations.

The committee report relates to legislation already drafted by Mark Latham, which would see bans on uranium mining lifted and pave the way for nuclear power generation.

The head of the committee is young Liberal upper house politician Taylor Martin, an ambitious centre right MP.

His personal opinion is clear: "With the advent of the next generation, walk away safe, small modular reactors, and with the benefit of the evidence we have seen and heard through this inquiry, in my view, it is inevitable that we will have to adopt the use of nuclear power at some point in the coming decades."

Nuclear power also has the fierce backing of Deputy Premier John Barilaro, who said the issue was likely to split the Liberals, in what will be the next frontier of NSW's energy wars.

“The government will have to make a decision here. The Nationals will support the issue – mining uranium is a Nationals policy,” he said.

Energy Minister Matt Kean’s personal concern is that the technology for nuclear is not ready and that the fail-safe costs associated with it are high.

He also believes that with a federal ban in place, the road is long and he wants to focus on available methods.

The Minerals Council of Australia CEO Tania Constable said, “Australia has a clear choice – we can reconsider the role nuclear energy can play in a low-carbon future and remove the obstacles prohibiting the development of a nuclear industry.”

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90452018/climate-change-wont-result-in-a-new-normal-but-in-constant-horrifying-new-disasters>

Climate change won't result in a new normal but in constant, horrifying new disasters

Fast Company, 16/01/2020

At an intense level of combined heat and humidity – a “wet bulb” reading of 35 degrees Celsius, hotter and more humid than humans have ever experienced – the air will become so muggy that people can’t sweat and their organs begin to shut down. A healthy person sitting outside could eventually overheat and die, even if they’re resting in the shade. And by 2030, there’s a chance that this type of deadly heat wave could hit regions in India where as many as 200 million people live.

A new report from McKinsey Global Institute looks at the risk of extreme heat in India along with eight other case studies of the potential physical risks of climate change over the next three decades, from the future of the food supply in Africa to the economic impact of rising sea levels and devalued houses in Florida.

For more than 10,000 years, and the entire history of human civilization, the climate has been relatively stable. Now it is not.

It’s not that we’re moving to a “new normal” but to a world where the climate is constantly changing.

We’re already seeing serious climate impacts now, of course, including catastrophic fires, droughts, heat waves, and flooding. And in a decade, those extreme events are likely to be both more frequent and more intense.

The researchers looked at the impacts from a high-emissions scenario, but note that what happens by 2030 will be similar even if we rapidly cut emissions now; emissions cuts will have more impact in the future.

“The warming for the next 10 years, and many of the climate outcomes, are kind of locked in,” says Dickon Pinner, head of McKinsey Sustainability. Warming will also continue for at least a decade even if the world hits net-zero emissions.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/weather/2020/03/02/australia-warming-climate/>

Summers get longer as Australia warms more than the rest of the world

New Daily, 02/03/2020

Australia’s temperatures are increasing more than the global average, the nation’s weather bureau says.

Bureau of Meteorology head of climate monitoring Karl Braganza said Australia had warmed by about 1.4 degrees while the rest of the world had increased by 1.1 degree.

BOM chief Andrew Johnson said Australia was expected to become drier and warmer – conditions that would bring further increased risks of severe fire weather.

It comes as an independent analysis of weather data shows Australian summers are getting longer and winters shorter.

The Australia Institute studied BOM data for Australian cities from 1999-2018, comparing it to weather records from 1950-1969.

It found all Australian capital cities had longer summers and shorter winters, with summer 31 days longer and winter three weeks shorter than in the 1950s and 1960s.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-03-03/beaches-sea-level-rise-australia/12006286>

If ‘life’s a beach’, Australian life is predicted to take the world’s biggest hit

Nick Kilvert, ABC, 03/03/2020

Beaches are a part of Australian life, and new research says that we’re going to lose about 40% of Australia’s beaches over the next 80 years.

By “lose”, the researchers mean those beaches will recede by more than 100 metres. If we factor in erosion of less than 100 metres, the figures will be much higher.

Within this century, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts oceans to rise, on average, by around 70 centimetres if we rapidly get our emissions down (RCP 4.5), and around 1 metre if we don’t (RCP 8.5).

Of all the countries in the world, Australia is forecast to lose the most sandy coastline – more than 12,000 kilometres worth – as sea level rise approaches that 70-centimetre mark.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/feb/28/angus-taylor-to-announce-shift-in-climate-investment-away-from-wind-and-solar>

Angus Taylor to announce shift in climate investment away from wind and solar

Katharine Murphy & Adam Morton, Guardian, 28/02/2020

The Morrison government will on Friday signal plans to shift investment from wind and solar to hydrogen, carbon capture and storage, lithium and advanced livestock feed supplements, as part of a “bottom up” strategy to reduce emissions by 2050.

Angus Taylor will also declare Australia will take a technology-based long-term emissions reduction “strategy” to the United Nations-led climate talks in Glasgow at the end of this year.

It is unclear from the speech extract what policy mechanism will drive the new investments and who will administer the research and development, and it does not address why the government is looking at technology such as carbon capture and storage, or CCS.

CCS technology has not proved commercially viable with fossil fuel power generation despite being promised billions in taxpayer support through initiatives such as the CCS flagships program.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/albanese-pledges-carbon-cuts-while-backing-coal-exports-for-decades-20200228-p545fz.html>

Albanese pledges carbon cuts while backing coal exports for ‘decades’

David Crowe, SMH, 29/02/2020

Australia will export coal for “decades” despite campaigns to shut down the industry, Labor leader Anthony Albanese will declare on Saturday in a call to cut carbon emissions rather than halt mining.

The Opposition Leader will back the case for “strong global action” to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a message to regional Australia, accusing parties on both ends of the political spectrum of blocking change.

But he will temper his call with an assurance to voters that Labor will defend regional jobs if it wins power at the next election, arguing climate action does not have to mean the end of coal mining.

"In fact, the global steel and aluminium industries – all needed to build solar panels and wind towers – will continue to demand high-quality Australian coal for decades to come."

Albanese will deliver the speech in the Hunter electorate held by Labor frontbencher Joel Fitzgibbon, who suffered a 9.5% swing against him at the last election.

With Labor retaining only a handful of seats in regional and rural areas, Fitzgibbon has warned against policies that appeal to inner-city voters but turn away workers in mining and other industries that depend on fossil fuels.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/feb/29/queensland-energy-minister-tells-angus-taylor-hes-deeply-concerned-about-collinsville-coal-plans>

Queensland energy minister tells Angus Taylor he's 'deeply concerned' about Collinsville coal plans

Ben Smees, Guardian, 29/02/2020

The Queensland energy minister, Anthony Lynham, says he is "deeply concerned" that plans for a new coal-fired power station at Collinsville are based on assumptions that existing generators will be closed ahead of schedule, potentially costing the state jobs.

In a letter to his federal counterpart, Angus Taylor, Lynham said he was not aware of any study that showed additional coal generation was needed in Queensland, and that he was worried about its impact on other power stations.

This month, a proposal to build an energy park at Collinsville in north Queensland, including a 1,000 MW coal-fired power station, was granted \$4m by the federal government for a feasibility study.

<https://www.smb.com.au/politics/queensland/trad-won-t-rule-out-using-coal-industry-to-prop-up-state-s-budget-20200302-p5461w.html>

Trad won't rule out using coal industry to prop up state's budget

Lydia Lynch, SMH, 02/03/2020

Queensland's mining companies could be leaned on to boost the state's stagnating cash flow, as Treasurer Jackie Trad refuses to rule out a hike to coal royalties in next month's budget.

With the effects of coronavirus expected to take a billion-dollar bite out of Queensland's economy this year, the state government will race to find ways to improve its bottom line before the October election.

When asked if she would rule out lifting coal royalties when she handed down the budget on April 28, Trad said she did not want to prejudice negotiations she was in with mining giants over "more funding for regional coal communities for infrastructure and royalty increases".

The rate of coal royalties, set in each state budget, has not increased in eight years.

Ahead of last year's budget, Trad promised a three-year freeze on coal royalties "in exchange" for millions of dollars in contributions from mining giants to a regional infrastructure fund.

As of January, the industry was yet to deposit a single dollar into the fund because the government was still figuring out how it would work.

Queensland Resources Council CEO Ian Macfarlane said the industry proposed a structure for the fund in November and continued to meet with govern-

ment officials to nut out how it would work.

"Queensland has recently fallen in a global ranking of investor confidence reported by the Fraser Institute, which shows Queensland can't take investment in the resources sector and the jobs it creates in regional communities for granted," he said.

"QRC looks forward to concluding the arrangements for the fund and associated royalty freeze for coal and minerals as soon as possible, to deliver investor and community certainty."

Trad said she could "absolutely rule out" an increase in the rate of royalties paid by the state's gas industry after a surprise hike in last year's budget, from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent.

Mining companies paid \$4.4 billion in coal royalties to the state government during 2018-19.

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A yellow ribbon tied in a bow around a yellow flower, with two yellow sticks crossed behind it.