

# 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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## Q Health gasfield study failed to meet standards

**Report did not adhere to any discernable best-practice health impact guidelines**

*A new scientific paper comparing a government-commissioned health study of coal seam gas (CSG) developments in Queensland with international best-practice health impact assessment (HIA) methodologies has concluded the government's study was deeply flawed.*

The paper, by Fernanda Claudio, Kim de Rijke and Andrew Page, concludes Queensland Health's report failed to meet HIA international best practice because seven of nine key steps were omitted.

"The Queensland Health study established no association between health complaints of residents and CSG activities, however, the study did not follow HIA guidelines," the authors said.

"The analytical framework of the report was unclear purporting to conduct a risk assessment, an evaluation of residents' health complaints, and a review of existing health and environmental data without using established frameworks.

The Queensland Health report is often used by gas promoters, such as peak body APPEA, to discredit claims of negative health impacts surrounding the industry.

### Q Health study 'methodologically poor'

"The study was methodologically poor: the inclusion/exclusion criteria for selected reports were not disclosed; there was no participatory component to set terms of reference; with regard to the clinical data, it was unclear whether comprehensive patient histories were recorded and blood tests and/or imaging conducted on patients



*A gas worker in the Darling Downs. Photo: Lock the Gate*

in either the contracted Queensland health report or the DDPHU reports included therein; results were not shared with the community for feedback; and no health strategy was developed for the target area.

"The report found no association between residents' health complaints and CSG extraction activities, suggesting these may have resulted from solastalgia, a form of psychological distress related to rapid environmental change.

"The report did not adhere to any discernable best-practice health impact guidelines," the authors said.

Concerns with unconventional gas

developments include air and water quality, human and environmental health, poor regulatory frameworks, inadequate social impact assessment, poor compliance and transparency, and poor industry disclosure of chemicals used in extraction.

People interviewed by Queensland Health reported poor consultation by government and industry within affected communities.

In some cases, government officials accused residents of causing their own health problems. When a dam was found to be contaminated, the residents were told they must have

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• P 2: Mining rehab may create 4,250 jobs

• P 3: Call for help to stop Flinders Ranges gas

• P 3: Santos makes inadequate response

# Mining rehabilitation could create over 4,000 jobs

**Ebenezer Mine, Qld: abandoned and in need of rehabilitation.**

Photo: Lock the Gate



**Lock the Gate analysis shows the Queensland Government could generate 4250 jobs in Central Queensland by fixing its mining rehabilitation legislation before it passes the Parliament in coming weeks.**

Currently, the Mineral and Energy Resources (Financial Provisioning) Bill would allow mining companies to be exempt from fully rehabilitating the land they damage on the grounds

of cost to their shareholders or if the environmental impacts are deemed to be only “local”.

### **Win-Win opportunity**

“Strengthening mine rehabilitation laws is a massive win-win opportunity for Queensland, that can deliver much-needed jobs in regional areas and strong environmental outcomes” said Lock the Gate spokesperson Rick Humphries.

“Our analysis shows that requiring mining companies to fully rehabilitate the 10 largest mines in Central Queensland would create 4250 jobs.

“These are jobs that Central Queensland could miss out on if the Palaszczuk Government fails to fix its mining rehabilitation legislation, by leaving a massive loophole that allows mining companies to shirk their responsibilities.

“If the government doesn’t fix up this legislation, mining companies will continue to say that rehabilitation costs their shareholders too much, leaving sites in an unusable condition meaning Queenslanders bear the cost of a degraded landscape.

### **Don’t leave taxpayers to foot the bill**

“We cannot let mining companies get away with leaving taxpayers to foot the clean-up bill or leaving surrounding landholders to deal with ongoing pollution and other impacts.

“The Queensland Government needs to uphold its election promise by fixing the legislation so that mining companies are legally required to fully rehabilitate land to a safe and stable landform that can be used for other purposes, such as agriculture, after mining is finished.

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## Qld mine rehab rules have massive loophole: LTG

**Lock the Gate is calling on the Queensland Parliament to urgently fix a massive loophole in legislation that will allow mining giants to leave massive holes in the ground, mountains of waste and contaminated tailings dams.**

Prior to the state election, Queensland Labor promised that if they were elected, they would ‘ensure that all mined land would be fully rehabilitated’, but the laws currently before the parliament will not be able to deliver on that promise.

The proposed laws – titled the Mineral and Energy Resources (Financial Provisioning) Bill 2018 – contain a massive loophole for mining companies allowing them to leave land unrehabilitated if they argue the costs

are too high and the impacts will be ‘localised’.

The proposed Colton coal mine, south of Hervey Bay, is an example of the severe risks of un-rehabilitated mines, with New Hope planning to leave an unrehabilitated final void which will be 111 hectares in size.

Lock the Gate spokesperson, Rick Humphries, said:

### **Pit the size of 1,000 house blocks**

“To just give you an idea of the sheer size of the void at Colton, 111 hectares is the equivalent to about 1,000 suburban house blocks.

“That large pit will be left as a dangerous hazard sitting 10km away from the globally significant Sandy Straits,

forever. If the legislation is not changed the Colton Mine will never be back-filled or fully rehabilitated.

“If the government fails to address the loophole in the legislation, this will not only impact the environment, it will be fore-going the opportunity to create jobs - lots of jobs particularly in the coal fields of Central Queensland. Ensuring mines are fully rehabilitated to best practice standards requires significant additional investment and a big boost in employment.

“The Government can use it’s majority to close the loophole and in doing so create thousands of jobs by ensuring the mining industry fulfills its obligations to protect the environment. It’s potentially a big win-win for Queensland.”

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# Call for help: Stop Leigh Creek Energy UCG in Flinders Ranges

*Flinders Ranges Communities have fought for over two years to stop Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) in the beautiful Flinders Ranges, South Australia.*

A company related to Linc Energy, Leigh Creek Energy, has just been given the first green light to proceed, by new Minister for Energy and Mining, Dan van Holst Pellekaan (a former oil industry executive).

## William Light Foundation fights UCG

Objections to the project are being led by The William Light Foundation, whose chairman is Nigel Carney.

Mr Carney is appealing for help with the fight against UCG.

"The William Light Foundation has prepared an injunction on solid environmental risk grounds under the EPBC Act. We call on national and international assistance to have financial support and all other support for the forthcoming injunction," he said.

"The ALP and the Liberals have their dirty mitts all over this Chinese funded project based on Linc Energy and Carbon Energy technology.

"The government assessment of last week relies on the word of a Linc Energy hydrogeologist, Gary J Love – the assessment is flawed and ignores

warning bells in the company's EIR statement.

"As bad as the Chinchilla tragedy was, and still is, this is a continuation, and both ALP and Liberal party members have recently joined the company as lobbyists."

The William Light Foundation's lawyers have received a letter from RMIT University scientists outlining concerns about Leigh Creek Energy's Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Associate Professor Gavin Mudd and Dr Matthew Currell emphasised the potential for gaseous and fluid leaks from the combustion chamber, which could occur via leaking wells or fractures or faults in the geology.

"The EIR states that the proposed demonstration site is within 100 metres of a fault... Why is 100 metres judged a 'safe' distance for UCG activities from such faults?" the letter asks.

"If there is a well fault or failure during operations, the consequences could be very difficult to manage and/or remediate in time to prevent gas or fluid migration.

"Similarly, the monitoring plan for groundwater, soil gas and ambient air quality monitoring is in our view poorly developed."

Nigel Carney said, "The Bender family

and Chinchilla community must be congratulated for continuing the fight, and yes, Helen Bender reminds us that our most fundamental rights have been taken away and now we must unite and stop wilful government and corporate destruction of the land.

## "Share campaign, help us win"

"Please share our campaign and help us. A win will be a win for all communities that are told they have no rights.

"Our page is [www.williamlightfoundation.org](http://www.williamlightfoundation.org)

"In the memory of George Bender and people that have experienced loss or are now threatened, we continue the battle until our land, water, and air is safe."

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# Santos response to EIS submissions 'weak, inadequate'

*The Santos Response to Submissions for the Narrabri coal seam gasfield EIS fails to address the many problems that experts and community groups have raised, leaving major data gaps that increase environmental risks.*

The report provides a detailed breakdown of the submissions, confirming that over 23,000 people made submissions, with 98% of submitters objecting to the project and only 1% supporting it.

Coonabarabran resident Jane Judd said, "This response from Santos is woefully inadequate, especially when it comes to water.

"They have point blank refused to conduct the extra baseline data collection on groundwater dependent ecosystems recommended by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee.

"What is the point of having an expert water group to review gas mining proposals if Santos is free to just ignore them? It's just not good enough.

Rohan Boehm from Narrabri said, "Despite extensive submissions from the community calling for Santos to reveal exactly where they planned to place their gas wells, they have not done so.

## Santos wants blank cheque

"The community still has no way of knowing where the 850 gas wells and associated roads, pipelines, compressor stations and other infrastructure will be located – Santos are basically asking the government to give them a blank cheque.

"It's clear from the overwhelming number of submissions objecting to this project, including two thirds of submitters from the Narrabri region,

that this project should never be approved" he said.

Local ecologist David Paull said, "Santos have refused to conduct any further research on the Koala population in the project area, despite admitting that it is in severe decline.

"The Office of Environment and Heritage had acknowledged concerns about the Koala and referred to the usefulness of an additional expert report to assess potential impacts, but Santos didn't deliver.

"The Narrabri Gas Project will do extensive damage to the Pilliga Forest, the largest temperate woodland left in eastern Australia, as well as clearing endangered ecosystems and putting unique threatened species like the Pilliga Mouse at risk" he said.

• See p6 for more news, link to Santos response

## Q Health report failed to follow health impact assessment guidelines, say scientists

• continued from p1

polluted it themselves by throwing old batteries into it.

Residents told the researchers of some of their frustrations:

*“What I’ve been asking for all along is permanent, independent air monitoring; permanent stuff so they know that if there’s a problem, cause we’ve got the compressor station that end with all their flares and associated ponds and what not. We just found out there’s a flare the next road over. I’ve sent off emails wanting to know the locations of ponds and their flares and all that and who’s testing them cause as far as we know only the companies test it.”*

The scientists said, “Lack of and poor quality health data was found to exacerbate community tensions. We recommend application of HIAs, epidemiological studies, consultation with communities and consideration of social risks of poor quality health studies,” scientists said.

They noted there is widespread political support for exploration of unconventional gas to reduce dependency on foreign energy.

“Australian coal seam gas (CSG) is predominantly extracted in the Surat and Bowen basins in Queensland, with 40,000 wells planned. It entails drilling gas wells in grid-like patterns, depressurizing the coal seam, and potentially using hydraulic fracturing (‘fracking’) technology.

### Complex social, land use conflicts

“CSG developments in populated and agriculturally productive regions, such as the Darling Downs in southern Queensland, have led to complex social and land use conflicts, including vociferous contestation of emerging ‘agri-gas fields’.

“CSG extraction in New South Wales and shale gas extraction in western and northern Australia are also scheduled.

“Our paper concentrates on unconventional gas developments and associated health impact assessment (HIA) practices in Queensland. We identify best-practice HIA methodologies that we compare to the only publicly available health impact study in Queensland. We use ethnographic data to identify community perspectives on CSG development, discuss implications for CSG debates of lack of scientific information, and make recommendations.”

### The CSG arena – full article

**Fernanda Claudio, Kim de Rijke & Andrew Page (2018) The CSG arena: a critical review of unconventional gas developments and best-practice health impact assessment in Queensland, Australia, Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal, 36:1, 105-114, DOI: 10.1080/14615517.2017.1364025**

To link to this article:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2017.1364025>

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## News this week

Another quiet week for **Adani**, but Stop Adani activists continue to protest the company’s plans, with a rally planned in Brisbane for May 19.

**Clive Palmer** is still hoping the Adani mine gets up, and has sought environmental approval for his company **Waratah Coal’s** proposed mine next door.

**Santos** made its long-awaited response to submissions on the EIS for its **Narrabri** gasfield. The company tried to discount the thousands of submissions opposed to the project.

A new study has documented **social stress** caused by the **CSG industry** in the Darling Downs. Population turnover, FIFO workers, divisions within the community, a property market boom and bust and rising crime, especially drug offences, all emerged as the gasco’s moved in.

**Matt Canavan’s** multi-million handout to gas companies has backfired, with one of the recipients, **Westside**, turning out to be Chinese-owned with links to the **Chinese Communist Party**. Westside is part of the Landbridge Group which now controls the port of Darwin’s. Critics say there is nothing to stop Westside exporting its subsidised gas.

The Federal government is believed to be including changes in the budget to increase the yield from the **Petroleum Resources Rent Tax**. Existing projects will be exempt and the extra money won’t start flowing for decades.

**Bloomberg** analysts note that excessive tax incentives have cost the country \$26 billion.

**Underground Coal Gasification** (UCG) is raising its ugly head in **South Australia**, with an environmental approval given to **Leigh Creek Energy**. This is surprising, given the recent conviction of **Linc Energy** for massive pollution caused by UCG in the Darling Downs. Apparently SA officials are unconcerned by the technology, which has been planned using the same consultants involved with the Linc disaster. Local groups are calling for help to resist the UCG plan.

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## Study finds endocrine disruptors in gasfields

**A study has found that polluted groundwater near a fracked Wyoming oil and gas field is more disruptive to human cells than tainted groundwater sampled near conventional oil and gas operations.**

The study by researchers at the University of Missouri and other institutions is believed to be the first to compare the effects of fracking-linked pollution to those of conventional oil and gas development pollution. Research found evidence for groundwater contamination from both types of drilling, but more insidious effects from groundwater in areas where nearby wells are stim-

ulated with hydraulic fracturing, the scientific paper says.

Some chemicals reportedly used in fracking act as endocrine disruptors that “can interfere with any aspect of hormone action” and “disrupt development and contribute to disease in both humans and animals,” the paper says. The endocrine system is key to fetal and infant development – turning on and off production of various growth hormones. Its disruption can cause everything from birth defects and miscarriages to low sperm counts.

<https://www.wyofile.com/study-water-near-fracked-wyo-gas-field-disrupts-hormones/>

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# In the news this week:

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 16,000 words of news for your convenience. Click on the [links](#) to view original articles. (\$) = subscription may be required

## THE ADANI SAGA

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/opinion/opinion-labor-mp-terri-butler-hijacks-anzac-day-over-adani-protest/news-story/af4151e29ce61681c6e1479af9b67de9>

### Opinion: Labor MP Terri Butler hijacks Anzac Day over Adani protest

Jill Poulsen, Courier-Mail, 25/04/2018

Am I the only one sceptical of Labor MP Terri Butler's claims that [protesters](#) tried to "hijack" ANZAC Day in her electorate? ...

I've had nothing to do with anti Adani protesters, from what I've read their methods can be fairly extreme, at times annoying, but banging some posters up in area you know there will be lost of foot traffic doesn't strike me as anything worth being ashamed of.

I think it is Ms Butler who has rather expertly hijacked ANZAC Day.

She knows how strong public sentiment is around ANZAC Day and to use emotive language to paint the posters in a way that made the sound disrespectful to the ANZACS, not her, the ANZACS handed her a sweet victory.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/apr/26/adani-builds-coal-fired-power-plant-in-india-to-send-energy-to-bangladesh>

### Adani builds coal-fired power plant in India to send energy to Bangladesh

Ben Smees & Michael Safi, The Guardian, 26/04/2018

Godda, in the Indian state of Jharkhand, is surrounded by the country's most productive coalmines. It will soon also be home to the Adani group's latest coal-fired power station, a plant built for the sole purpose of sending energy across the border to Bangladesh.

Adani has framed its planned 1,600-megawatt Godda power plant as a humanitarian venture. ... But market analysts say the supply agreement is anything but benevolent. The tariffs quoted by the [Bangladesh](#) Power Development Board are about double the current cost of solar and wind power in India.

Tim Buckley, a former head of equity research at Citigroup and now an analyst with the pro-renewable energy group the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), says there is a more obvious reason for



Adani to build Godda: to prop up the prospects of the proposed Carmichael megamine in [Queensland](#). ...

Despite Godda's proximity to India's coal heartland, Adani would have to import coal to the new plant. The company's Australian arm has already begun to hint that this will come from Carmichael. At an event in Brisbane last month the chief executive of Adani Australia, Jeyakumar Janakaraj, was reported by News Corp as saying Galilee coal had been "booked".

## COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.singletonargus.com.au/story/5357471/no-escape-from-mine-dust/>

### Department of Planning must say no to any new open cut coal mines

Louise Nichols, Singleton Argus, 23/04/2018

Ridiculously irresponsible is how Bulga resident Wayne Riley describes the Department of Planning's continued approvals for expanded open cut coal mines near Singleton.

"Singleton is surrounded, in fact it's being enveloped by these open cut mines, which means you can never escape the dust," said Mr Riley.

"Every time a westerly wind blows 25,000 residents in Singleton are covered in dust and diesel particulates and because the existing mines are expanding that air pollution is getting worse and travelling further down the valley. So it's time the Department, our Council and State Government said no to these mining companies and stopped any new or expanded open

cuts in the Hunter." ...

Mr Riley argues the authorities should have insisted that only underground mines to allowed to be developed so close to populated areas. ...

His story is like so many Bulga residents because he actually trusted the government to uphold the 2003 Deed of Agreement signed by then Labor State Government and the owners of Warkworth Mount Thorley mine Rio Tinto to protect in perpetuity Saddle Ridge from open cut mining.

Today Saddle Ridge is being mined – the deed of agreement shredded and this is taking place despite the resident's group the Bulga Milbrodale Progress Association succeeding first in the Land and Environment Court in then in Supreme Court and the Appeal Court to prevent this happening. ...

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-26/clive-palmer-seeks-approval-for-monster-mine-near-adani/9698680>

### Clive Palmer seeks approval for 'monster mine' next door to Adani

Michael Slezak, ABC, 26/04/2018

Clive Palmer has sought federal environmental approval for a huge greenfield coal mine in central Queensland, which documents suggest could produce 33 per cent more coal than Adani's controversial and delayed Carmichael mine.

Its viability depends on the construction of the Carmichael mine, or another mine with a rail link to the coast, adding weight to claims the Adani project could open the floodgates to



significantly more coal mining in the Galilee Basin.

Environmentalists have called for the Federal Government to reject the new application out-of-hand, without a full assessment. ...

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/business/palmers-plan-for-new-coal-mine-south-of-townsville/news-story/68cce0ce5c07baa816bc5095c562f106>

### Palmer's plan for new coal mine south of Townsville

Chris Lees, *Townsville Bulletin*, 26/04/2018

A new coal mine south of Charters Towers could be generating jobs and coal by 2030.

Waratah Coal is behind the project and has lodged an environmental application with the Federal Government.

Waratah Coal is owned by Clive Palmer's private company Mineralogy. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/apr/27/a-readymade-garbage-dump-queensland-allows-bare-minimum-mine-rehab>

### A readymade garbage dump: Queensland allows 'bare minimum' mine rehab

Ben Smee, *The Guardian*, 27/04/2018

The [Queensland](#) government accepted a "bare minimum" rehabilitation plan for a decommissioned coalmine near Ipswich after apparently losing key documents relating to the site's environmental conditions.

The site of the former Ebenezer mine will remain scarred by massive voids and a waste dam. Rather than fill them – a course of action demanded by environmentalists and local community groups – the owner wants to keep the cratered landscape in the hope of selling the site as a readymade garbage dump. ...

A Lock the Gate spokesman, Rick Humphries, said in a letter to the department: "There has been no serious attempt by the department nor [owner] Zedemar to seriously identify the environmental and public health and safety risk and their mitigation."

Humphries said the plan agreed to by the department simply locked in the existing landform at the site and was a "bare minimum approach". ...

Locals are concerned by what they say is an increasing trend: landfill companies using decommissioned coalmining sites at Ipswich, a city built largely around a once-thriving coal industry, as dumps.

## GAS, GAS, GAS

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/5358083/santos-formally-responds-to-narrabri-coal-seam-gas-objectors/>

### Santos formally responds to Narrabri coal seam gas objectors

Jamieson Murphy, *Northern Daily Leader*, 23/04/2018

Environmental groups have already levelled criticism at Santos' Response to Submission, saying the report "failed to reveal crucial aspects" of the gas field.

Wilderness Society spokeswoman Naomi Hodgson said the company's approach was "like saying it wants to bulldoze a freeway through a city but refusing to say where the route will go and which buildings it wants to knock down".

"Santos has still not revealed where it will drill its 850 wells and where the hundreds of kilometres of pipes and roads will go so it's impossible to say exactly how bad the impacts will be," Ms Hodgson said.

"The Rural Fire Service highlighted this as a problem in its submission and Santos has still not revealed this information." ...

[Of the record-breaking 23,000 submission](#), the vast majority objected to the project – according to Santos' Response to Submission report (RtS), 98 per cent were against the project, while the remaining two per cent were in favour or neutral. ...

NSW Resources and Energy Assessments director Mike Young said the response could be accessed on the Department of Planning and Environment's website.

Under NSW planning laws, any major project that receives more than 25 objecting submissions will be determined by the Independent Planning Commission.

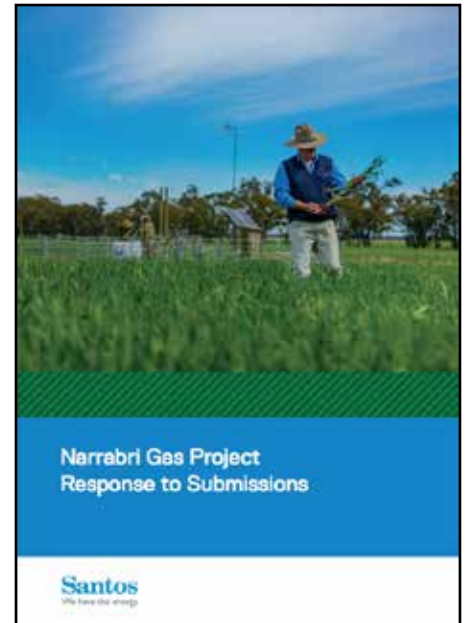
The Department will make its assessment information publicly available when finalised.

<http://www.afr.com/business/energy/gas/santos-fuels-storm-of-protest-over-response-to-narrabri-csg-opponents-20180423-h0z4dy>

### Santos fuels storm of protest over response to Narrabri CSG opponents

Angela Macdonald-Smith, *AFR*, 23/04/2018

Opponents of Santos' \$3.6 billion Narrabri coal seam gas project in NSW have stepped up demands for the oil and gas company to reveal the location of the planned 850 wells and



### Santos response to submissions on the Narrabri gas project can be downloaded here:

<https://majorprojects.accelo.com/public/f84683501b4fc0d6970771187ddd1fc5/Narrabri%20Gas%20Project%20-%20Response%20to%20Submissions%20-%20Report%20Part%20A.pdf>

"hundreds" of kilometres of pipelines and roads, as the company responded to [the overwhelmingly negative 23,000 submissions](#) on the venture.

The release of Santos' formal reply to the raft of submissions – a record in NSW – shifts the controversial project into the next phase of the approvals process before a revised target for the start of construction of mid-to-late 2019 and production start-up in 2021-22.

The venture has been repeatedly delayed over several years amid changing state regulations for coal seam gas and a lack of capital to move forward after the collapse in oil prices.

Santos, [the target of a \\$13.5 billion takeover approach](#) by US firm Harbour Energy, [took the project back into its core portfolio late last year](#) as it resumed work on growth opportunities after making progress on cutting debt and costs.

The project, owned 30 per cent by EnergyAustralia, would supply about 200 terajoules a day of gas, meeting up to half of demand in NSW where gas fuels more than 1 million homes and about 33,000 businesses. A Santos spokeswoman said NSW's gas imports could be cut from 95 per cent to less than 50 per cent. ...

Chief executive Kevin Gallagher reiterated Santos' findings that the project "would not have a significant impact

on groundwater resources” and that significant effects on threatened flora and fauna “will be avoided”.

Mr Gallagher described coal seam gas as “a clever way to extract energy from coal without mining”. He said the project would deliver about \$1.2 billion in royalties for NSW and create about 1300 jobs during construction and 200 ongoing jobs. ...

<http://www.news.com.au/national/breaking-news/csg-will-decimate-nsw-forest-greenies/news-story/ef9a0933d-c3a336a611c462bc322ab94>

### CSG will ‘decimate’ NSW forest: activists

*Dominica Sanda, AAP, 23/04/2018*

A coal seam gas project in northwest NSW which could satisfy half of the state’s natural gas demand has the potential to decimate the “Noah’s Ark of inland NSW”, environmentalists claim.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment received a record 23,007 public submissions relating to the Narrabri gas project. Some 98 per cent opposed the proposal.

Oil and gas giant Santos formally responded to the submissions on Monday.

Opponents are worried about the potential impacts on groundwater, terrestrial ecology as well as social and health impacts. ...

<https://www.echo.net.au/2018/04/critical-information-missing-santos-pilliga-proposal/>

### ‘Critical information’ missing from Santos’ Pilliga proposal

*Echonet Daily, 23/04/2018*

Santos has failed to reveal crucial aspects of its Narrabri coal seam gas scheme in its response to the record number of 23,000 submissions generated by its environmental impact statement for the controversial project, the Wilderness Society has said after Santos’s response was made public. ...

Ecologist David Milledge highlighted concerns over Santos’s fauna surveys in a submission by the North-West Alliance yet no new fauna surveys have been conducted. A 10-day survey by Landmark Ecological Services led by Milledge found more than twice the animals in the project area than Santos’s consultants did in a four-year period.

The Narrabri coal seam gas scheme will decimate the project area in the Pilliga Forest, with roads and gas pipelines ripped through NSW’s most important inland forest connecting hundreds of gas wells. Tiny woodland

**Active well drilling in the Pilliga.**  
Photo: D Sewell, Lock the Gate



endangered animals such as the Pilliga mouse and eastern pygmy possum will have to play British bulldog across a heavily cleared landscape with increasing numbers of trucks, foxes, feral cats, dogs and pigs. ...

<https://www.dailyliberal.com.au/story/5360700/community-to-be-consulted-on-coal-seam-gas-position-poll/>

### Community to be consulted on Coal Seam Gas position – Poll

*Orlander Ruming, Daily Liberal, 24/04/2018*

Members of the community have urged Dubbo Regional Council to take a stance against fracking.

At the April council meeting on Monday night, mayor Ben Shields introduced a Mayoral Minute to review council’s position statement on Coal Seam Gas.

Cr Shields said it was his belief CSG was an industry that posed great risk to the city’s future economic potential. It also had an unreasonably high chance of doing permanent, irreversible damage to the environment, he said. ...

<https://www.echo.net.au/2018/04/will-pay-queenslands-linc-stink/>

### Who will pay for Queensland’s ‘Linc stink’?

*Mia Armitage, Byron Echo, 25/04/2018*

Poisoned land, workers told to drink milk to prevent burning their stomach linings, nearby farm pigs allegedly dying from the ‘Linc stink’ and a \$23M clean-up bill.

Former gas company Linc Energy is guilty on five counts of wilful and unlawful environmental harm, a Queensland District Court jury found

in early April, but the case for farmers and taxpayers is far from over. ...

<https://indaily.com.au/news/2018/04/26/experts-urge-caution-leigh-creek-projects-environmental-risks/>

### Experts urge caution over Leigh Creek project’s environmental risks

*Stephanie Richards, InDaily, 26/04/2018*

Associate Professor Gavin Mudd and Dr Matthew Currell, both of RMIT University, sent a letter to the lawyers of environmental group William Light Foundation earlier this month outlining their concerns about the Leigh Creek Energy Project’s Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

William Light Foundation, which is opposed to the project, is currently seeking a Federal Court injunction to stop the controversial practice of underground coal gasification (UCG) mining in Leigh Creek. ...

The letter gave particular mention to the potential for gaseous and fluid leaks from the combustion chamber, which according to Mudd and Currell could occur via leaking wells or fractures or faults in the geology.

“The EIR states that the proposed demonstration site is within 100 metres of a fault... Why is 100 metres judged a ‘safe’ distance for UCG activities from such faults?” the letter asks.

“If there is a well fault or failure during operations, the consequences could be very difficult to manage and/or remediate in time to prevent gas or fluid migration.

“Similarly, the monitoring plan for groundwater, soil gas and ambient air quality monitoring is in our view poorly developed.” ...



Leigh Creek Energy managing director Phil Staveley said in a statement last week that the Minister's approval marked "a major milestone" for the pilot project, which is anticipated to start producing gas by the end of June.

Conservation groups and the Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association have condemned the project, citing the Linc Energy environmental disaster in Queensland as a reason not to proceed with UCG mining in South Australia. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/data-room/metgasco-rebel-voted-off-the-board/news-story/f00536364d36164347daa5f8e23c999>

### Metgasco rebel voted off the board

Scott Murdoch & Bridget Carter,  
The Australian, 24/04/2018

The future of Metgasco remains in question after the oil and gas explorer saw off a coup by one of its non-executive directors, who in turn was booted off the company's board.

The bizarre saga at Metgasco over the past few months has ended, at least for the time being, with director Andrew Purcell voted off the board by the company's shareholders.

But the future is not clear, with Mr Purcell remaining the company's largest shareholder with 19.2 per cent. ...

The company has been described as a cash box, which seems appropriate given its major asset is \$6 million in cash.

In the past, Metgasco held three gas exploration licences in the NSW Northern Rivers region but in 2015 it was paid compensation from the state government to withdraw those licences. ...

<https://theconversation.com/fracking-can-cause-social-stress-in-nearby-areas-new-research-95216>

### Fracking can cause social stress in nearby areas: new research

Will Rifkin, The Conversation, 24/04/2018

The question of opening the Northern Territory and South Australia to fracking has [re-ignited concerns](#) about environmental and health impacts.

Receiving less attention are the social and economic changes affecting nearby rural communities from this natural gas development and the social stress that can result.

From 2012, I led a team analysing trends in key social and economic indicators over the past 15 years in Queensland's largely agricultural Darling Downs, where over A\$20 billion has been invested in coal seam



**New research demonstrates the social stress bought to Chinchilla by unconventional gas mining.** Photo: Lock the Gate

gas (CSG) development since 2011. We also interviewed and talked with over 200 residents and business owners. [Social stress](#) emerged as the most visible health impact of this coal seam gas development. ...

Population turnover increased, according to ABS statistics, from 10-15% per year before the CSG boom to 15-20% per year during the boom. The [number of nonresident workers](#) peaked in 2014 at over 9,000 for the Western Downs local government area, which has 30,000 residents.

Arguments about whether the CSG development was good or bad for the community exacerbated a decline in the number and strength of bonds among residents. Interviews suggest that these arguments – both in the gasfield towns [and within Aboriginal groups along the gas pipeline route](#) – split neighbours and families.

Business and employment opportunities with the resource industry reduced financial stress for some but increased it for others. ...

The construction phase for coal seam gas development resulted in a surge in housing costs. Rents rose dramatically in Chinchilla, where 20-30% of residents live in rental housing. [Median rent on a three-bedroom house](#) went from A\$280 per week in 2011 to A\$400 per week in 2013. That is despite most industry staff and tier-one contractors living in camps outside the town. Lower-income families moved away.

[The rate of construction of new housing climbed.](#) Chinchilla had 106

residential building approvals in 2011. That more than doubled to 252 in 2014, just as the CSG construction phase ended. Overbuilding caused rents to plummet. ...

[Drug arrests](#) had bottomed out at 4.3 per thousand population in 2012 during the coal seam gas construction boom. By 2016, this figure climbed to 35 arrests per 1,000, well above the Queensland trend. The number of police on the street heightened concern among Chinchilla's residents, interviews revealed. ...

• Will Rifkin, Chair in Applied Regional Economics and Director, Hunter Research Foundation Centre, University of Newcastle

<http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/16160151.Fracking-gas-pipeline-heralded-by-Ineos-closed-to-prevent-catastrophe/>

### Fracking gas pipeline heralded by Ineos closed to prevent "catastrophe"

Rob Edwards, Herald Scotland, 15/04/2018

A fracking gas pipeline key to the "shale gas revolution" promised by Grangemouth petrochemical giant Ineos has been shut down by US safety regulators to prevent "catastrophic results impacting the public".

State authorities in Pennsylvania ordered the closure of the 300-mile Mariner East pipeline after three large sinkholes were discovered near drilling for another adjacent pipeline. Continuing to pipe huge amounts of inflammable and explosive gases presented "a clear and present danger to life or property", a state investigation concluded. ...

Campaign groups describe the pipeline



closure as a “big blow” for Ineos, and question the safety of transporting gas around the world. ...



<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/apr/27/fracking-south-korean-earthquake>

### Fracking may have caused South Korean earthquake – study

Lily Kuo, *The Guardian*, 27/04/2018

One of South Korea’s largest earthquakes on record may have been caused by hydraulic fracturing – or fracking – according to a study published on Friday in the journal *Science*.

A magnitude-5.5 earthquake hit the south-eastern city of Pohang on 15 November, injuring at least 70 people, temporarily displacing hundreds, and causing millions of dollars of damage. In the aftermath, residents and researchers have questioned whether the quake could be connected to a geothermal plant – the country’s first – less than 2km (about 1 mile) away. ...

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-26/agl-announces-newcastle-gas-fired-power-station/9701122>

### AGL announces Newcastle gas-fired power plant to replace the Liddell power station

Belinda Kontominas & Alice Matthews, *ABC*, 26/04/2018

AGL has released details for a gas-fired power plant in New South Wales, as part of its plans to replace the aging Liddell coal-fired station and move towards cleaner energy.

The company said it was investing up to \$400 million in the 252-megawatt facility to be built near Newcastle and be completed during 2022. ...

AGL said it was assessing sites for the project near the company’s Newcastle Gas Storage Facility.

## FOSSIL POLITICS

[http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-24/landbridge-subsidiary-wins-\\$6m-gas-grant-for-domestic-lng-supply/9688304](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-24/landbridge-subsidiary-wins-$6m-gas-grant-for-domestic-lng-supply/9688304)

### Federal Government gives \$6 million to boost domestic gas supply to Chinese-owned Westside Corporation

Mark Willacy & Alexandra Blucher, *ABC*, 24/04/2018

The Federal Government has awarded a \$6 million grant to a gas producer wholly-owned by a massive Chinese company said to have close links to the country’s Communist Party.

Landbridge holds the 99-year lease of Darwin Port, a deal that angered the United States Government when it was made in 2015

Federal Resources Minister Matt Canavan announced grants to Westside Corporation and three other gas firms last month under the Government’s Gas Acceleration Program (GAP), which was established to help develop and secure domestic gas supplies.

But a government grants specialist says under the grant agreement there is nothing stopping the company sending the gas it taps overseas.

Westside is part of the Chinese-owned Landbridge Group ...

Executive director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), Peter Jennings said Landbridge gets access to concessional loans from Chinese banks “because it is a favoured son of the Chinese political system”.

“There is reach back to the Chinese Communist Party and to the Chinese intelligence apparatus, and that’s something that we should be concerned about,” he said.

“[This] should have led to some closer due diligence on the part of the Australian authorities in assessing whether or not this was an appropriate company to provide that \$6 million incentive.”

But Federal Resources Minister Matt Canavan told the ABC that the project assessment process confirmed the company was eligible. ...

The \$6 million in federal money granted to Westside is to fast-track the drilling of 10 gas wells at the company’s Greater Meridian Fields in Queensland’s Bowen Basin, bringing forward the already planned wells by one year to 2020. ...

But Ben Cusack from government grants consultancy Buletpoint has studied the Commonwealth’s grant

agreement and believes there is nothing to stop Westside from selling the gas sourced from the new wells to international markets.

Mr Jennings said a large and connected Chinese company like Landbridge did not need Australian taxpayers to fund its gas developments.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/energy-companies-will-pay-more-under-budget-changes-that-could-also-secure-company-tax-win-20180426-p4zbt1.html>

### Energy companies will pay more under budget changes that could also secure company tax win

Eryk Bagshaw, *SMH*, 26/04/2018

Oil and gas giants will be forced to pay billions more in tax under changes to the Petroleum Resources Rent Tax that could also deliver the Turnbull government a shock victory on its stalled company tax cuts.

It is understood next month’s budget will tackle longstanding concerns about the way energy companies are taxed by curbing “uplift concessions”, which determine tax deductions associated with exploration and construction. But in a concession expected to win industry support, the changes will exempt existing projects. ...

The billions of dollars in extra revenue will not start flowing for decades, but could be enough to help secure the support of the two crucial cross-benchers.



<https://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/excessive-incentives-australia-s-26-billion-missed-opportunity-20180426-p4zbt1.html>

### ‘Excessive incentives’: Australia’s \$26 billion missed opportunity

Bloomberg, *SMH*, 26/04/2018

Australia is on track to match Qatar as the world’s biggest liquefied natural gas exporter next year. The boost to the budget bottom line? Virtually nil.

While the Persian Gulf nation is forecast to rake in as much as \$26.6 billion in fiscal 2020 from taxes on the fuel, Australia is set to reap a paltry \$800 million, according to analysis by the

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## News this week ... from previous page

Tax Justice Network's Australian office. Australia's Petroleum Resource Rent Tax levies 40 per cent on profits after company tax has been paid, a system that works pretty well for oil projects but is a poor fit for LNG projects. That's because an oil venture can be cash positive within a few years of production, while LNG requires significantly more capital expenditure, prolonging the time before it generates enough cash to pay tax, a government report found. ...

<https://independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/welcome-sebastian-joyce-campion-to-barnabys-world-albeit-dystopian-one.11424#.Wt0MySsq8L0.facebook>

### Welcome to baby Sebastian Joyce/Campion to Barnaby's (albeit dystopian) world

Ross Jones, *Independent Australia*, 23/04/2018

Sydney bureau chief [Ross Jones](#) contemplates the world in which newborn Sebastian Joyce/Campion will grow up — a world where the policies of his father's party will likely result in dystopia.

A BIG Hi and Welcome to the world! to [neonate](#) Sebastian Joyce/Campion and genuine congratulations to his proud parents from all of us here at IA.

Young Sebastian will be just 32 when 2050 rolls around.

What sort of Australia will it be in that year for a young man heading into the meaningful part of life? What prospects will he have? Will there even be an Australia?

Natural resources will be ... unappealing because if things keep going as they are there won't be any — of any kind. The bush will be shredded, native animals extinct, gas fracked, methane bubbling, reefs dead, landscape scarred and broken, devoid of all minerals and wealth, frittered away on the short-term altar of greed for greed's sake. Ruined.

Sebastian will be able to thank his dad for playing a crucial role in the creation of such a rich legacy. There may well come a meaningful father-son dialogue when Sebastian reaches, say, 16. ...

Apart from a few holdouts, there probably won't be many rich people — because there will be no middle class to bludge off — so there will be only a few people to lend money to, or advise. Accordingly, opportunities in banking or law could be rare.

Anyway, have fun Sebastian — and thanks to your dad for all the laughs.

FFB



### A short educational film on the shale gas rush in the Northern Territory

Featuring Eddie Mason and Heleana Gulwa from Protect Arnhem Land, Gadrion Hoosan, Nancy McDinny and Asman Rory from Borroloola in the South West Gulf of Carpentaria, Daniel and Shannon Tapp from Big River Station in the Roper and Marjorie Braedon from Wattarka Kings Canyon.

Produced by Lauren Mellor and Boudicca Cereze edited by Cloudcatcher Media for Lock the Gate Alliance, 2015.

<https://vimeo.com/122897319/description>

### Interview: CSG on the Darling Downs

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

#### Recommended listening!

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

### SACRIFICE ZONE

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

<https://vimeo.com/257444267>

### Fiona Wilson fundraiser

Gas industry whistleblower Fiona Wilson is still battling her incarceration and forced medication by Queensland's Fixated Persons Unit.

Fiona's story was told in FFB1.2 and FFB1.13.

She needs to fund about \$30,000 in legal costs.

If you can help, click the link below:

<https://www.gofundme.com/harrister-needed-for-fiona-wilson>

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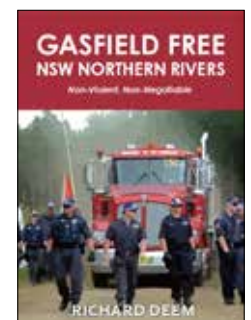
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<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01H4WU0L0>

<https://store.kobobooks.com/en-us/ebook/gasfield-free-nsw-northern-rivers>

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/book/gasfield-free-nsw-northern/>

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