



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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Federal Budget 2020-21: A win for big polluters, a loss for climate action

The gas industry, mining companies and big polluters are the clear winners from this year's federal budget, while climate action is the clear loser, the Australian Conservation Foundation said.

"We know the best way to cut the pollution driving global warming is to move away from burning coal and gas, yet this budget provides funding that locks in new fossil fuel projects," said ACF's Chief Executive Officer, Kelly O'Shanassy.

"The gas industry is the big winner with \$52.8 million allocated to accelerating gas projects, continuing gas research and re-establishing the east coast gas market."

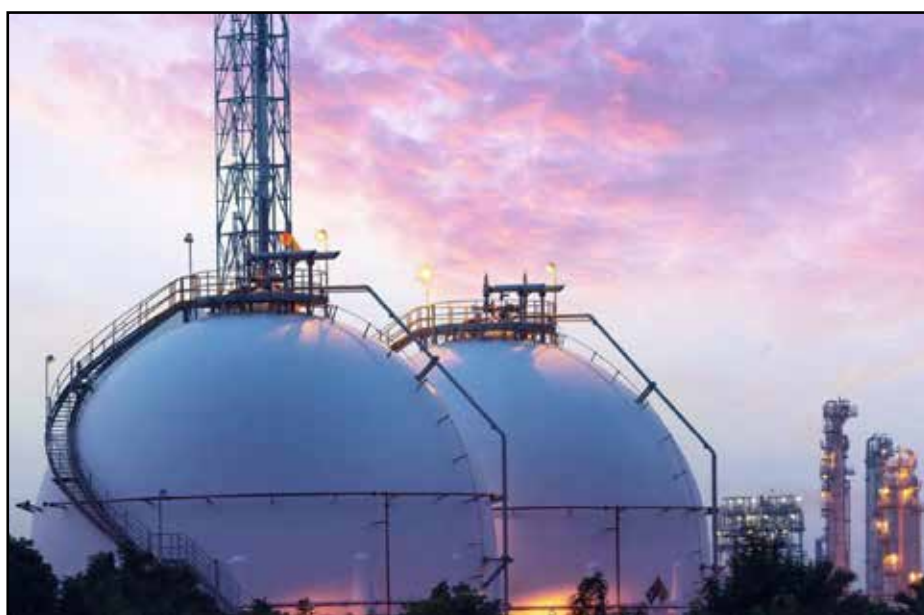
(The fossil fuel industry doubled its donations to the major parties in the past four years.)

"We welcome ongoing funding for Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC), but of the \$1.4 billion announced for ARENA only \$223.9 million is allocated over the forward estimates," O'Shanassy said.

Miners get billions in fuel tax credits

"Mining companies are winners, taking around 45% of the fuel tax credit scheme, which is worth \$15 billion to them over the forward estimates.

"The fuel tax credit subsidy, which allows multinational mining companies like Rio Tinto, BHP and Glencore to pay zero tax on their off-road diesel use, will cost Australians \$33 billion across the forward estimates.



"Coal mining companies alone will receive more than \$1.2 billion a year in diesel fuel subsidies over the forward estimates.

"The budget puts \$50 million over three years to further experiments with speculative carbon capture and storage, even though CCS has already received \$1.3 billion in taxpayer support with virtually no commercial success.

"It is outrageous that public money is allocated towards upgrading the Vales Point coal-fired power station on the NSW central coast.

"We welcome some of the new investments in potentially environmentally-friendly initiatives, including micro-grid studies that could support clean energy communities and investment in land stewardship and environment

restoration.

"We welcome any funding to help protect and restore nature, including money for protecting marine life.

"Despite Australia's outstanding natural beauty, not enough is being invested in the protection of our unique wildlife and special places.

"Since Australia's national environment laws came into effect 20 years ago, threatened species habitat larger than Tasmania has been bulldozed and logged.

"ACF believes annual investment of \$1 billion a year is needed to restore our landscapes and stop extinction."

ACF was denied access to this year's pre-budget lock-up.

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• P2: Govt to dodge nature protection

• P3: Secret deal a gift for Adani

P3: Waitsia 2 project bad for jobs, climate

Devolving extinction: State environment approvals would weaken nature protection

Relinquishing federal responsibility for environmental approvals and handing powers to the states and territories would substantially weaken nature protection in Australia, a new report shows.

The Morrison government is preparing to wash its hands of its duties to assess major projects on environmental grounds, claiming unpopular changes to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act are 'minor technical amendments'.

But measured against 13 core elements of the EPBC Act, no state's laws matched more than two existing federal requirements, the Places You Love Alliance audit found.

30 cases where state laws failed

The report catalogues 30 case studies where state and territory laws have failed national benchmarks.

The studies include:

- The Gorgon Gas Project, WA
- Governance and conflict of interest (eg. Adani), Qld
- McArthur River Mine, NT
- Yeleerie Uranium, WA
- Shoalwater and Corio Bays (coal mining), Qld
- Protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage (Juukan Cave), WA
- Olympic Dam mine expansion proposal, SA

"While there are significant flaws in the Commonwealth EPBC Act, it still

provides some safeguards that simply don't exist in state or territory systems," said Rachel Walmsley, Head of Law Reform at the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO).

"Any devolution of Commonwealth powers to the states would be lowering the bar of environmental protections.

"This report shows the implications of the Bill passing are far from minor or technical.

"No state or territory laws meet all the necessary existing benchmarks to protect matters of national environmental significance. And, in some jurisdictions, environmental protections have been weakened since our last audit," she said.

The EDO audit of state and territory environment laws, commissioned by the Places You Love alliance, concluded no state or territory legislation met the full suite of existing EPBC Act requirements needed to protect matters of national environmental significance.

"The audit found no state system fully met more than two of the 13 elements," said Nicola Beynon, Head of Campaigns at Humane Society International and Places You Love Alliance spokesperson.

"Two out of 13 is a fail in anyone's book. It shows there is a gulf between current - already weak - protections and the paltry and haphazard standards set by states.

"The EDO easily found an alarming 30 substantive case studies that clearly highlight the shortcomings in state and territory systems.

"Many show that without federal government oversight core international obligations to protect threatened species or World Heritage values would have been simply ignored.

"This report shows how far states would need to come before they could credibly deal with these matters."

Call for independent regulator

The Places You Love alliance is calling on the Senate to reject the current bill and insist on a full package of reforms to the EPBC Act, including strong legally enforceable national environmental standards and a statutory independent regulator.

The alliance has more than 60 members, including WWF-Australia, The Wilderness Society, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Birdlife Australia, Humane Society International, Environmental Justice Australia and many conservation councils and local groups around the country.

• Download the report here:

https://www.acf.org.au/devolving_extinction



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Photo: James Thomas



Queenslanders to lend Adani \$271 million in royalty deal

The Australia Institute has criticised the Queensland Government's deal to subsidise the Adani coal project via a royalty deferral deal.

The long-running negotiations between Adani and the Queensland Government will allow the coal mine to 'dig now, pay later' at a secret, but certainly discounted, interest rate.

Key points:

- The royalty deal has been reported in *The Australian* as a \$5m cap on royalties for 5 years.
- This reported royalty deal rate has never been contested by the Queensland Government.
- Based on current mine plans, coal prices and exchange rates, this would see Adani defer royalty payments of \$271 million.
- The interest rate and term for this loan are unknown, but will be certainly subsidised compared to commercial rates.

Adani gets free ride, secret deal

"Yet again we see Adani being given a free ride and a secret deal," said Rod Campbell, Research Director at The Australia Institute.

"Queenslanders are essentially giving Adani a discounted loan of around \$271 million based on leaked details of initial deal.

"Subsidising new coal is the last thing Queensland should be doing as global coal demand declines in the wake of the pandemic and in response to climate action.

"Subsidising Adani is not only bad policy, it is bad politics.

"Australia Institute polling has shown that 59% of Queenslanders oppose subsidies for Adani, while just 19% support."



Waitsia 2 green light would be bad for jobs and climate

An onshore gas project in Western Australia's Mid-West that will produce nearly 40 million tonnes of carbon pollution during its lifetime and only 15 ongoing jobs has been challenged by farmers, energy experts, medical experts and environment groups who say the project is bad for the climate and jobs in WA.

Twenty-one appeals have been lodged against the project with the WA Appeals Convener.

The WA Environmental Protection Agency recommended approval of Waitsia stage 2 on the condition that its proponent, Mitsui, offset 0.18 million tonnes of carbon pollution per year, however some 25 times that amount will be released into the atmosphere as a result of burning gas produced by the facility.

Those 'scope 3' emissions are estimated at 4.6 million tonnes per year or 37.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over the lifetime of the project.

Conservation Council of WA Director Piers Verstegen said the EPA's recommendation went directly against the growing international body of science and legal precedent.

"With millions of tonnes of pollution and only a handful of jobs, this project is the very last thing WA and our climate needs right now.

"The world is turning away from gas and coal precisely because of the pollution that results from burning these fossil fuels and courts and investors around the world are ruling against new coal mines and gas developments after considering the total pollution that will result.

Doesn't pass the pub test

"Despite this, it appears that Mitsui and the EPA have overlooked the vast majority of the pollution that would result from this project. A decade ago that approach might have been acceptable, but today it doesn't pass the pub test.

"Any approval that is given for a fossil fuel project without considering the full extent of pollution that would result will be unlikely to provide certainty to investors because it will present a target for legal challenge.



Mitsui's Waitsia 2 project includes a new 250 TJ/d gas processing plant that will draw from up to eight production wells and convey gas via the nearby Dampier to Bunbury Natural Gas Pipeline. Graphic: Mitsui

"Gas producers must take responsibility for the harm caused by their product being used as intended, not simply for the emissions produced in extraction and processing.

"Claims that this project is needed to provide jobs in WA do not stack up either."

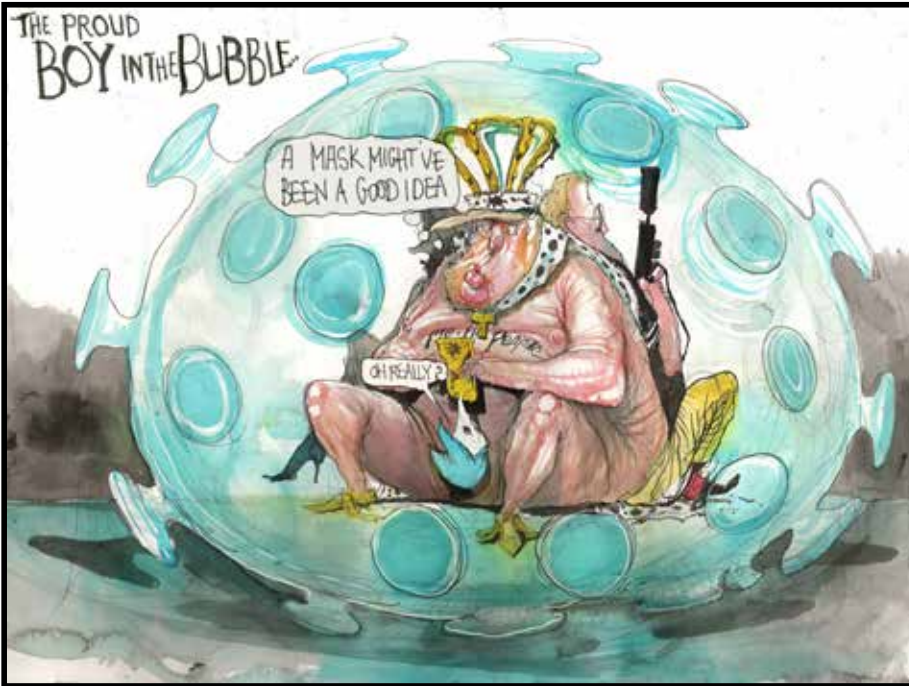
Mitsui says Waitsia stage 2 will create 12 to 15 ongoing jobs, and 'a minimum of 150' temporary jobs in the development phase of the project.

"According to the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, Waitsia stage 2 is worth more than \$500 million. A half-billion-dollar project creating just a dozen ongoing jobs," said Verstegen.

"If \$500 million were invested in renewable energy it would deliver 2,500 jobs.

"\$500 million investment in renewable energy is exactly what the Queensland government recently announced and what WA needs instead of more polluting gas projects that deliver few jobs and a major pollution bill for West Australians."

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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 15,300 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links to view original articles.](#) (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-01/adani-carmichael-coal-mine-royalties-deferred-qld-election/12716272>

Queensland Government signs deal to allow Adani to defer royalty payments for unspecified period

Stephanie Zillman & Allyson Horne, ABC, 01/10/2020

The Queensland Government has signed a deal with mining company Adani to defer payment of royalties on its Carmichael mine in central Queensland for an unspecified period of time.

Treasurer Cameron Dick said both when the company would start to pay royalties and how much revenue the state would collect were commercial in confidence.

“But I can assure you that Adani will pay every dollar in royalties that they have to pay to the people of Queensland – with interest,” he said.

Greens MP Michael Berkman called on Dick to reveal the terms of the royalty deferment.

“We’re in the middle of a historic recession and Queensland Labor are giving a multinational coal corporation a tax break with a royalties holiday,” Berkman said.

“Cameron Dick should reveal just how many millions of dollars will be cut out of the Queensland budget as a result of this dodgy, secret deal.”

Australian Conservation Foundation campaigner Christian Slattery called the royalties deal a disgrace.

“Astonishingly, the public is still in the dark about the details of this deal, which has been stitched up behind closed doors,” Slattery said.

“The Government should immediately disclose the terms of this deal [because] Queenslanders have a right to know how much revenue and risk has been sacrificed at the altar of Adani’s destructive coal mine.”

<https://www.themorningbulletin.com.au/news/35m-new-police-station-for-cq-mining-town/4112326/>

\$3.5M new police station for CQ mining town

Melanie Plane, Morning Bulletin, 04/10/2020

Police resources are set to receive a multimillion-dollar boost in a Central Queensland mining town, with the Queensland Government revealing plans for a new station.

The State Government has pledged \$3.5 million for a new police station at Clermont – a move which has been welcomed by Isaac Regional Council. IRC Acting Mayor



Kelly Vevea said it was great news for Clermont and the broader Isaac region.

“Clermont certainly needs a bigger police station, particularly with the ongoing protest action against the Carmichael coal project which draws police from the town,” Cr Vevea said.

“Adani’s operational workforce – expected to be up to 1,800 people – permanently located in their onsite camp will also be serviced from Clermont.

Cr Vevea said the announcement about Clermont Police Station highlighted the demands placed on services and infrastructure in the Isaac region by large-scale mines and their work force.

“Adani have stated their entire operational workforce will come from Rockhampton and Townsville. That’s not fair on the people of Clermont, or workers who would prefer to live in Isaac closer to their work,” she said.

“Of course, there is also the broader issues of so many State Government services for the Isaac region being funded on the basis of our full-time resident population of 21,000 whereas our true population – because of the travel-in travel-out mining workforce that resides here on any night of the week – is 33,000.

<https://inql.com.au/business/2020/10/06/adani-back-in-court-over-very-large-plumbing-project/>

Adani back in court over what it calls ‘a very large plumbing project’

Aaron Bunch, In Queensland, 06/10/2020

Adani is back in court over its controversial scheme to pump Galilee Basin floodwater to its Carmichael coal mining project in central Queensland.

The Indian mining giant wants to build a pipeline to “harvest” 12.5 billion litres of water from the Suttor River to clean coal and suppress dust at the mine site.

The Australian Conservation Foundation says the Morrison Government made an error of law when it initially assessed the yet to be approved North Galilee Water Scheme.

It should have applied the “water trigger” law, which assesses the impacts of coal seam gas and large coal mining developments on aquifers and rivers.

The government’s view was the trigger wasn’t applicable because the scheme doesn’t involve the physical extraction of coal, it supplies water.

There’s also a different company proposing it – Adani Infrastructure – to that building

the coal mine, which is Adani Mining. The projects will be financed separately and should be assessed separately, it said.

But ACF's lawyer Neil Williams SC says both are clearly subsidiaries of the Adani Group and the NGWS is ultimately part of the mining process.

"It calls into question how wide the definitions of coal mining activity and the action involving large coal mining development are," he told the Federal Court in Sydney on Monday.

Adani lawyer Stephen Lloyd SC said the scheme is just "a very large plumbing project" involving pumps and a pipeline.

"It's not a coal mining activity," he said.

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-30/olive-downs-coking-coal-mine-disappoints-conservationists/12709522>

Queensland government approval of Olive Downs Coking Coal Project criticised by conservation groups

Rebecca Hyam & Lia Walsh, ABC, 30/09/2020

Conservation groups say they're disappointed the Queensland Government has approved the state's third-largest coal mine, because of the threat it poses to koala habitats.

Construction will begin soon on the Olive Downs Coking Coal Project, located 40 kilometres south of Moranbah in Queensland's Bowen Basin.

The mine, run by Pembroke Resources, will have a production life of 80 years and is expected to produce up to 15 million tonnes of metallurgical coal for steel production each year.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) said an expansive koala habitat could be wiped out for the mine's construction.

"Clearing those forests pushes this species closer to extinction," Gavan McFazdean, the ACF's program manager for climate and energy, said.

"We're concerned about any new, large coal projects going ahead in Australia — particularly those that will be destroying vulnerable koala habitat," he said.

Greenpeace communications campaigner Martin Zavan said the decision to approve the mine was unacceptable.

"It was really disappointing but not really surprising," he said.

"This decision is completely incompatible with the Queensland Government's plan to transition the state to net-emissions by 2050.

The Queensland Resources Council says the State Government's approval of the mine could not have come at a better time.

QRC chief executive Ian Macfarlane said the project would deliver a significant number of job opportunities to those who had lost work through the pandemic.



Whale Cave in the Illawarra region has been severely damaged by coal mining activity and the ceiling is held up by timber props. Photo: Tim Fernandez, ABC

Greenpeace's Zavan was sceptical about the mine's promised 1,000 jobs.

"We've heard similar claims from mining companies before ... they tell communities that they will create a lot of jobs, while at the same time telling investors that automation will allow them to keep costs down by employing as few people as possible."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-02/illawarra-indigenous-sites-being-destroyed-behind-barri-cades/12717976>

Indigenous leaders appalled after being granted access to Illawarra's Whale Cave for first time in decades

Kerry Fuller, ABC, 02/10/2020

About 10 kilometres from Wollongong, nestled in subtropical rainforest near Cordeaux Dam is Whale Cave, which contains more than 200 ochre and charcoal drawings, including portrayals of a large whale and emu.

Special permission is needed to enter the catchment and last month members of the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council were granted access for the first time in decades.

Land council chairman Jade Kennedy had not visited the site since he was a child.

"We have physically got gates and we have bureaucracy that continues to lock us out and remove us from the opportunity to be connecting with our stories," Kennedy said.

The art is believed to date back some 6,000 years and some of the pictures represent connections to significant creation stories.

The sandstone cave was damaged in about 1979 when Nebo Colliery was using the bord-and-pillar mining method.

It was owned by BHP Billiton subsidiary Illawarra Coal at the time.

In 2006 the land manager, WaterNSW,

installed mesh and steel supports and used treated pine pit props to help stop the cave ceiling from collapsing.

Now, new rockfalls at the back of the cave are continuing to destroy the art.

Because of the restrictions placed on access to the area, little is known about the area's other cultural sites, but it is believed there could be as many as 4,000 across the escarpment.

Reports obtained by the ABC reveal the recent destruction of another cultural site from subsidence caused by new longwall mines operated by South32.

The company took control of the Dendrobium Mine after a demerger by BHP Billiton.

Upon being granted access to the site for the first time, the land council inspected an area above longwalls 14 and 15.

They saw a shallow sandstone overhang with charcoal drawings of eels damaged by vertical and diagonal cracking, fallen rock, and water infiltration of the rock shelf.

Council chief executive Paul Knight, a frequent recipient of Aboriginal heritage reports from mining companies in the region, was shocked by the level of damage.

In a statement, South32 acknowledged damage to two sites:

"We are actively engaging with traditional owners, registered Aboriginal parties and government in respect of how cultural heritage management processes can be improved in the future in Australia," the miner said.

Jason Economidis, the chief operating officer for South32's Australian operations, said in a statement that the company began an internal review in June of its approach to cultural heritage management to determine "where we may need to strengthen or enhance our systems".

Under the planning system there are no repercussions for the damage, South32 is only required to continue monitoring.

Knight said while destruction of culture was allowed through the mining licence approved by the NSW Government, it raised questions about the company's moral obligations.

"When their only responsibility is to report and monitor and not think about what we have to repair, correct or even avoid, it leaves it to the company's moral compass," he said.

Knight said the destruction of the Juukan Gorge caves in Western Australia's Pilbara region highlighted what had been happening on the escarpment for decades.

"We have had the same thing here and people ignore it," he said.

"We have been calling for years to stop this damage to our sites and everyone just keeps ignoring it.

<https://www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/story/6957362/high-court-reserves-new-acland-decision/>

High Court reserves New Acland decision

Mark Phelps, The Land, 06/10/2020

The High Court has reserved its decision on the New Acland Stage 3 coal mine north of Oakey.

The High Court is ruling on an appeal from the Oakey Coal Action Alliance on a Queensland Court of Appeal decision in 2019.

New Hope Group chief operating officer Andrew Boyd said it was not known when the High Court decision would be handed down.

Opponents of the mine say Stage Three will destroy both underground water resources and prime agricultural land.

However, the claims are seemingly at odds with the track record of mined land being rehabilitated and the development of a 4,000-head cattle operation at the New Hope Group owned property.

In addition, all of the water used in the mining operation is bought from Toowoomba city's Wurtulla water treatment facility via a 47km long pipeline, eliminating the need to use ground water in the mining operation.

Prior to today's developments, Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Ellie Smith said New Hope has pulled out all stops to pressure the government to wave the approval through.

"We commend the Queensland Palaszczuk Government for standing firm in the face of this pressure and allowing the High Court to consider this matter properly before any further decisions are made by governments," Smith said.

Opposition Leader Deb Frecklington said the mine will be approved if the LNP wins government on October 31.

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/6949383/narrabri-coal-seam-gas-approval-brings-hunter-pipeline-closer/>

Santos' Narrabri coal seam gas approval brings Hunter pipeline closer

Michael Parris, Northern Daily Leader, 01/10/2020

Environmental and community groups reacted with outrage after the NSW Independent Planning Commission approved the Narrabri Gas Project on Wednesday, but the Hunter man behind a proposed pipeline from Newcastle to Queensland was popping the champagne.

"We're the only approved route to market," Hunter Gas Pipeline managing director Garbis Simonian said after the IPC gave his \$1.2 billion project its second shot in the arm in two weeks.

Simonian was handed a potential main customer for his pipeline on September 16 when Scott Morrison arrived in the Hunter to announce he would build a gas-fired power plant at Kurri Kurri if the industry did not lock in enough new energy investment by April.

The government will also underwrite new pipelines in the event of a "market failure" to ensure cheap gas supply to the southern states.

Lock the Gate Alliance, Country Women's Association, Greenpeace, Climate Council, Wilderness Society, climate scientists and some industry analysts condemned the approval after 98% of the more than 23,000 public submissions opposed the project.

The IPC placed 134 conditions on the consent. NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean has opposed gas as anything but a short-term fix, arguing it is an expensive way of making electricity.

NSW Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy Adam Searle said Labor supported the IPC decision.

Hunter MP and federal opposition energy spokesman Joel Fitzgibbon described the IPC approval as "great news".

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/6951223/green-light-but-whats-next-for-multi-billion-dollar-gas-project/>

Wait isn't over for controversial Narrabri Gas Project despite green light

Andrew Messenger, Northern Daily Leader, 02/10/2020

The Narrabri Gas Project could overcome its final formal regulatory burden in less than 30 days.

But proponent Santos is unlikely to begin widespread exploitation of the mineral for a number of years, in part due to rigorous conditions imposed by the Independent Planning Commission, opponents claim.

Now, the project is in the hands of the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment,

Sussan Ley. Under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, the minister has 30 business days to approve the project following formal receipt of the NSW Government's assessment report.

Minister Ley was asked if she will take into account community views when making the approval.

"The Commonwealth will consider the findings of the NSW Government's assessment," she said.

Lock the Gate Alliance spokesperson Georgina Woods said the company may not make a final investment decision on the project before 2023.

"As usual for these projects there's a great deal of work for Santos to do until they can begin," she said.

"One of the things I was pleased to see in the consent was the commission specifying Santos must update their groundwater model to the highest confidence level before they can proceed to production.

"We're talking about sort of two years from now before a decision is really available to them to make about proceeding to production and that's if the groundwater model has been updated by that time.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/02/nationals-mp-hails-narrabri-gas-project-as-win-for-community-despite-vocal-opposition>

Nationals MP hails Narrabri gas project as win for community despite vocal opposition

Katharine Murphy & Adam Morton, SMH, 02/10/2020

The Nationals frontbencher Mark Coulton has declared the controversial Narrabri gas project is a winner for his community, despite continuing opposition from landholders, environmentalists and Indigenous traditional owners.

With coal seam gas development a divisive issue in regional Australia, the National Farmers Federation last week warned the Morrison government to tread carefully with its much-vaunted "gas-led recovery" after the coronavirus pandemic. NFF affiliate NSW Farmers has voiced its opposition to the Narrabri gas project.

Despite vocal objections from the National party's core constituency, Coulton, who is the minister for regional health, regional communications and local government, and the member for Parkes – the electorate where the coal seam gas proposal is located – insisted the Santos project would "be beneficial for not just Narrabri, but the entire country".

Coulton said the gas project, in conjunction with the "transformational inland rail" would give Narrabri the potential to be "one of our significant manufacturing hubs".

Coulton's stout defence of the Narrabri project came as the prime minister on Thursday stepped around a question about

how much the “gas-led recovery” would cost taxpayers, and whether the government had modelled the impact of a significant gas expansion on his government’s climate change policy commitments.

The NFF’s chief executive, Tony Mahar, said that “farmers should have a choice in determining his or her own priority with how private land is used through a respectful and transparent process”.

“Farmers have and will continue to advocate that any extractive development must not impede on quality of agricultural resource, whether land or water,” Mahar said.

The need for new gas fields is contested. Morrison has quoted a gas industry estimate that 225,000 manufacturing jobs are in industries that used a lot of gas and need a cheap, reliable supply.

But an upcoming report by the Grattan Institute challenges this, finding there were only between 4,000 and 5,000 manufacturing jobs heavily reliant on gas on the east coast.

<https://www.boilingcold.com.au/poor-federal-regulation-allowed-the-360m-northern-endeavor-mess/>

Federal Govt regulates poorly and gets \$360M Northern Endeavor clean-up bill

Peter Milne, Boiling Cold, 02/10/2020

The Federal Government is burdened with an expensive clean-up of the rusty Northern Endeavour oil vessel because of its own ineffective regulations, according to information in a report by an experienced UK oil and gas regulator.

The vessel’s owner Northern Oil and Gas Australia went into liquidation in February after safety regulator NOPSEMA shut down production due to a string of safety incidents, many related to corrosion.

New information allows the fullest picture yet of how Woodside made \$132 million, NOGA’s creditors lost \$165 million, and the Federal Government inherited a \$362 million clean-up bill.

It is a tale of liability shifting from two oil and gas giants to a tiny inexperienced one-man outfit and then to the Federal Government while safety concerns mounted, one regulator was powerless, and the other dithered.

This tale starts with a deal, perhaps a deal too good to be true: take my rusty old asset and have some cash too.

The first step towards NOGA’s liquidation was when Woodside switched from a long-planned decommissioning to consider selling the Northern Endeavor and its Laminaria and Corallina oil fields 550km north of Darwin.

The Northern Endeavour produced less than 3000 barrels of oil a day in 2015, a fraction of its peak of 180,000 bbl a day.

The National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator had long known of Woodside’s plans to decommission the Northern



Northern Endeavour floating production storage and offloading vessel.

Photo: Northern Oil and Gas Australia

Endeavour. It only became aware of the switch to a sale in December 2015, three months after the agreement was signed.

Interest in NOGA’s collapse has focused on the decommissioning liability falling on the Federal Government.

The other question is why a facility where numerous safety risks that were demonstrably poorly managed was allowed to operate for so long?

Boiling Cold asked NOPSEMA why it allowed the Northern Endeavour to operate for 2.5 years after a near-fatal incident caused by corrosion when there was ample evidence that corrosion was significant, widespread and not well managed by UPS?

A NOPSEMA spokesperson said as evidence of widespread corrosion escalated in 2018 it issued improvement notices to UPS, but the company went to the Fair Work Commission for a review.

“The matter remains before the Commission and no further comment can be provided,” the spokesperson said.

There is no suggestion that any of the players in this saga operated outside the law. The law is the problem.

There is an opportunity for change. The Federal Government is in the final stages of reviewing how it manages decommissioning and has launched reviews of NOPSEMA and NOPTA.

The Federal Government is paying UPS about \$1.4 million a week to look after the Northern Endeavour while it waits for the \$8.8 million of advice on what to do next it has ordered from Woodside.

All of this is on top of the eventual decommissioning cost, that was \$362 million the last time Woodside looked at it.

What a mess.

NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/federal-labor-divided-over-plans-to-block-sa-s-nuclear-waste-dump-facility-20201005-p5628p.html>

Federal Labor divided over plans to block SA’s nuclear waste dump facility

Rob Harris, SMH, 05/10/2020

A 40-year effort to establish a nuclear waste dump in remote South Australia faces a rocky passage through Federal Parliament after Labor signalled it is prepared to block the Morrison government’s attempts to resolve the long-running debate.

The decision, rubber-stamped by the federal caucus in lengthy debate on Monday, has sparked further divisions within the opposition, with veteran senators Alex Gallacher and Kim Carr expressing fierce criticism of their party’s position.

There are also concerns within federal Labor that its stance could unwittingly hand Prime Minister Scott Morrison a double-dissolution trigger should the cross-bench sink the laws.

The government intends to introduce legislation to finally establish a low- and medium-level nuclear waste facility at Napandee, a farm on South Australia’s Eyre Peninsula, having spent seven years and more than \$60 million finding a suitable home.

A community ballot, run by the Australian Electoral Commission, was held at Kimba in 2019 and showed more than 60% of the community supported the facility.

But the traditional owners of the region, the Barngarla, were not included in the vote because it was limited to those living in the Kimba Council area.

The group later challenge the ballot under the Racial Discrimination Act in the Federal Court but it was dismissed.

See past editions of Fossil Fool Bulletin at
<https://knitting-nannas.org/> (under the Resources tab)

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-10-05/exxon-carbon-emissions-and-climate-leaked-plans-reveal-rising-co2-output>

Exxon's Plan for Surging Carbon Emissions Revealed in Leaked Documents

Kevin Crowley & Akshat Rathi, Bloomberg, 05/10/2020

Exxon Mobil Corp has been planning to increase annual carbon-dioxide emissions by as much as the output of the entire nation of Greece, an analysis of internal documents reviewed by Bloomberg shows, setting one of the largest corporate emitters against international efforts to slow the pace of warming.

Exxon's own assessment of its \$210 billion investment strategy shows yearly emissions rising 17% by 2025, according to the internal documents.

The largest US oil producer has never made a commitment to lower oil and gas output or set a date by which it will become carbon neutral, and its near-term plans have been disrupted by fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic. Exxon has also never publicly disclosed its forecasts for its own emissions.

But the planning documents show for the first time that Exxon has carefully assessed the direct emissions it expects from the seven-year investment plan adopted in 2018 by Chief Executive Officer Darren Woods. The additional 21 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year that would result from ramping up production dwarfs Exxon's projections for its own efforts to reduce pollution, such as deploying renewable energy and burying some carbon dioxide.

These internal estimates reflect only a small portion of Exxon's total contribution to climate change. Greenhouse gases from direct operations, such as those measured by Exxon, typically account for a fifth of the total at a large oil company; most emissions come from customers burning fuel in vehicles or other end uses, which the Exxon documents don't account for.

That means the full climate impact of Exxon's growth strategy would likely be five times the company's estimate – or about 100 million tons of additional carbon dioxide – had the company accounted for so-called Scope 3 emissions. If its plans are realized, Exxon would add to the atmosphere the annual emissions of a small, developed nation, or 26 coal-fired power plants.

Exxon's ambitious growth plans, calling for higher cash flow and a doubling of earnings by 2025, are a vestige of pre-pandemic times. The industry has been hard hit by Covid-19, which destroyed demand for oil and sent prices into a tailspin. "As demand returns and capital investments resume," Exxon added in the statement, "our growth plans will continue to include meaningful emission mitigation efforts."

Fulfilling the plan would mean producing



Exxon Mobil CEO Darren Woods has adopted an explosive emissions growth plan. Photo: Justin Chin/Bloomberg

an additional 1 million barrels of oil a day. The emissions generated by the extra drilling and refining would increase the company's greenhouse gas emissions to 143 million tons of CO₂ equivalent per year, the internal documents show.

CDP, an independent group that tracks and encourages carbon disclosures, estimated Exxon's total emissions at 577 million metric tons for 2015.

Allegations of inadequate disclosures related to the dangers of global warming have become a source of legal trouble for Big Oil. In June, Minnesota sued Exxon, Koch Industries Inc. and the American Petroleum Institute for allegedly withholding critical information about the impact of fossil fuel use on climate change. All told, Exxon and other oil companies are being sued by about a dozen cities, counties and states seeking compensation for consumers and taxpayers over the cost of adapting to climate change.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2020/10/07/australia-climate-change-oecd>

Back of the pack: Australia now the worst OECD country for climate change action

Cait Kelly, New Daily, 07/10/2020

Australia has become the worst-performing of all OECD countries when it comes to climate change, and will soon become a global pariah unless federal policies change fast, experts warn.

It comes as UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson became the first democratic leader to outline a green-centred plan for rebuilding the country and creating jobs when the coronavirus crisis ends.

One of Australia's leading experts in climate change, Professor Will Steffen said the UK's announcement has left Australia in the dust.

"The UK is the first country to put forward a concrete plan but other OECD countries, particularly the Nordic ones – Denmark, Norway and Sweden – already have advanced plans," he told said.

"We and the United States are stumbling around while most European countries are trying to get it done."

He said depending on how the US election plays out, Australia could soon become an outlier.

"We're pretty much alone now and who knows how the US is going to go," Professor Steffen said.

The stark warning we have fallen behind the pack comes as new analysis from WWF reveals that in terms of committing to stimulus spending on renewables, Australia lags even further behind.

We are currently spending five times less than the conservative UK government and 10 times less than South Korea – a major trading partner.

The European Union has committed \$400 billion to a renewable recovery stimulus, while Germany has committed \$59 billion, France \$58 billion, South Korea \$52 billion and the UK \$35 billion.

Comparatively, Australia committed just \$2.5 billion, the report notes.

The government has focused Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19 on fossil fuels, namely gas.

SACRIFICE ZONE

Cloudcatcher Media's feature-length film:
battle to save the Pilliga

<https://vimeo.com/257444267>

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/narrabri-gas-field-remains-a-huge-risk-20201001-p5614r.html>

Narrabri gas field remains a huge risk

SMH Editorial, 01/10/2020

The political battle over Santos' proposal to develop its Narrabri gas field has gone on for almost a decade and despite a long-awaited decision by the NSW Independent Planning Commission this week the battle looks likely to continue for some time.

Many were looking to the IPC to settle the question of whether the jobs and tax revenue generated by the project were enough to compensate for the damage the project would cause to the environment, including its projected impact on global warming.

In fact, while the IPC approved the project it has come with so many conditions that it remains far from certain that it will stack up technically and economically.

The IPC was under political pressure to green light this project from the Morrison government, which has put the project at the heart of its plans for a "gas-fuelled" recovery.

To its credit, the IPC appears to have taken seriously its responsibility to ensure Narrabri meets the highest standards. Santos's share price fell after the announcement of the IPC decision as investors realised how expensive it will be to comply with the conditions of the approval.

Before it even starts digging, Santos must produce better modelling of the impact on groundwater of pumping out coal seams in the already drought-prone region.

Many farming groups have objected to the project because if the water table falls, it could cost a lot more farming jobs than it generates in manufacturing.

The *Herald* argues that in the next decade Australia will have to impose much tighter controls, such as a carbon tax, on greenhouse gas emissions, including from gas.

There is no case to put even one cent of taxpayer money into this project. It is up to Santos to decide whether it wants to take the risk.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/morrison-claims-gas-needed-because-batteries-cant-yet-firm-wind-and-solar-39016/>

Morrison claims gas needed because batteries can't yet firm wind and solar

Michael Mazengarb, Renew Economy, 01/10/2020

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has again suggested that gas is the only technology available to firm supplies of wind and solar generation, saying that batteries have yet to be built at sufficient scale.

The comments came during an address to the National Press Club on Thursday ahead of the federal budget, announcing a new \$1.3 billion 'Modern Manufacturing Initiative'.

They appear to contradict a range of expert analysis about the capabilities of battery technologies, including the Integrated System Plan prepared by AEMO as a blueprint for the future energy system.

Morrison's comments are in contrast with the outgoing head of the Australian Energy Market Operator, Audrey Zibelman, who told the Global Smart Energy Summit on Wednesday that the rapidly falling costs of battery storage will play a major factor on the ongoing development of the energy system.

Responding to the Morrison manufacturing speech, which briefly mentioned "clean energy" but with no details, Labor leader Anthony Albanese said the government should be focusing on boosting manufacturing in clean energy industries based on the resources abundant in Australia.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2020/10/05/matt-canavan-coal-black-lives-matter/>

Qld Senator Matt Canavan co-opts Black Lives Matter to promote coal

Samantha Dick, New Daily, 05/10/2020

Matt Canavan has been labelled "pathetic" after appearing to co-opt the Black Lives Matter movement while promoting coal before the Queensland state election.

The Nationals Senator posted a photo of a ute stamped with the phrase 'Black Coal Matters' to Facebook on Monday afternoon.

A cardboard cutout of former Greens leader Bob Brown is pictured in the driver's seat holding a sign advocating for the New Acland Mine project.

The caption reads: "Bob's back! And this time he is on a mission to create 500 jobs

at the New Acland Mine. If you want to join Bob's crusade for coal jobs please join us this Saturday at the Grand Hotel in Clermont." Some of Senator Canavan's supporters were happy to play along with the stunt, but others did not see the funny side.

"This is more attention-seeking behaviour from a politician who's struggling with being irrelevant. It's insulting and pathetic," Labor Senator Murray Watt said in a statement to *The New Daily*.

Mike Cannon-Brookes, CEO of Australian software giant Atlassian, tweeted: "Black coal matters? Really?"

Sydney Law School Professor Tim Stephens called the act "sickening".

"Racist and planet-trashing sentiments both rolled together," Professor Stephens tweeted.

Senator Canavan's post comes after months of growing support for Black Lives Matters protesters who have taken to the streets to highlight racial inequality after the death of US man George Floyd at the hands of police.

<https://www.afr.com/policy/energy-and-climate/vales-point-coal-power-station-secures-upgrade-20201005-p56248>

Vales Point coal power station secures upgrade

Elouise Fowler, AFR, 06/10/2020

Vales Point coal-fired power station near Lake Macquarie in NSW will get an upgrade from taxpayers, securing a slice of a \$134.7 million government power grid fund that will also underwrite two major transmission cables and fund a battery in Western Australia.



"Mr Coal" Matt Canavan's photo of a 'Black Coal Matters' ute, described as comprising "racist and planet-trashing sentiments both rolled together".

Photo: Matt Canavan, Twitter

The budget document does not reveal how much Delta Electricity's Vales Point Power Station will receive from the grid «reliability and affordability» fund for an upgrade, because the Morrison government is still negotiating the cost with its owners, power barons Trevor St Baker and Brian Flannery, Treasury officials said.

The government money will be spent on upgrading Vales Point with "brand new turbines and high pressure heaters" by 2022-23, the officials said.

The government also set aside \$52.9 million to launch its gas-led recovery.

That includes 13 measures to open up the east coast gas market, including new gas basins, a trading hub and new pipeline as well as expanding the remit of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency and Clean Energy Finance Corporation to include carbon capture and storage, and increase focus on hydrogen and green steel.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/companies/federal-budget-2020-15bn-plan-to-boost-the-manufacturing-sector/news-story/f02da25194c7944c8a9e30d4d-9b499a2btr=71a18eeadc4c9c72725c835958fb2bb3>

Federal budget 2020: \$1.5bn plan to boost the manufacturing sector

Nick Evans, Aus, 06/10/2020

The federal government's so-called "gas-fired recovery" plan includes a proposal to emulate the US Henry Hub gas facility in Australia by expanding the existing Walmubilla facility in Queensland, establish a domestic gas reservation scheme and strengthen price commitments with LNG exporters, to help to improve conditions for manufacturers.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/gas-fired-manufacturing-to-get-economy-back-to-work/news-story/6c2d887a4aa9974dfb36dc75a354b51e?btr=64f06e30e4886ea4511036ec22fb659>

Gas-fired manufacturing to get economy back to work

Jared Lynch, Aus, 06/10/2020

The Morrison government is betting on a "gas-fired recovery" as part of its multibillion-dollar plan to lower carbon emissions and resuscitate the country's manufacturing sector.

The government will spend \$52.9m on unlocking Australia's vast gas reserves

and creating more affordable and reliable energy to spur growth across the nation's factories.

The government will inject \$1.9bn into its green energy arm, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, and Clean Energy Finance Corporation to expand their investment remit to include low-emissions technology.

The gas plan will include, spending \$28.3m on investing in five "strategic" gas basins, starting with the Beetaloo Basin in the Northern Territory and the North Bowen and Galilee Basins in Queensland. It will also create the country's first National Gas Infrastructure Plan, which will identify and prioritise key projects to ensure gas is "delivered where it is needed".

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/state-election-2020/mining-giant-bhp-splits-with-powerful-queensland-resources-council/news-story/2a6b8b15b-2f15473a2e5df00af9a51d4>

Mining giant BHP splits with powerful Queensland Resources Council

Jessica Marszalek, Courier-Mail, 07/10/2020

Multinational resources giant BHP has split with the state's powerful resource lobby over its foray into the state's political campaign after it urged Queenslanders to vote for anyone but the Greens.

The company issued a statement in which it said it had given notice to the Queensland Resources Council that it was suspending its membership immediately after advertising that targeted a specific political party.

"BHP has expressed to the QRC on several occasions its opposition to this advertising approach and had formally requested that it be withdrawn," the statement said.

"Unfortunately this has not occurred."

"Now is not the time to risk a single job in Queensland by voting for the Greens or by putting them anywhere but last on your ballot paper," QRC chief executive Ian Macfarlane said.

"The Greens want to stop jobs in our sector and others."

Macfarlane said he would continue to warn Queenslanders about the risk to jobs of voting for or preferencing the Greens up until 6pm on election night [October 31].




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