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Fossil Fool Bulletin

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

Published by Eve Sinton • fossil.fool.bulletin@gmail.com

FFB 1:37 • 14 AUGUST 2018

Health professionals reject natural gas

As CSG & Public Health conference held in Narrabri, report documents health hazards

There are compelling reasons to question the use of natural gas (methane), given the risks it poses to human health. A report from Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) in the US report summarises recent scientific findings that document methane's implications for health.

This article comprises the Executive Summary from the 32-page *Fracking – Too Dirty, Too Dangerous* report.

Methane extraction, especially by means of high-volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing (fracking), releases methane and dangerous toxic substances into the water and air. So do the subsequent processing, transport and delivery of methane. PSR classifies the associated health threats into two broad categories: those caused by exposure to toxic substances, and those associated with methane's effects on the climate.

Toxic Exposures

A. Water Contamination

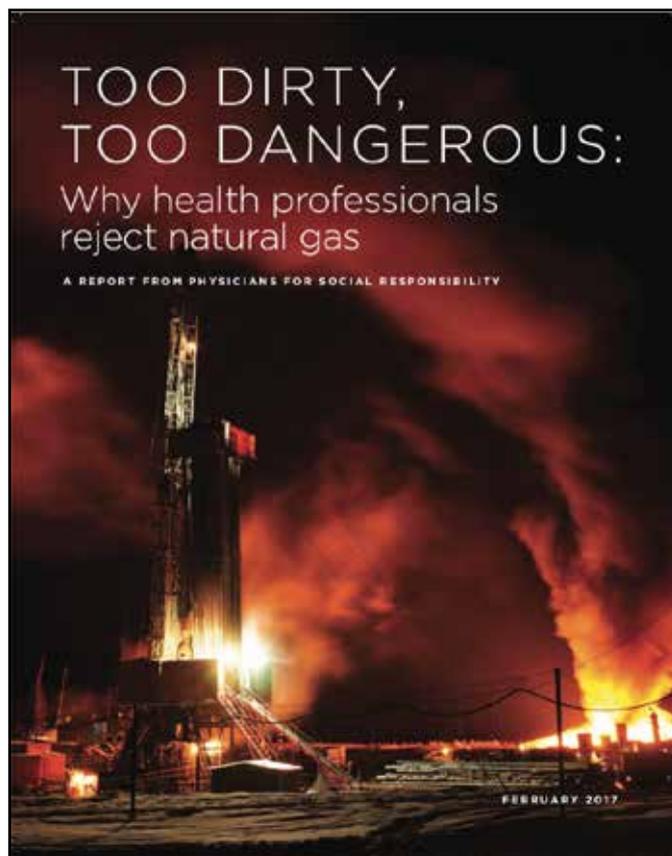
In fracking, a complex mixture of chemicals is combined with millions of litres of water, then pumped deep underground under high pressure to fracture rock, thus releasing tiny bubbles of gas or oil. The list of chemicals used in fracking fluids is considered proprietary business information and is not always made public. However, some fracking fluids contain benzene (known to cause leukaemia and other blood cancers), formaldehyde (a known carcinogen), and petroleum distillate (toxins which would render water undrinkable). Where people are exposed to fracking fluids but dislo-

sure of the chemicals involved is not required, health professionals may have to guess at toxicity, thus complicating or delaying treatment.

Some of the chemical-water fracking mixture routinely remains underground, where it can migrate into underground water supplies; methane and fracking chemicals have been found in drinking-water wells near fracking sites. The fracking wastewater that is removed from the well is generally so severely contaminated that conventional water treatment facilities cannot purify it. Its disposal poses a host of new problems, from ground and water contamination to earthquakes.

B. Air contamination

Fracking releases toxic substances not only into the water but also into the air. One of the most dangerous is particulate matter, which causes or contributes to lung diseases like COPD and lung cancer, heart effects including heart attack and congestive heart failure, and ischemic stroke. Fracking also releases volatile organic compounds



(VOC's) such as benzene and formaldehyde, both of which are known carcinogens; toluene, associated with mental disabilities and abnormal growth in children, as well as damage to the kidney, liver, and immune and reproductive systems; and xylene, which can affect the nervous system, kidneys, lungs and heart. VOC's also contribute to ground-level ozone, a pollutant that can reduce lung function and worsen bronchitis, emphysema and asthma. Radioactive substances like radon can

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• P 4: Sea Shepherd sails into Abbot Pt

• P 5: Trumpian America 1st energy conf

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accompany methane; radon is a potent cause of lung cancer. The full list of dangerous substances is far longer. Because fracking is conducted in rural, suburban and even urban areas, it exposes over 15 million Americans to the toxic substances used in and around drilling sites.

Some of these health risks are not limited to the fracking site. The pipelines and compressor stations that transport fracked gas hundreds of miles from well sites can leak, exposing distant populations to dangerous substances that travel through the pipelines along with the methane; these include, notably, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, and radon and its radioactive decay products. This infrastructure also carries the risk of explosions and intense fires.

C. Health outcomes

The risks from exposure to fracking-related toxics are not theoretical. Evidence is accumulating that exposure to fracking-related substances has caused serious health effects. Proximity to fracking sites has been shown to be associated with an increase in various health symptoms. Some, such as migraine headaches, severe fatigue and nose-bleeds, may indicate underlying health impacts whose causes and implications may not be fully understood. Research indicates certain health outcomes associated with proximity to fracking sites are immediately understood to be serious; these include the increase in high-risk pregnancies, birth defects and premature births. (Premature birth is a leading cause of infant death.) Other health outcomes may not manifest for years, given their long latency periods, but peer-reviewed research shows a clear link between early life exposures to some of the chemicals used in fracking and eventual adverse health effects. Evidence also links fracking to effects on farm animals, including stillbirths and deaths. Fracking's impact on the food supply is not yet known.

Fracking & climate change

A. Climate impacts on health

Methane is an extremely potent climate change gas, 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide over its first 20 years in the atmosphere. As such, it

THE EVIDENCE IS IN:
LIVING NEAR FRACKING SITES HAS BEEN LINKED TO ASTHMA, RASHES, HEADACHES, AND CANCER.

DOWNLOAD at: concernedhealthny.org/compendium

FRACKING SCIENCE COMPENDIUM 5TH EDITION

Concerned Health Professionals of NY

PSR

©Faces of Fracking

contributes to the host of threats to health known to be associated with climate change here and around the world. These include heat waves, which are the most lethal impact of climate change in the United States; the spread of diseases carried by insects and other vectors, such as West Nile disease, malaria, and Lyme disease; intense hurricanes, storms, and sea level rise; flooding, which may cause water contamination and destruction of homes and crops; and droughts, wild fires, and decreased crop yields.

B. Leakage and tipping points

Methane leakage into the atmosphere is a problem whose magnitude is now being reassessed: Rates of leakage appear significantly higher than was previously calculated, especially from fracked wells, both active and abandoned; infrastructure including compressor stations; and pipelines, including distribution pipelines for heating and cooking. Large storage facilities, such as Aliso Canyon in California, have emerged as another source of methane leakage. The cumulative impact of this leakage may overwhelm the apparent climate advantage of burning methane gas instead of coal for power generation.

Due to tipping points in the climate system, the next 20-30 years will be decisive in determining the extent of climate change impacts. With air and ocean temperatures rising worldwide, we are in danger of surpassing the critical threshold of a greater than 2°C temperature increase. If that happens, much of the world's permafrost will

melt. The result: vast amounts of carbon dioxide and methane will be released, yielding even greater climate change acceleration; more parts of the world would reach unliveable temperatures. The critical need to avoid such a climate crisis requires that we take into account methane's near-term warming impacts and act expeditiously.

Conclusions

Our nation's policies and practices must recognize and respond to these grave health hazards. Industry and government action to stem methane leaks are welcome steps in the right direction but are inadequate: they reduce but do not resolve methane leakage and toxic threats. Therefore, Physicians for Social Responsibility calls for a full and honest assessment of methane gas's impacts on health, including the following steps to protect human health:

- Calculate methane's climate-forcing potential based on its impact over its first twenty years in the atmosphere;
- Develop a thorough inventory of methane gas leakage across its entire lifecycle; and
- Appraise the toxic risks associated with methane, including at the points of extraction, processing, transport and distribution.
- Ensure that natural gas projects are subject to fundamental health-protective policy, including the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

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CSG: dirty and dangerous

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- Require companies conducting hydraulic fracturing to fully and transparently declare the chemicals they use in those processes.
- Require federal, state and local governments to prioritize the protection of human health in their decisions concerning gas-related projects.

These factors should inform public policy and should lead to the phasing-out of methane gas.

Finally, to meet our nation's need for abundant energy, PSR calls for a swift and equitable transition to renewable energy sources. Our health and that of future generations deserve and depend on a clean energy future.

The full report, as well as PSR's 266-page *Fracking Science Compendium* can be downloaded here:

https://www.psr.org/resources/?_sft_resource_category=fracking

PFAS pollution mapped



A new interactive web page shows sites known to be contaminated with a class of chemicals commonly known as PFAS (Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances).

PFAS chemicals are anthropogenic fluorosurfactants, used in a variety of applications including: fire fighting foams, non-stick cookware, the fabric protector "scotchguard", stain repellants, and some fast food packaging. PFAS can also be found in house dust, with homes being the major route for human exposure.

PFAS chemicals are likely to be widespread throughout the environment and there are likely to be thousands of contaminated sites across Australia.

The map was created by volunteers associated with Friends of the Earth Australia. It can be seen here:

<https://pfas.australianmap.net/>

Adani must be held accountable

The Australian Marine Conservation Society is calling on the Queensland Government to hold Adani to account, following media revelations the company knew it would pollute the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area during Cyclone Debbie and breach their special licence to pollute by up to 900%.

Dr Lissa Schindler, AMCS Senior Reef Campaigner, said: "According to media reports Adani actually suspected that its water on site was more polluted than what was allowed to be released into our Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area during Cyclone Debbie. This demonstrates yet again that Adani can't be trusted with our Reef.

"To knowingly allow this water to be released and pollute the area surrounding the Abbot Point coal terminal would be to recklessly risk the health of our threatened dugongs,

turtles, snubfin dolphins and the nationally significant Caley Valley Wetlands.

"How can Adani challenge its measly \$12,000 fine and fight an environmental assessment of Abbot Point when it reportedly knew it would pollute the Reef and breach its licence before the cyclone hit?

"This is blatantly unacceptable to everyone who loves the Reef, let alone depends on it for their livelihoods. The Queensland Government must fight for our Reef and hold Adani accountable for this coal pollution.

"AMCS visited the wetlands following the pollution breach and took samples of the surrounding soil. We were only able to sample the surrounding area because Adani refused to grant us access to the W2 area where the pollution breach into the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area occurred."

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Community continues to fight AGL's proposed Crib Point gas terminal

The Australian Financial Review reports AGL Energy chief executive Andy Vesey has declared a go-ahead for the company's proposed \$250 million LNG import terminal in Victoria is only "months away", saying the business case is "still robust" even if an Andrew Forrest-backed NSW import venture also proceeds (10/08/2018).

AFR said AGL has already committed about \$100 million towards "long-lead items" needed for the Crib Point project in Western Port, with negotiations on a floating terminal lease arrangement and LNG supply also understood to be well advanced.

"AGL is yet to get Victorian state development approvals, and has yet to win over many local residents, who are being promised discounts on their energy bills to compensate them for any disruptions. It wants to start importing gas in 2020-21.

"CEO Andy Vesey acknowledged the local issues, saying: 'We have a lot of work to do, getting through the approvals process, engaging with the community'."

Local residents have active Facebook



and web pages detailing the environmental and safety hazards of the gas import terminal and its associated pipeline to be built by APA.

The community is urged to contact their local MP, Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt, and the Victorian government with their objections.

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Sea Shepherd's Operation Reef Defence reaches Abbot Point, drawing national attention to Adani's folly

Last Wednesday, at sunrise, the M/Y Steve Irwin vessel arrived at Abbot Point, as part of the at sea component of Operation Reef Defence, in opposition to the Adani coal mine and in defence of the Great Barrier Reef.

A number of First Nations people were on board.

Ngaro elder Ken Dodds said, "First Nations people, Burri, Juru, Ngaro and Giao, stand united with Sea Shepherd and crew against the destruction of the sea land and rivers and the reef. It is our role and responsibility as custodians and guardians of our sacred lands and waters to protect it for our future generations."

Githabul man, and M/Y Steve Irwin Quartermaster, Jarmbi stated: "Together with my brothers and sisters onboard the Steve Irwin, I am proud to stand strong and in respect with the Ngaro, Burri, Juru and Giao people in opposition of the Adani coal mine, for our Mother Earth, for our people and for our Great Barrier Reef."

Hoping to open their hearts

"We hope to open the hearts of Adani and their workers, let them feel, love and appreciation for all creation, that they may reconnect with nature, that they may see what they are doing to our planet, to nature and ultimately to their own children. We are all in this together and we cannot continue to treat our Mother Earth this way."

Captain Malcolm Holland stated: "I am proud of my crew, for its execution of the mission up to now; however, we're far from finished here."

Our initial voyage for the at-sea component of Operation Reef Defence has seen measurable success, and it's felt that we're just getting underway now in our campaign to protect the Reef, and our hopes for a continually liveable environment for our children."

Miners: "anti-jobs" campaign

QRC Chief Executive Ian Macfarlane criticised the Operation Reef campaign.

"Once again, it's a case of do as we say, not do as we do for anti-mining activists," Macfarlane said.



TOP: Aboard the Steve Irwin. Photo: Frontline Action Against Coal

ABOVE: Abbot Point coal terminal, seen from the Steve Irwin. Photo: Tara Lambourne/Sea Shepherd

"But you can't avoid the facts for long. And the facts are the ship the crew is using to sail up the Queensland coast is a product of resources – most notably coal.

"If these activists truly wanted a coal free future they would have no choice but to end the journey immediately," Macfarlane said.

"If they continue then their anti-jobs, anti-regional growth claims will have a very hollow ring to them."

Macfarlane "out of touch"

Jeff Hansen, Managing Director, Sea Shepherd Australia said, "These comments by Mr Macfarlane clearly show how out of touch and disconnected he is, because the reality is, Sea Shepherd does not want to even be here, our crew and myself would much rather be at home with our families. However when we have projects like the Adani

coal mine that put at risk an Australian icon, the Great Barrier Reef, and threaten the very existence of all life on our planet, we have to make a stand.

"Sea Shepherd's work in protecting our oceans, our primary life support system, is critical right now at this point in history, however our ultimate goal is that one day Sea Shepherd does not need to even exist.

"These comments from Mr Macfarlane show that he is completely disconnected and shows no respect at all for the 64,000 jobs the reef supports, no respect for the Queensland farmers and their families whose water will be stolen by Adani, and no respect for the global fight for any chance in a liveable climate for our children."

• See page 7 for more media reaction to Operation Reef Defence.

Heartland Institute gathers climate deniers for America First energy conference

Graham Readfearn, *DeSmog Blog*

One of the world's most notorious climate science denial groups – the Heartland Institute – gathered its supporters and fellow ideologues on August 7 for a one-day energy conference in Louisiana.

Aside from the conference's fanatical devotion to fossil fuels, the line-up included the usual pushers of junk science who are sure that every major science academy in the world is wrong about the dangers of adding CO₂ to the atmosphere.

Gathering at the conference were "hundreds of state and national elected officials, think tank leaders, and policy analysts."

Front and centre in New Orleans was Fred Palmer, a veteran coal industry lobbyist who was behind what was probably the very first fossil-fuel funded attacks on the science linking coal burning to dangerous climate change.

After more than 30 years with the Western Fuels Association and then coal giant Peabody, Palmer now spends his time as a senior fellow at the Heartland Institute.

Funded by industry and Trump backers

Shortly after Donald Trump won the US Presidency, Palmer told *DeSmog* that he would be "reaching out to the fossil fuel community" for cash to fund the institute. This would be added to the more than \$5 million the institute has received from major Trump financial backer Robert Mercer, the hedge fund billionaire whose daughter Rebekah Mercer was a key member of the President's transition team.

Given the backing of the Mercers, it's perhaps not surprising that Heartland has borrowed the title of Trump's energy policy in holding its "America First Energy Conference."

A favourite talking point from climate science deniers around the world – including those at the Heartland Institute – is that governments and scientists around the world have adopted climate science as a new "green religion" and it's this fanaticism that is clouding their judgment.

Heartland likes to pitch global warming as "facts vs faith," as a "green reli-



gion," and to tell its followers that environmentalism is like a church where climate change is the new religion.

This is a curious position to take, when you compare it to the beliefs of Fred Palmer and other speakers at the Heartland conference. Quite literally, they believe that coal was put there by a god for humans to use.

Coal: "A divine plan"

"It's hard not to concede that coal hasn't been put on Earth and other fossil fuels as part of a divine plan," Palmer has told *DeSmog*.

In July 2018, Palmer gave a speech to the Western Conservative Summit in Colorado. In audio obtained by *DeSmog*, Palmer says of Heartland's efforts on climate change: "We are, I know, doing the Lord's work."

"Coal is green. It is not dirty, because of electrification. CO₂ is a benign gas required for life on Earth and is not dirty."
– Fred Palmer

But this literal religious zeal was not restricted to Palmer at Heartland's conference last week.

One session – titled Why CO₂ emissions are not a climate crisis – included panelists Dr Roy Spencer and Professor David Legates, who are both old hands at pushing back on all that green religion.

In 2015, Legates was featured in a series of videos attacking climate

science and environmentalism produced by the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation.

"There has to be a designer – a creator behind this to make something as complex as it is, yet as robust as it is," says Legates.

"To be a true Christian means you have to believe and understand what we are being taught through the Bible and through God's word."

Scheduled beside Legates on the Heartland Institute panel was Dr Roy Spencer of the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Spencer once wrote that he had analysed Biblical claims that "the universe and all life within it had been created by some greater intelligent Being, not by mere chance."

Creationism vs evolution

His conclusion? The "theory of creation actually had a much better scientific basis than the theory of evolution."

There are many well-credentialed climate scientists who are also people of faith.

But the argument from denialists that climate scientists are blinded by their own faith in a "climate change religion," belies their own quite literal belief that they are doing the work of god.

As a presumably god-given debating tactic, it's as flawed as their science.

• First published at www.desmogblog.com

Sydney Knitting Nannas call on NSW Health



Following Anna Christie's story in last week's FFB, describing how NSW Health appears to be ignoring observed impacts of CSG on public health in Queensland, the Sydney Knitting Nannas paid the department a visit.

"The Nannas' Martin Place vigil was followed by a visit to the Ministry of Health in North Sydney today," the Nannas said.

"The Department has declined invitations to attend the **CSG and Public Health Conference** coming up next Wednesday 15 August in Narrabri.

"We delivered a letter from Nannas and one from the conference organisers asking the Secretary to send representatives to engage with health

professionals researching the experience of Queensland communities. What could they have to lose?"

Despite the proposed Santos Narrabri gasfield attracting the largest number of objections ever made to any energy project in the state, NSW Health made only a brief submission saying no significant health impacts were expected.

This flies in the face of rocketing hospital admissions in the Queensland gasfields from conditions known to be associated with CSG mining.

An inside source commented to **FFB** that gasfield health impacts would be considered a 'political hot potato' by the department.

Photo: Colin Ryan

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Inside the news

As *Sea Shepherd's* vessel *Steve Irwin* sailed to Abbot Point, protesting the Adani mine, the **Murdoch press** published disparaging comments from the Minerals Council and the Coalition. Predictable lines: "anti-jobs, anti-regional growth ... **greenies** stuffing everything up" (p7). Sometimes they referred to the vessel as the 'Sea Shepherd', confusing the organisation with its 900-tonne flagship. Which tends to occur when one has sacked most of one's sub-editors.

The *Steve Irwin* headed back south without incident, and a new scandal erupted concerning **Adani's pollution** of wetlands adjacent to its **Abbot Point** coal export terminal.

Meanwhile the **Minerals Council** must have been pleased with the **six politicians** who partook of its hospitality on a **junket to Japan**. The Coalition's Craig Kelly put a photo of himself worshipping a model of a **HELE coal-fired power plant** on his Facebook page, which is mostly dedicated to climate denial articles (p10). Labor's Meryl Swanson said she was so impressed with her Japanese experience she now favoured HELE technology. The MPs were accompanied by former **Nationals** leader and deputy PM, Mark Vaile – currently a director of **Whitehaven Coal**. Great pro-coal publicity for the price of a few tickets to Yokohama.

Much of the week's news was hot air around **national energy guarantee**. The NEG lives on in the meantime (p10).

Malcolm Turnbull's donation of **half a billion taxpayer dollars** to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation also generated headlines. Mal's captain's call on the foundation looks like being seen to do something for the reef while **not actually doing anything** at all to tackle its biggest problem – climate change (p11).

The frustration created by the **corporate-government merry-go-round** was well analysed by former energy executive turned environmentalist, **Ian Dunlop**. Highlights from his long article published in *Renew Economy* appear on page 12. **FFB** recommends clicking through to the whole story, beautifully expressed and meticulously referenced.

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Qld mine rehab flaws will cost jobs

Existing and approved mines in Queensland will be exempt from crucial new mine rehabilitation standards which could cost Queensland thousands of potential new jobs.

Exemptions buried deep in the mining rehabilitation Bill currently before Parliament will give most existing and approved mines a free pass to escape several crucial mine rehabilitation controls and avoid public scrutiny of rehabilitation plans.

It seems mines like the Adani Carmichael coal mine will not be required to publicly notify their rehabilitation plans, despite planning to leave six final un-rehabilitated pit voids, some as deep as 200m, and which will drain groundwater from adjoining areas permanently.

Carmel Flint, spokesperson for Lock the Gate Alliance said, "This mine rehabilitation legislation will be a lost opportunity to create thousands of new jobs and fix the mining industry's mess if it goes ahead with these broad exemptions.

"These new laws are long overdue, once in a generation reforms, but if existing mines are exempt from the key provisions it will substantially undermine their effectiveness.

"We need these laws to be tough enough to stop coal mines near Ipswich offloading their responsibilities to waste companies – it's simply not good enough for them to fill un-rehabilitated coal pits with rubbish.

"We're calling on the Queensland Government to take action."

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In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 20,000 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-06/sea-shepherd-sets-sights-on-stopping-adani-coal-mine/10073662>

Sea Shepherd sets sail for north Queensland to stop Adani Carmichael coal project

Tara Cassidy, ABC, 06/08/2018

Conservation group Sea Shepherd is training its sights on campaigning to stop Adani's Carmichael coal project but Federal MP George Christensen has criticised the move, saying the activists should "stick to what they know".

Sea Shepherd, best known for its long-running battle with Japanese whalers in the Southern Ocean, which it abandoned last year, this week sailed north for Abbot Point in north Queensland where the coal project is underway.

The group's managing director Jeff Hansen said the 12-stop trip aimed to draw international attention to the mine and to raise awareness about the "detrimental impacts it will have on the Great Barrier Reef". ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/business/activists-the-sea-shepherd-called-out-over-adani-megamine-hypocrisy/news-story/dedc5bed0e49fa39b728e7849d8abb03>

Activists the Sea Shepherd called out over Adani megamine 'hypocrisy'

John McCarthy, Courier-Mail, 08/08/2018

Environmental activists have been attacked for using fossil fuels to power their protests against the mining industry.

The Sea Shepherd, which was fined \$15,000 in 2014 for spilling 500L of diesel into the Trinity Inlet, in Cairns, has taken its flagship vessel, the *Steve Irwin*, north to protest against the Adani megamine and its potential impact on climate change.

The Queensland Resources Council said it was complete hypocrisy by the activists. ...



The Steve Irwin in the Whitsundays, on its way to protest against Adani at Abbot Point. Photo: Frontline Action on coal

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/sea-shepherds-hypocrisy-sails-deep-with-antiadani-protest/news-story/37bd42f9e5480e602b1a4e8a110ef3eb>

Sea Shepherd's hypocrisy sails deep with anti-Adani protest

Jenna Cairney, Townsville Bulletin, 08/08/2018

Opinion: The Sea Shepherd organisation has been travelling up the east coast, with its ship expected to travel near the Abbot Point port early today.

The irony of some of [Sea Shepherd MD Jeff] Hansen's comments can't be ignored. ...

He makes these comments from the comfort of the *MV Steve Irwin* – a ship that the Queensland Resource Council says weighs around 900 tonnes, with the steel component requiring up to 620 tonnes of coking coal and up to 860 tonnes of iron ore to build. The ship is powered by diesel. It's yet another case of environmentalists protesting against the mining of the very products that make their world go round. ...

The workforce at the port deserve better than to have their safety jeopardised by the actions of out-of-town activists.

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville-shipload-of-protest-sails-toward-adani/news-story/266d4756d322c226049da43e3373e88e>

Shipload of protest sails toward Adani

Clare Armstrong, Townsville Bulletin, 08/08/2018

Safety will be the top priority for Adani as the company prepares for a visit from Sea Shepherd protesters at its port near Bowen. ...

The *Townsville Bulletin* understands security has been tightened and water police will be on high alert as the protesters, who have been vocal in their opposition to Adani's Carmichael coal mine, approach the port. ...

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/financial-impact-of-anti-adani-protesters-on-north-queensland-community/news-story/8a9a160eb903aa30da77a08db510b593>

Financial impact of anti-Adani protesters on North Queensland community

John Andersen, Townsville Bulletin, 10/08/2018

Anti-Adani protests are costing the Bowen community millions of dollars in lost income as well as jobs including apprenticeships for school leavers.

Bowen businessman Neil Stone has a well-established crane hire company and is a well-known coal industry figure in the Bowen and Galilee Basins. He has lost work at Abbot Point be-

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cause of the Sea Shepherd and associated protests this week. ...

Wayne Kirk from Bowen Engineering does shutdown and other work at Abbot Point. He said the town was losing money.

"The greens are stuffing everything up and no one is doing anything about it. It's costing everyone money," he said.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-10/adani-spent-a-year-trying-to-hide-reef-spill-details/10090632>

Adani spent a year trying to hide this information on its reef spill

Michael Slezak, ABC, 10/08/2018

Adani has been fighting to hide details of what it told the Queensland Government about the risk of pollution to the Great Barrier Reef ahead of Cyclone Debbie in 2017.

Now, conservationists say documents and a series of emails obtained through freedom of information laws appear to show the company and the Queensland Government knew the pollution would be so bad it would break the law. ...

Among the documents were also details the company then fought tooth and nail to hide because Adani said it would "cause extreme and unfair prejudice" against it.

On the other side of the battle was the Mackay Conservation Group, who applied for the documents under freedom of information laws back in April 2017. ...

The Queensland Government said Adani admitted to breaching its licence, spilling polluted water into the Marine Park that was 800 per cent dirtier than was allowed.

Adani told the ABC it challenged that interpretation and that "no breach occurred", but details the company fought to keep secret appear to suggest it knew it would breach the licence it was applying for and the Queensland Government knew too.

According to lawyers from the Queensland Environmental Defenders' Office, this means the breach of the licence could be a much more serious matter. ...

In fighting the release of the details, Adani claimed it would exacerbate "ongoing public vitriol".

In submissions to the Queensland information commissioner, the company claimed it would pressure the depart-



Adani's Abbot Point coal export terminal and adjacent wetlands. The area was polluted with coal-laden water in a cyclone. Photo: Tara Lambourne/Sea Shepherd

ment to be seen to be "cracking down" on Adani, and alleged the Government was "conferring" with environmental groups. ...

Adani did not directly answer a series of questions put to them by the ABC, but did supply a statement.

"We categorically deny any wrongdoing in this matter, we complied with the limits imposed by the Temporary Emissions Licence issued by the regulator and no breach occurred," the statement read.

"We have elected to have the matter heard by a magistrate rather than pay a \$12,000 fine, which should not have been issued in 2017 following Cyclone Debbie, and we look forward to resolution of the matter."

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/aug/10/adani-knew-of-abbot-point-pollution-risk-before-cyclone-spill-conservationists>

Adani knew of Abbot Point pollution risk before spill, conservationists say

Lisa Cox, The Guardian, 10/08/2018

Adani and the Queensland government were aware that polluted water could be released from the company's Abbot Point coal terminal during cyclone Debbie in 2017, conservationists say. ...

After the cyclone hit, the government issued an amended licence that retrospectively allowed increased pollution ...

Christian Slattery, the Stop Adani campaigner for the Australian Conservation Foundation, said the government should hold the company accountable.

"Our elected representatives have

consistently stated that Adani will be subject to strict environmental conditions," he said. "But unless these laws are enforced, they aren't worth the paper they're written on."

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/adani-executive-says-mine-is-closing-in-on-the-cash-needed-to-go-off-to-the-races/news-story/7114c91b07c95a7c38281319d6e09c61>

Adani executive says mine is closing in on the cash needed to go 'off to the races'

Madura McCormack, Townsville Bulletin, 11/08/2018

Adani's mining chief executive has doubled down on revelations the company is close to securing funding for its rail line, with the Carmichael Mine set to be "off to the races" once finance has been secured.

Chief executive Lucas Dow told the *Townsville Bulletin* his boss Karan Adani's comments last month were "on the money" but would not lay down a time frame or specify who their financiers were. ...

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.singletonargus.com.au/story/5569950/council-consents-to-close-wallaby-scrub-road/?cs=1534>

Heritage road set for closure following Singleton Council vote

Singleton Argus, 06/08/2018

An extraordinary meeting of Singleton Council has been held tonight where councillors formally consented to the closure of Wallaby Scrub Road.

The heritage road built by convicts in

the 1830s, links the villages of Bulga and Warkworth, and is used by an estimated 1000 vehicles each day.

But it stands in the way of the expansion of the Yancoal-owned Mount Thorley Warkworth open cut coal mine and is therefore deemed an expendable asset by the majority of Singleton Councillors. ...

For those opposed to its closure the fight to keep the road open has been long and at times fraught with controversy especially following with the arrest of two Aboriginal elders at a protest to protect the road in July 2016. ...

<https://www.theherald.com.au/story/5570385/work-resumes-at-austar-underground-coal-mine/?cs=7573>

NSW Resources Regulator lifts prohibition notices at troubled Paxton mine

Joanne McCarthy, Newcastle Herald, 07/08/2018

Yancoal will recommence production at its Austar underground coal mine near Paxton after the NSW Resources Regulator lifted all prohibition notices following troubling coal burst incidents and the deaths of two miners in 2014.

Yancoal advised the Australian Stock Exchange today that employees redeployed to other Yancoal-owned underground operations had been recalled to recommence production. ...

<https://news.mongabay.com/2018/08/indonesia-demands-cleanup-after-coal-spill-pollutes-beach/>

Indonesia demands cleanup after coal spill pollutes beach

Junaidi Hanafiah, Mongabay, 06/08/2018

Banda Aceh, Indonesia – Fishermen and environmental activists in Indonesia are demanding accountability after a barge spilled 7,000 tonnes of coal off the Sumatra coast, polluting beaches, damaging coral and impacting marine life.

The incident occurred on July 30, when the barge, reportedly carrying coal to a cement factory run by a local subsidiary of Swiss-based LafargeHolcim, was hit by high waves just 100 metres (330 feet) off Lampuuk Beach in Aceh Besar district, on the northern tip of Sumatra. ...

Imran, the leader of a local community-based maritime watchdog, said his organization was in talks with representatives from the cement company to address the problem.

“Because the company failed to respond immediately, the coal has polluted the beach and damaged the coral. Lots of fish and crabs have died,” he said. “The coal must be cleaned away immediately so that this won’t get worse.” ...



McArthur River Mine.
Photo: mcarthurriverrmine.com.au

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-11/mcarthur-mine-river-expansion-recommend-epa-glencore-environment/10108052>

EPA recommends McArthur River Mine expansion, despite history of environmental incidents

Jane Bardon, ABC, 11/08/2018

The Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority’s (EPA) recommendation that Glencore should be allowed to expand its McArthur River zinc and lead mine in the Gulf of Carpentaria has infuriated Indigenous and green groups. ...

The EPA has recommended the company should be allowed to expand the mine and add another half a billion tonnes of reactive waste rock to the dump.

That includes pyritic iron sulphide rock which spontaneously burns on contact with air or rainwater, acid and salt-leaching rock, and rock which leaches heavy metals. ...

The Territory and Federal Governments can decide to either take or reject the EPA’s advice.

Glencore is asking them to consider the future of 800 mostly fly-in-fly-out jobs on the site. ...

GAS, GAS, GAS

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/boom-over-the-industry-that-was-spending-10-000-a-minute-has-reached-its-peak-20180803-p4zved.html>

Boom over: The industry that was spending \$10,000 a minute has reached its peak

Cole Latimer, SMH, 06/08/2018

At the peak of the LNG construction boom, oil and gas company Santos was spending about \$10,000 a minute over seven years to bring its \$25 billion Queensland-based Gladstone LNG project online.

But the days of new gas mega-projects being built is over as the industry shifts into a new gear of producing gas, says Deloitte.

In a new report, Deloitte says the completion of another two major LNG projects – Inpex’s Ichthys project in the Northern Territory and Chevron’s Wheatstone project in WA – has all but capped Australia’s LNG construction boom. ...

However, oil and gas analyst Saul Kavonic said while planned supply levels are expected to run higher than demand, growing demand from China will outstrip supply in the early 2020s. ...

“We really do need to see new LNG projects sanctioned today to avoid this shortage,” Mr Kavonic said. ...

<https://thewest.com.au/business/public-companies/strike-gas-wells-online-in-south-australia-ng-b88919592z>

Strike gas wells online in South Australia

Matt Birney, West Australian, 06/08/2018 (Sponsored)

ASX listed Strike Energy will soon be able to gauge the commercial quality of its Jaws-1 deep coal seam gas project in South Australia’s Cooper Basin after commencing pilot testing of the wells.

In a market update recently, the company said that it had established reservoir water flows to surface and started depressurisation of the project. ...

Separately, the company is preparing to drill the West Erregulla-2 well in W.A in early 2019 that targets a conventional gas reservoir similar to the neighbouring Waitsia gas field.

CONTACT FFB: Email

fossil.fool.bulletin@gmail.com

with your comments & tips

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/the-east-coast-gas-market-is-dead-and-the-accg-killed-it-20180806-p4zvp3.html>

The east coast gas market is dead, and the ACCG killed it

Bruce Robertson, SMH, 07/08/2018

When it comes to gas prices, the ACCG is acting like a criminal judging its own trial. It's supposedly investigating the east coast gas market and put a report out about it last week. The trouble is there is no east coast gas market – the ACCG has killed it off.

The ACCG has allowed what was once our gas market to become a cartel, controlled by just four players. We have high gas prices in Australia because the ACCG has given up on its principle remit – ensuring market competition.

Australia is the second-largest exporter of liquefied natural gas in the world, yet manufacturers are being forced to pay sky-high gas prices. Prices are so high that we've got four consortiums looking to build import terminals here in Australia.

We could seriously have gas tankers passing each other in the Indian Ocean needlessly carrying gas in opposite directions. ...

• Bruce Robertson is an investment analyst at the Institute of Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.

<https://www.news-mail.com.au>

Frack off: Bundy growers deliver strong message to state govt amid fears fracking is closing in on us

Sarah Steger, News Mail, 08/08/2018

Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers has seized upon the impending expiration of an oil and gas giant's two fracking licenses to pressure the State Government to stop the spread of the practice across the Wide Bay/Burnett region.

Two out of three exploration licences held by Blue Energy in Maryborough are up for renewal in December, with the third set to expire in 2019. ...

<https://www.nvi.com.au/story/5574532/santos-shutting-up-shop-in-gunnedah-staff-move-to-narrabri/>

Santos shutting up shop in Gunnedah, staff move to Narrabri

Jamieson Murphy, Namoi Valley Independent, 08/08/2018

Santos will close its Gunnedah shopfront in September, following an announcement earlier this year it would not be drilling for coal seam gas on the Liverpool Plains.

A spokesperson for the gas giant said the company had decided to close its Gunnedah office to focus its presence in the area of the Narrabri Gas Project. ...

FOSSIL POLITICS

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-06/mining-rehab-new-queensland-laws-loophole/10073558>

Queensland mining rehabilitation laws allow loopholes for existing mines, advocates say

Josh Robertson, ABC, 06/08/2018

Hundreds of mines will have the green light to leave behind environmentally hazardous no-go zones without public scrutiny, despite the Queensland Government touting landmark rehabilitation reforms, environmental advocates say.

Under the Government's new bill, expected to be passed later this year, existing mines will not have to justify plans to leave "non-use management areas", which may include pit voids, waste rock and water dumps.

By contrast, new mines will have to produce evidence including environ-

mental reports to show why such areas cannot be "rehabilitated to a stable condition", meaning they are safe, cause no environmental harm and can be used for something else after mining. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/labor-mp-backs-neg-with-new-coal-plants/news-story/f1a6756abe26d4e78ffa99ca06f6fb56>

Labor MP backs NEG with new coal plants

Greg Brown, The Australian, 07/08/2018

A federal Labor MP has said new coal-fired power stations could be part of the nation's energy mix and urged state Labor governments to support Malcolm Turnbull's national energy guarantee.

Meryl Swanson, the daughter of a coalminer who holds an electorate in the NSW Hunter Valley, said she was impressed with low-emissions coal technology being used in Japan and suggested it could help solve Australia's energy price crisis. ...

Ms Swanson urged Labor states to back the NEG. The member for Pater-son, who travelled to Japan last month

A junket to Japan paid for by the Minerals Council of Australia enthused Labor MP Meryl Swanson, (see above, right) who has come out in favour of new coal-fired power plants. She travelled with Labor colleague Milton Dick and Coalition MPs Craig Kelly, George Christensen, Jason Falinski and Tim Wilson. Craig Kelly's Facebook page shows him adoring a model HELE station and he said he wants three. (See FFB1.36, 07/08/2018, for Christensen's Japan story.) Photo: Craig Kelly



with Labor colleague Milton Dick and Coalition MPs Craig Kelly, George Christensen, Jason Falinski and Tim Wilson, said the cost of power was “beyond a joke”.

She told *The Australian* she would support the construction of a new coal-fired station as long as it had the backing of the private sector and a low carbon footprint. ...

Mr Wilson and Mr Falinski – two moderate MPs who have not been vocal in the coal-fired power debate – also backed high-efficiency, low-emissions coal plants as potential replacements for Australia’s ageing power stations. ...

Ms Swanson’s support of new coal stations contrasts with the approach of Labor MP Pat Conroy, who has told constituents in his nearby Hunter Valley electorate that there is no future in coal-fired power stations.

Bill Shorten has labelled Coalition MPs who support the construction of new coal power stations “knuckle draggers”. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/labor-mp-praised-for-supporting-clean-coal-power-stations/news-story/4196e7f172c1403b340be1d0170d98e5>

Labor MP praised for supporting clean coal power stations

Greg Brown, The Australian, 08/08/2018

The boss of one of Australia’s largest coal producers has praised Labor MP Meryl Swanson for suggesting there could be a future for new coal-fired power stations as part of the nation’s energy mix.

Whitehaven Coal chief executive Paul Flynn said Ms Swanson, who represents a coal electorate on the NSW Hunter Valley, was “spot on” in saying high energy, low emissions (HELE) coal plants should be considered as replacements for ageing power stations. ...

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2018/08/05/secretive-great-barrier-reef-grant/>

‘More secretive than cabinet papers’: Reef charity may hide fundraising ‘forever’

New Daily, 05/08/2018

The Turnbull government’s controversial \$443.8 million funding grant to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation contains secrecy provisions more onerous than cabinet papers, Labor has alleged.

Shadow environment minister Tony Burke said on Sunday the 98-page grant agreement rivalled “the ozone layer” for holes.

“Under the agreement they’ve signed, it is completely lawful, completely OK for the foundation to wine and dine the mining and banking executives who are on their chairman’s panel, up and down the Queensland coast, in the name of trying to win them over for more fundraising,” Mr Burke told the ABC.

“Not only is it allowed, we might never know if it’s happened because that exact clause is covered by the confidentiality provisions and these are confidentiality provisions that are more strict than cabinet papers. ...

The large grant made headlines when it was announced in the federal budget in May. Newly-elected Labor senator Kristina Keneally has since thrust it back onto the national agenda through a Senate inquiry.

Much of the criticism has centred on the fact that the large grant was awarded without a competitive tender process, was not requested by the charity, and was awarded when the charity employed just 11 staff. ...

<https://thirdsector.com.au/great-barrier-reef-foundation-board-director-steps-down-following-criminal-charges/>

Great Barrier Reef Foundation board director steps down following criminal charges

Naomi Neilson, Third Sector, 07/08/2018

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) has confirmed one of its board directors will step down as he faces criminal charges for cartel conduct.

Stephen Roberts, an investment banker and GBRF board director, has been charged by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for allegedly playing a part of a criminal cartel during a \$2.5 billion deal. ...

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation has since removed any reference to Roberts on their website as Environment Minister, Josh Frydenberg, continues to support the grant. ...

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-09/barrier-reef-foundation-grant-shocking-myer-former-board-member/10090780>

Barrier Reef Foundation grant ‘unthinkable, mind-blowing’, former board member says

Josh Robertson & Liam Fox, ABC, 09/08/2018

A member of the Myer family dynasty who played a key role in establishing the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) has condemned a \$444 million federal grant to the body as “shocking and almost mind-blowing”. ...

Michael Myer was a financial supporter of the GBRF and a member of its board for two years until 2002, when he quit in part over concerns about its “corporate” direction and the growing involvement of figures from the fossil fuels industry. ...

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2018/08/08/neg-advocates-denialists-climate-wars/?ins=UKZCbkkwMHPcZDIRYjBF7kiPNmsvQT09>

NEG advocates want surrender to denialists, not an end to the climate wars

Bernard Keane, Crikey, 08/08/2018

It’s always amusing when politicians accuse other politicians of “playing politics”, as if that isn’t the job description, but its emergence in the last few days from the Liberals in relation to opposition to the National Energy Guarantee has an extra rich, extra creamy layer of irony. ...

In fact, playing politics is the only coherent response to the NEG, because it is entirely a political response to a political problem created by the Liberals. ...

Another long-running argument from those who want critics of the NEG to simply fall into line is that this is a final opportunity to end the climate wars. Except, by locking in token emissions reduction targets, the NEG wouldn’t be a resolution. It would be a surrender on the part of those who recognise that Australia, as one of the planet’s worst per capita carbon polluters and the developed economy most exposed to climate change, must decarbonise, to people who reject climate science and want to extend coal-fired power. Such advocates of surrender should direct their pleas at a minority of conservatives who refuse to accept basic science and economics instead.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/10/neg-survives-after-canberra-and-states-agree-to-keep-talking>

Neg survives after Canberra and states agree to keep talking

Katharine Murphy, The Guardian, 10/08/2018

The commonwealth and the states have agreed to keep talking on the national energy guarantee – keeping the policy alive – but a final process of determination won’t happen before September, and possibly not for months. ...

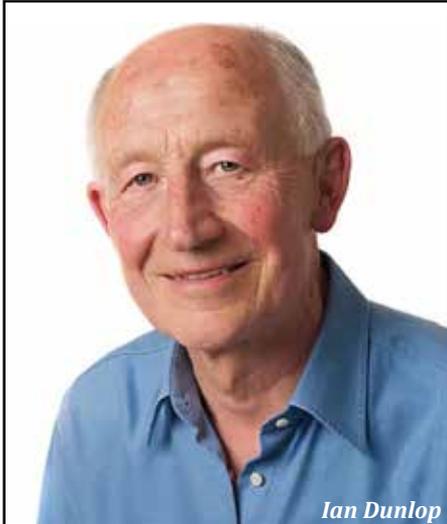
The ministers agreed to move to the next stage, and allow legislation required in the states to implement changes to the national energy market

News this week ... from previous page

rules to go out for a month of consultation – provided Frydenberg emerges with an agreement from his party room colleagues next week on the emissions reduction components of the scheme. ...

RECOMMENDED READ

Click the link for this long and worthy article, from which FFB gives you highlights



Ian Dunlop

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/neg-an-bject-failure-of-principled-political-leadership-55022/>

NEG: An abject failure of principled political leadership

Ian Dunlop, Renew Economy, 08/08/2018

... Australian society today is not a pretty sight. Despite the hype around Australian “values”, years of neoliberal policy have seen money corrupt everything. ...

Driven by right-wing apparatchiks in the Institute of Public Affairs, the Minerals Council of Australia, the Business Council of Australia, the Murdoch press and elsewhere, every opportunity is taken to push deregulation, reduce the size of government, and emasculate and politicise the public service, making it subservient to ideologically blinkered political advisers, with no regard for the “common good”.

Power is concentrated in a few wealthy hands in the interests of “conservatism”, shorthand for maintaining the status quo for the benefit of existing elites.

So dissent must be suppressed, activist groups muzzled, the ABC silenced, academic freedom undermined, public debate dumbed down and the public treated as fools. Few are even aware it is happening, except when the occa-

sional stuff-up occurs as with Tony Abbott spilling the beans on the real intentions of the Ramsay project for the promotion of Western Civilisation ...

Overshadowing it all is human-induced climate change.

Its risks are intensifying and the physical impact worsening, with global climate-related losses running at record levels. Despite 30 years of political and corporate rhetoric, nothing has been done to seriously address it, notwithstanding increasingly urgent warnings.

The result is that climate change is now an immediate existential risk to humanity. ...

The risk is immediate in that it is being locked in today by our insistence on expanding the use of fossil fuels when the carbon budget to stay below sensible temperature limits is already exhausted. ...

Neoliberals in the US and Australian fossil fuel industries long ago saw climate change as the greatest threat to the stranglehold on power from which they have benefited for so long.

Accordingly billions of dollars have been devoted to discrediting climate science, raising doubts about its authenticity through every possible means, with much US money flowing in to support Australian campaigns. A process which has been remarkably successful, albeit nothing less than a crime against humanity.

But even the Koch brothers, the IPA and the MCA cannot change the laws of physics. The climate science has been rock-solid for decades and the cost of neoliberal disinformation is now coming home to roost.

Unfortunately that cost is being borne by the poor who can least afford it, and groups like Australian farmers, rather than the elites who created it. ...

Policy is dictated by scientifically and economically illiterate right-wing hard-coalers, such as Messrs Canavan, Abbott, McCormack, Kelly and Abetz who cannot understand that reliable, dispatchable and lower-cost power is now available from renewable energy sources far more effectively and cheaply than from coal. ...

They stamp their feet like petulant schoolboys whose favourite coal toy is being taken away. They lie and dissemble, misrepresenting and cherry-picking sound technical reports, twisting them to achieve their preferred pro-coal outcomes, irrespective of the severe implications for the wider Australian community, egged on by the serried ranks of the neoliberal cheer squad. ...

The brutal reality is that climate risk now has to be handled as an emergency. Either we act, or we face a bleak future. Parliament must work for the people, not destroy them. ...

• *Ian Dunlop was formerly an international oil, gas and coal industry executive, chair of the Australian Coal Association and CEO of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He is a Fellow of the Centre for Policy Development, a Director of Australia21 and a Member of the Club of Rome.*



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