



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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Whitehaven Coal in huge land grab

61,050 ha, 471 freehold titles, 90 family farms bought up for mining



Photo: Whitehaven Coal

The land owned by Whitehaven Coal in north west NSW is nearing the size of the country of Singapore, new mapping reveals.

The release of the mapping came as the Independent Planning Commission commenced a public hearing into the company's deeply controversial Vickery Project, near Boggabri, got underway.

Lock the Gate has compiled a briefing paper which reveals Whitehaven has acquired more than 61,050 ha of land over 471 freehold titles – a land area fast approaching the size of Singapore (72,150 ha), or roughly twice the size of Malta (31,600 ha).

The briefing paper also reveals that in the north west, a bird could fly for 60km, without leaving airspace above Whitehaven owned land. At least 90 family farms have been bought out, with many leaving the region permanently.

This family farming land has been purchased as biodiversity offsets, for mine infrastructure and as a buffer zone to

protect neighbours from air and noise pollution.

Some were purchased through the mandated and highly controversial “Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy” (VLAMP).

Whitehaven currently operates four mines across the north west, with Vickery to become its fifth if approved and built.

Boggabri farmer Pat Murphy said Whitehaven's relentless expansion under the VLAMP had transformed Boggabri from a tight-knit farming community into an industrial mining support hub.

“We have reached saturation level from the impacts of mining in our area and cannot afford another greenfield mega-mine,” he said.

Communities lose residents

“We in the bush are being given an impossible choice by the government and Whitehaven: do we sell up and leave the communities we love and

our families love, or do we live with unbearable and unhealthy noise and dust from a coal mine next door?”

“So much good quality farming country and water has been lost to this mining company at a time when we should be doing all we can to ensure the security of food and fibre production in this country.

“We are still enduring the impacts of one of the worst droughts to ever hit this region, yet Whitehaven - a rogue operator that has been fined for countless breaches - wants to open up yet another coal mine at Vickery and further deplete our water.”

IPC urged to reject new mine

Lock the Gate NSW spokesperson Georgina Woods urged the IPC to rule against the Vickery project.

“The Vickery coal mine would see the Boggabri farming community emptied as so many Hunter Valley communities have been. We've been concerned for years about the social damage being

• Continued p2

• P2: How to take action against Vickery Mine

• P3: AGL's gas import project up for comment

P3: Fracking won't fire up NT manufacturing

Whitehaven: repeat environmental offender prosecuted for water theft

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inflicted by the VLAMP policy and that damage is evident in Boggabri already," she said.

"Whitehaven has deferred any planned investment in Vickery until at least next year. The market for coal is highly uncertain, but the market for sustainable food and fibre will never decline.

"New South Wales cannot afford to sacrifice community, agriculture, the environment, and rich cultural heritage for the sake of a temporary coal mine and we strongly urge the Independent Planning Commission to stop this mine."

Whitehaven prosecuted for Maules Ck water theft

Meanwhile, the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) has announced it is prosecuting Whitehaven Coal for stealing water at the company's controversial Maules Creek mine, following a Lock the Gate Alliance instigated investigation.

NRAR confirmed it would prosecute Whitehaven Coal in the Land and Environment Court for two alleged breaches of section 60A(2) of the Water Management Act 2000 for taking water without an access licence over a three-year period between 2016 and 2019, or in the alternative section 60C.

The decision comes more than two years after Lock the Gate first raised concerns. It also comes as the Independent Planning Commission public hearings get underway for Whitehaven's planned Vickery Project, which the Department of Planning admits has insufficient water available "to satisfy demands in prolonged periods of dry conditions (Vickery coal project Final Assessment Report page 37)."

Boggabri farmer Dave Watt said he was deeply concerned about Whitehaven's Vickery expansion, even before taking the company's dismal track record into account.

"People in the north west know that Whitehaven cannot be trusted," he said.

"Whitehaven is a repeat offender that views the many fines it has received for environmental vandalism as simply the cost of doing business."

Lock the Gate Alliance recently sent

legal advice to the NSW Resources Regulator arguing there is a prima facie case that Whitehaven Coal's conduct at its coal mines in north-west NSW has been so poor as to warrant a decision under the Mining Act that it is not a "fit and proper person" to hold mining titles.

Lock the Gate NSW spokesperson Georgina Woods said, "This latest legal case against Whitehaven is vindication for farmers who have known all along Whitehaven was stealing water.

"We are pleased to see NRAR finally hold Whitehaven to account and look forward to the results of its investigation into illegal groundwater take at Maules Creek mine as well.

"This is also a huge red flag for the IPC about the risk of water-hungry mines in the Namoi and the environmental conduct of Whitehaven Coal. This company has shown time and time again that it does not respect environmental laws or the effect of its mining activities on rural communities.

"There's simply no way that the Commission should allow the Vickery coal mine to proceed."

Whitehaven behaving badly:

1. The company has been investigated or found in breach of environmental laws or conditions on more than 20 occasions since 2012, across five different mine sites.
2. Over that time Whitehaven has been fined or made to pay \$235,000 in total for regulatory breaches.
3. Whitehaven has now been taken to court five times, once by the EPA, once by Maules Creek Community Council, currently by the Resources Regulator and NRAR and South East Forest Rescue.
4. Whitehaven has breached a range of conditions designed to protect the public and the environment over the 12 year period, including:
 - Allowing toxic blast fumes to drift over neighbouring properties
 - Polluting air and water
 - Illegal dumping of waste
 - Illegal clearing of bushland
 - Worker safety breaches

Take action: Email IPC and object to Whitehaven's Vickery coal mine



Whitehaven's Vickery Project is a massive coal mine in the productive farming district of Boggabri, with a new rail connection that will cross the Namoi River and its floodplain.

Whitehaven currently operates four mines across the north west, with Vickery to become its fifth if approved and built. The Boggabri farming community has already felt the damage from these mines taking water and driving local farming families away.

To feed its thirst for water, Whitehaven's nearby Maules Creek coal mine has already taken water illegally, outbid local farmers for water at auction and built pipelines from nearby farms to divert farming water for mining.

Vickery Mine will add 370 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere, putting all Australians at risk of extreme weather and dangerous fires.

Mine infrastructure will encroach within 300 metres of the historic 'Kurrumbede' homestead. Mine dust and blasting could put the structural integrity of the homestead at risk.

• **Lock the Gate makes it easy for you to email the Independent Planning Commission. Go to:**

<https://lockthegate.good.do/stopvickery/emailipc/vickery/>

• **Or go direct to the IPC:**

<https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say>

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Call for comment on AGL's gas project

In 2018 Victorian Minister for Planning Richard Wynne called for an Environment Effects Statement on AGL's giant gas import proposal for Crib Point, Victoria, in response to community concerns about countless safety and environmental risks.

The EES has now been released and the documents are available online.

Candy Van Rood of Save Westernport said, "Why does AGL continue to publish lovely photos of Westernport on their reports?"

"We know how beautiful the Bay is. What we need to know is what the spectre of the proposed FSRU ship, 17 storeys tall, would look like at our beach."

The Public Comments period for the EES on AGL's proposal on the Mornington Peninsula commenced on July 2 and will run until August 26, 2020.

That's just 40 business days for submissions and numerous reports to consider, but there are countless reasons why this project must not be approved.

"We encourage people to make a submission during this time. You can focus on just single area or areas of concern to tell the Minister why you object to AGL's dangerous and unnecessary plans.

"Minister Wynne needs to hear from this community, and from all Victorians why AGL's plans to import and process gas, and to construct a 60 km gas pipeline are entirely incompatible with the proposed location in Westernport Bay.

"There is nothing that AGL could do to tweak this project to make it acceptable. The government and Victorians have been misled with tales of gas shortages and cheaper prices, with AGL only now admitting that the price of imported gas would be set by international markets. Rather than helping us 'transition from fossil fuels' as they claim, AGL's project would keep us burning gas for the next 20 years," Van Rood said:

• **More info at:**

www.savewesternport.org



Fracking won't fire up NT manufacturing

Research published this week by The Australia Institute highlights that employment in gas-related manufacturing declined while gas in the Northern Territory was very cheap. Fracked gas will be far more expensive, making petrochemical manufacturing in the Territory unviable without massive taxpayer subsidy.

Key findings:

- The NT Government's Power and Water Corporation had large surpluses of gas from the late 2000s.
- NT governments spent millions trying to find takers for this gas and would likely have provided it at near-zero prices to projects that could provide significant employment.
- Yet employment in gas-related manufacturing sectors declined from 209 people to 193 people between 2006 and the 2016 census.

Now with new supply from fracking likely to be high cost, and links to export and east coast markets in place, the era of cheap gas in the NT is over.

Developing petrochemical industries in this context is very unlikely. Economic stimulus should be directed to labour-intensive service industries like tourism and healthcare.

"This report raises serious questions around the credibility of the Gunner Government and its plans for a major fracking industry," said Terry Mills, former Chief Minister and leader of Territory Alliance.

"Territorians need an honest conversation about fracking, not pipe-dream promises to develop industries that have been very difficult to establish in the Territory," Mills said.

"If gas-based manufacturing couldn't develop in the NT with near-free gas, it can't be viable with expensive fracked gas," said Rod Campbell, report author and Research Director at The Australia Institute.

"Employment in gas-related manufacturing sectors actually declined while the NT taxpayer was paying for gas that the Territory couldn't use."



Fossil fuels worst stockmarket performer

Fossil fuel stocks have been the worst performers in the Australian stock market over the last decade.

Fossil fuel stocks have lost around half their value in the first quarter this year with the Covid crisis compared to 23% for the wider market, continuing a decade-long trend of underperformance, according to research from The Australia Institute.

Key findings:

- The fossil fuel sector was the only sector to have lost value over the decade.
- \$100 invested in the fossil fuel dominated S&P ASX 300 Energy index in 2010 was worth just \$104 by January 2020, dropping to \$51 with COVID.
- \$100 in the wider market peaked at \$237, falling to \$169 with COVID.
- Excluding fossil fuels from a portfolio of the ASX 300 would have increased returns by 8.6% over the decade.

"Fossil fuels have not only damaged the climate over the last decade, but have damaged most Australian's

superannuation savings," said Richie Merzian, Climate & Energy Program Director at the Australia Institute.

Poor investment, big losses

"Coal and gas supporting politicians and lobbyists routinely claim that fossil fuels are contributing to the financial wellbeing of Australians, yet the data shows that fossil fuels have been a poor investment over a long period.

"The poor financial performance of fossil fuel companies would likely come as a surprise to most Australians, particularly those of us with super funds invested in broad portfolios that have experienced these losses.

"Australian companies such as Santos, Origin, Woodside, Whitehaven, and New Hope have all cost investors dearly, while also damaging the climate and dividing communities with controversial gas and coal projects.

"Australian investors and governments should realise the risk that fossil fuels present to savings and the climate and take action to protect both."



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



Tech problems delay newsletter

Fossil Fool Bulletin has been running behind schedule as its computer has been **crashing** at ever closer intervals. The old laptop is past its **use-by date!**

The good news is that readers have been generous with **donations** (see panel at bottom left for bank details).

A new laptop will be purchased next week and then **FFB** will be back to its regular schedule, keeping you informed of developments in the **fossil fuel** industry and our fossil-dominated politics.

Inside the news

Santos pushes on with its bid to get the **Narrabri** gasfield approved, recruiting other industries to boost its credibility.

First, there was a memorandum of understanding signed with minor **fertiliser** manufacturer **Perdaman** to set up a manufacturing plant at Narrabri.

Now, rather incredibly, Santos has forged an alliance with Colorado-based baking soda producer **Natural Soda** (p8). They plan to turn **toxic** salt waste from Narrabri into a product for use in the food and pharmaceutical industries: **baking soda**.

Santos will generate about **33,600 tonnes of salt waste** per year, and has yet to find a suitable spot to dump it.

So, baking soda is the answer. But a new problem arises: the salt contains **btex chemicals** and **radioactive elements** along with other contaminants. These are very difficult to filter out – especially substances such as **radon**.

FFB won't certainly won't putting Santos baking soda into her **scones**.

Some good news: A US federal judge has ordered the **Dakota Access Pipeline** to **shut down** and remove all oil within 30 days, a huge win for **Standing Rock Sioux Tribe**, the **Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe**, and the other plaintiffs (p7-8).

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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 11,880 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links to view original articles.](#) (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.insurancebusinessmag.com/au/news/breaking-news/they-have-failed-adani-swings-at-activists-after-insurance-row-226719.aspx>

“They have failed”: Adani swings at activists after insurance row

Camilla Theakstone, *Insurance Business Australia*, 02/07/2020

Weeks after four major insurers withdrew their policies from the Adani coalmine in Carmichael, Queensland, the company has come out swinging at activists and those who support them.

Adani says its commercial contracts are private in nature but still insists it has adequate insurance to continue its operations. The coal mine’s representatives say activists and their supporters have ignored the facts surrounding their commercial success.

“Anti-mining activists and the so-called charities that fund and employ them have thrown everything but the kitchen sink at us to try and stop us building the Carmichael mine and rail project and they have failed,” an Adani spokesperson told *Insurance Business Australia*.

Adani’s reaction comes after HDI, AXA XL, Liberty Mutual and Aspen Insurance revealed this month they would not have any further business involvement with the controversial coal mine outside of current contractual duties, citing climate change concerns.

Adani did not respond to questions put forward surrounding which insurers are currently providing it policies and if the project was given notice from its former insurers on their withdrawal.

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-30/shenhua-liverpool-plains-coal-mine-application-meets-deadline/12405946>

Liverpool Plains coal mine bid alive as Shenhua application meets NSW deadline

Amelia Bernasconi, Caitlin Furlong & Patrick Bell, *ABC*, 01/07/2020

The New South Wales Government has confirmed Shenhua Energy has met a deadline to apply for a mining lease on the Liverpool Plains. The company plans to extract about 10 million tonnes of coal from an open-cut mine.



Adani’s biggest contractor BMD is a major Powerhouse sponsor, even getting a board position. Galilee Blockade has asked supporters to mail the Powerhouse power-brokers, asking they replace BMD with a sponsor that values a safe climate
Photo: Galilee Blockade

“We have received the application, they had to do that by June 30, and that has occurred and now we’ll look at it,” Deputy Premier John Barilaro said.

Opponents fear the mine will destroy prime agricultural land, groundwater and Aboriginal artefacts if approved.

Former federal agriculture minister and New England MP Barnaby Joyce says he’s still not convinced of the merits of the mine.

“It’s outside my electorate now ... I’m a big supporter of the coal industry, but not on the Breeza Plains,” Mr Joyce said.

It comes as a NSW parliamentary inquiry into koalas recommends that the State Government ensures the protection of a koala colony and habitat before allowing any further development at the Shenhua Watermark mine site.

Meanwhile, local opponents have been left disappointed by the news, but say they will not give up their fight.

Traditional descendent Mitchum Neaves said the project would have a devastating impact of Aboriginal artefacts if it goes ahead.

<https://www.michaelwest.com.au/environment-minister-approves-whitehavens-tenth-coal-mine/>

Environment Minister approves Whitehaven’s tenth coal mine

Callum Foote, *Michaelwest.com*, 01/07/2020

The state’s 52nd coal mine, and the first since Covid, has been approved by the Minister for the Environment in NSW amid plunging coal prices and huge local opposition. The fate of Whitehaven’s Vickery mine, and its impact on farmers around Narrabri, now lies in the hands of the NSW’s independent planning commissioners, who are conducting their final public hearings.

NSW’s Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has given the green light to Whitehaven’s Vickery coal mine extension project, not that there was any doubt. The final step is a review by the state’s Independent Planning Commission (IPC), which holds the last round of its public hearings tomorrow and Thursday.

The commission’s independence was threatened by then environment minister Rob Stokes for having the audacity to deny a permit for the Bylong Coal Mine in 2018 on environmental

and public interest grounds. Following that Bylong decision, Stokes ordered a review of the IPC and introduced a bill which limits the scope of environmental damage the IPC can consider.

Whitehaven, the company behind the Vickery mine, has strong links to the Coalition, at the national and state level. Its chairman, Mark Vale, was deputy prime minister between 2005 and 2007 under John Howard.

Narrabri Shire Council Mayor Cathi Redding says there was “a very valid feeling that there have been no benefits at all to Boggabri” from the three other Whitehaven activity sites in the area.

Whitehaven’s Maules Creek coal mine has come under sustained attack over its alleged misuse of ground water, and many locals believe Whitehaven is intending to use the same strategy in its Vickery mine. It used inaccurate groundwater modelling for Maules Creek to get the mine over the line with the state government planning authority.

Whitehaven also outbid local farmers for groundwater licences, handicapping agricultural production and the livelihoods of farmers whose families had lived in the region for generations.

The proposed mine site is adjacent to the Namoi River and the best farming land in the region. If groundwater drops and the Namoi river no longer drains water into the surrounding soil, then the local ecology may collapse.

Regarding possible water shortfalls, Whitehaven claims it will simply source water from the market, effectively outbidding struggling farmers. This strategy worked for Whitehaven at its Maules Creek coal mine, 20 minutes’ drive to the north of the proposed Vickery mine.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/02/nsw-mine-could-face-multi-million-dollar-fine-for-allegedly-breaching-water-law>

NSW mine could face multimillion-dollar fine for allegedly breaching water law

Lisa Cox/AAP, Guardian, 02/07/2020

A mine operator in north-west NSW could be facing a multimillion-dollar fine after allegedly taking water without a licence over three years.

The state’s independent water regulator on Thursday said it commenced prosecution in the Land and Environment Court against Whitehaven Coal over two alleged breaches of the

Water Management Act at its Maules Creek coalmine.

The Natural Resources Access Regulator charged the operator for taking water without an access licence over three years between 2016 and 2019 at the mine near Boggabri.

The maximum penalty for a breach of the related section of the Water Management Act for a company is \$2m.

NRAR chief regulatory officer Grant Barnes said in a statement that the alleged failure to get licences for the water impacted other water users and the environment – especially during the severe drought.

The Environmental Defenders Office, on behalf of Lock the Gate, had made complaints in relation to Whitehaven Coal’s water use at the Maules Creek site over several years.

“We are really pleased to see the regulator has decided to take action in this case,” the EDO’s principal solicitor, Elaine Johnson, said on Thursday.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/second-explosion-at-anglo-americans-grosvenor-mine/news-story/7d8169cb419b98cb9d91a74fe9ec6fa9>

‘Second explosion’ at Anglo American’s Grosvenor mine

Sarah Elks, Aus, 01/07/2020

Anglo American suspects there has been a second underground methane explosion at its Grosvenor mine, where five miners were nearly killed by a blast in May.

In the past week senior staff at the mine have been told there was a likely second methane ignition shortly before 3am on June 8.

There were no injuries because all workers had been evacuated about an hour earlier after making major changes to the ventilation system at the coalface.

A spokeswoman for Anglo American said there was no fire burning underground and the company could not be definitive about what occurred on June 8 because no one had been underground since.

Leaked documents show Grosvenor recorded dangerously high methane levels at least 98 times since the mine began operating in 2016. The inspectorate knew of the repeated incidents but did not order Anglo to stop mining.

Of the five miners burned in the explosion, one has been released from hospital.

Grosvenor staff have been told the four miners have a long journey to recovery, and face further surgeries and skin grafts.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/mining/umpire-coal-tests-under-microscope-in-faking-scandal-20200702-p558dx>

‘Umpire’ coal tests under microscope in faking scandal

Liam Walsh, AFR, 03/07/2020

Coal tests at inspection giant ALS were allegedly doubly manipulated by tampering with a backstop measure called umpire samples, as part of a deepening analysis scandal.

Queensland fraud police have begun examining allegations of the analysis manipulation that exploded on the \$70 billion Australian coal export market this year, The Australian Financial Review can reveal.

Industry veterans have since described a long-running problem extending beyond ALS, where labs were under pressure, due to low margins, to artificially upgrade results.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://smallcaps.com.au/bph-energy-outlines-potential-nsw-offshore-field-supply-eastern-gas-market/>

BPH Energy outlines huge potential for NSW offshore field to supply eastern gas market

Robin Bromby, Small Caps, 01/07/2020

BPH Energy has reviewed years of work on the potential PEP 11 gas field lying in the offshore Sydney Basin and reveals it has identified structural leads that could contain 1 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of gas.

Offshore oil and gas seeps have been recorded from Long Reef (near the Sydney northern beaches suburb of Dee Why) to Catherine Hill Bay on the New South Wales Central Coast. These seeps have given rise to periodic hydrocarbon slick occurrences along the coast.

BPH said an active hydrocarbon system has been demonstrated that is analogous to major discoveries in Queensland’s Surat-Bowen Basin.

<https://www.smb.com.au/business/companies/oil-search-lays-off-550-workers-as-energy-prices-plummet-in-pandemic-20200701-p557x5.html>

Oil Search lays off 550 workers as energy prices plummet in pandemic

Nick Toscano, SMH, 01/07/2020

The head of Australian-listed energy producer Oil Search said the axing of

An Oil Search drill site in Papua New Guinea.

Photo: supplied



one in three workers was a painful but necessary decision in order to ride out a prolonged period of devastation facing the global oil and gas industry.

Oil Search on Wednesday said it would reduce its total workforce by more than 550 full-time jobs – cutting employee numbers from 1649 to 1222 immediately with a further 137 positions to be culled by December.

The cuts come amid growing expectations the recent slide in the oil price will not be temporary.

In Australia, top ASX-listed energy producers are hunkering down and are bracing for further pain to come when the extent of oil price falls flow through to their sales of LNG. Oil Search, Santos and Woodside have wiped billions of dollars from their budgets this year in the hope of riding out the downturn inflicted by travel restrictions sapping fuel demand and gutting prices of crude oil and LNG, one of Australia's most valuable exports.

Oil Search has slashed its expected investment spending by \$675 million, suspending all non-essential projects and activities in Papua New Guinea and deferring exploration work it had planned.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/121961383/oil-rig-workers-claim-unfair-treatment-in-a-system-rotten-to-the-core>

Oil rig workers claim unfair treatment in a system 'rotten to the core'Steve Kilgallon, *Stuff*, 29/06/2020

New Zealand oil rig workers claim the industry is "rotten to the core", angry that most senior jobs on a newly-arrived rig have been handed to foreigners.

Stuff spoke to seven experienced rig workers overlooked for positions on the Archer Emerald rig, which has

arrived off the Taranaki coast to drill up to five exploratory wells for the Austrian-based company OMV New Zealand.

It's the second example in less than a year of visiting rigs being granted permission to bring in offshore workers over the protests of locals.

Rig workers claim it's part of a long-standing pattern where Kiwis miss out, or take lower-ranked positions with the best jobs always going to foreign workers – despite them being advertised here.

<https://www.michaelwest.com.au/a-savage-call-energy-tsar-calls-time-on-australias-gas-cartel/>

A Savage call: energy tsar calls time on Australia's gas cartelMichael West, *Michaelwest.com.au*, 03/07/2020

The new chair of the Australian Energy Regulator, Clare Savage, is saying that if the gas transmission networks do not convert to hydrogen, these assets may be stranded; that's many billions of dollars in gas pipelines stranded.

"She is calling time on a multi-billion dollar industry," says energy analyst Bruce Robertson.

The candid assessment from Clare Savage is even more remarkable considering the Government, with the connivance of its Covid-19 Commission, is pushing plans to build a \$6 billion gas pipeline from Western Australia to the East Coast.

This pipeline would entail a massive taxpayer subsidy for the multinational gas giants – this, at a time when Australia's top energy regulator Clare Savage is seriously questioning whether gas will really be, as the Government claims, the "transition fuel" the country needs before renewables dominate the grid.

Already, Australia's gas sector is a travesty. Consumers in Japan buy Australian gas for half the price paid here by Australian consumers. That's after shipping, LNG production and transmission costs. This bizarre predicament – engineered by the gas cartel of Origin, Santos, BHP, Shell and Exxon with the complaisance of successive governments – means that Australia, which is now the world's largest gas producer, is about to import gas from overseas.

Meanwhile, it may have been missed but the US gas industry is not in a slow-down or even in a recession, it is in a deep depression. The NCCC wants to use the USA as a model for Australia's recovery, touting \$4/GJ gas, a figure that even the gas lobbyists at APPEA baulk. APPEA claims it is simply not achievable as it is well below the costs of production.

The pioneer of the fracking industry, Chesapeake, went bankrupt only last week. At its peak, it had a market capitalisation of \$US38 billion.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/04/steamy-showers-australian-instagram-influencers-post-natural-gas>

'Steamy showers': Australian Instagram influencers post on behalf of natural gasElias Visontay, *Guardian*, 04/07/2020

The natural gas giant Jemena has defended paying Instagram influencers, including former contestants of *The Block*, *Married at First Sight* and other reality TV shows, to promote the fossil fuel in social media posts.

The #GoNaturalGas campaign from the Chinese and Singaporean-owned Jemena, which manages key natural gas pipelines around and out of Australia, appears to have been running for two years online, and comes amid concern liquified natural gas could be as bad for the environment as coal.

Among the posts, influencers spruik natural gas as a good source of energy for staying warm, for kitchen use and for better health.

<https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/historic-day-for-standing-rock-as-pipeline-company-told-to-shut-down-remove-oil-KkDdhNzafUONvPvkm-Bc66A>

'Historic day' for Standing Rock as pipeline company told to shut down, remove oil

Indian Country Today, 06/07/2020

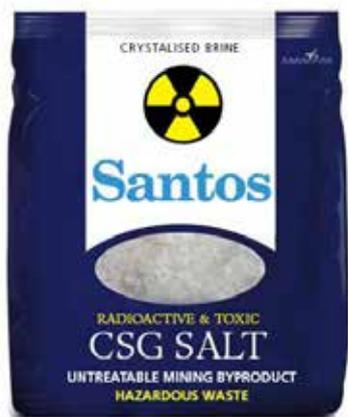
A federal judge has ordered the Dakota Access Pipeline to shut down and remove all oil within 30 days, a huge

win for Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, and the other plaintiffs.

Meanwhile, the US Supreme Court handed another blow to the disputed Keystone XL pipeline from Canada by keeping in place a lower court ruling that blocked a key permit for the project.

In a statement, the Indigenous Environmental Network is celebrating all the prayers and support the #NoDAPL movement has received over the years. While Boasberg's opinion clearly states the flow of oil must stop, the organization is prepared to fight to see that through.

"The Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes have shown the world that treaty rights and environmental justice are not token concepts without merit, but rather tangible arguments that inherently protect the sacredness of mother earth. We will continue to fight until DAPL is stopped completely," the statement said.



<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/santos-turns-to-salt-to-sweeten-narrabri-gas-20200703-p558vp>

Santos turns to salt to sweeten Narrabri gas

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 06/07/2020

Santos forged an alliance with Colorado-based baking soda producer Natural Soda in a bid to turn salt waste from its proposed \$3.6 billion Narrabri gas project in NSW into a product for use in the food and pharmaceutical industries.

The project would also produce about 33,600 tonnes a year of salt waste.

Under the agreement with Natural Soda, Santos and the US company will carry out a study for a potential plant at Narrabri that would produce sodium bicarbonate – also known as baking soda – from the brine.

Santos boss Kevin Gallagher said the water extracted from the coal seam gas wells is of no use to farmers because of the salt content, so it needs to be treated to make it suitable for irrigation, stock watering and other purposes. He said if the project wasn't successful, the water would still be able to be used for irrigation and the salt removed from the water disposed of in accordance with laws on waste.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theage.com.au/business/companies/nations-top-polluter-agl-vows-to-tie-executive-pay-to-climate-targets-20200630-p557jr.html>

Nation's top polluter AGL vows to tie executive pay to climate targets

Nic Toscano, Age, 30/06/2020

Power giant AGL, the nation's heaviest polluter, has pledged to roll out tougher decarbonisation goals across the company including linking top executives' pay to achieving climate targets and becoming a "net-zero" emitter by 2050.

Australia's largest and oldest energy supplier said in a statement on Tuesday it would expand carbon-neutral offerings to all its products by the end of 2021, meaning it would purchase "carbon offsets" such as tree-planting programs on behalf of gas, electricity and telco customers who wanted to neutralise their emissions.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/steggall-calls-for-conscience-vote-on-zero-carbon-bill-to-kickstart-covid-recovery-73943/>

Steggall calls for conscience vote on zero carbon bill to kickstart Covid recovery

Michael Mazengarb, Renew Economy, 01/07/2020

Independent federal MP Zali Steggall has told a meeting of Australia's leading investors that the Morrison government should offer a conscience vote on the member for Warringah's Climate Change bill.

In an address to the Responsible Investment Association Australasia on Wednesday, Steggall said that the Climate Change Bill, the text of which was released in February had been designed based on successful legislation passed by the national governments of New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

"This bill is not revolutionary in that it is modelled on the United Kingdom's Climate Change Act, which has been

in force for over ten years, as well as the New Zealand Climate Change Response Amendment Bill which came into force late last year," Steggall said.

Steggall called on the Morrison government to allow a free vote in the Federal parliament as a potential pathway to finding a compromise position on climate change policy, but noted that a vote on the legislation may be delayed to make way for more urgent parliamentary business relating to the Covid-19 response.

"Members should feel free to be able to vote according to their values and those of their electorates. This is now a matter of safety for many and should be elevated beyond party politics. As individuals here and important stakeholders. I urge you all to reach out to your network, use this time we have wisely, and shore up support for this initiative."

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2020/07/01/news-corp-climate-expert/>

News Corp's newest climate convert is a career contrarian

Kishor Napier-Raman, Crikey, 01/07/2020

There's nothing more powerful than a conversion narrative. And News Corp has found its latest convert in Michael Shellenberger, an American environmentalist who is apologetising for "crying wolf" on climate.

"On behalf of environmentalists everywhere, I would like to formally apologise for the climate scare we created over the past 30 years," Shellenberger writes in *The Australian* today.

Much of the piece involves cherry-picking useful factoids denying the link between climate change and last summer's bushfires despite years of warnings from scientists. He also spends a lot of time trying to prove his progressive bona fides.

Shellenberger says he isn't a climate denier, just someone trying to cut through the bubble of hysteria and alarmism. But News Corp's staunchest denialists seem to love him. He will appear on Sky News with Chris Kenny tonight.

Shellenberger, 49, isn't a one-time clean energy crusader who saw the light. He's got a long history of climate contrarianism and is a staunch advocate for ditching renewables in favour of nuclear energy.

He's also not a climate scientist. He carefully describes himself as an "envi-

ronmentalist” or “energy expert” but has no formal scientific qualifications. That hasn’t stopped him producing the kind of wonkish contrarianism that soaks up media attention.

Much of Shellenberger’s work seems to have been committed to promoting nuclear energy while attacking renewables and Greenpeace.

In *The Australian* he argues the most important way to reduce emissions is to move towards uranium. He also argues “nuclear weapons make us peaceful” and that more poor countries should be allowed to have them.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/politics/australian-politics/2020/07/03/australia-logo-twiggys-forrest/>

‘A very bad move’: How Australia’s \$10 million ‘Twiggy’ Forrest-backed logo could cost the nation

Isabelle Lane, *New Daily*, 03/07/2020

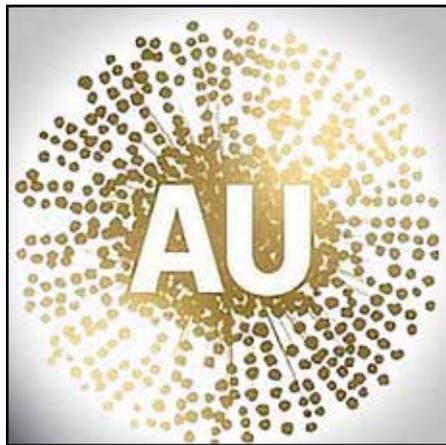
A controversial logo commissioned by a council led by mining magnate Andrew ‘Twiggy’ Forrest at a cost of \$10 million to the Australian public has been slammed as a huge waste of money.

The logo, featuring a gold wattle and the letters ‘AU’, was unveiled on Tuesday and is set to replace an existing logo featuring boomerangs and the words ‘Australia Unlimited’ that Australian businesses use to represent themselves overseas.

It immediately drew criticism online, with the design criticised for resembling a coronavirus, and being too similar to Australia’s NBN logo.

Others have argued the design’s focus on gold (Au is the symbol for the chemical element) heavily favours the mining industry at the expense of other businesses.

The logo was overseen by the Nation Brand Advisory Council which comprises 12 of the nation’s most prominent corporate executives, and is



Andrew ‘Twiggy’ Forrest’s \$10 million logo for Australian businesses (top) has been criticised as ‘resembling a coronavirus’ and its focus on gold heavily favours miners at the expense of other businesses. The better-known Australian Made logo will continue to be used on many Australian products.

chaired by Western Australian mining billionaire Forrest.

Other members include Qantas boss Alan Joyce, Australia Post chief executive Christine Holgate and Atlassian billionaire Mike Cannon-Brookes.

Deakin business school marketing expert Michael Callaghan said that the new logo could make things difficult for Australian businesses overseas, and questioned whether NBAC’s strong connection to the mining indus-

try through Forrest may have influenced the design.

“It draws more connections towards mining and virtually no real connections towards Australia because it doesn’t have kangaroos, boomerangs, anything memorable in it.”

The logo’s launch caused mass confusion, with many incorrectly assuming that it would replace the iconic ‘Australian Made’ kangaroo logo that appears on consumer goods.

That logo has been used for 34 years, and will remain the same save for an update of the colour scheme to a darker green and gold.



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