



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 1:40 • 4 SEPTEMBER 2018

Knitting Nannas rejoice as Dubbo says no to CSG Another NSW community rejects gas, despite federal govt push for more fossil fuels

Dubbo Knitting Nannas met with the Dubbo Regional Council earlier this year to request action to protect the region from coal seam gas (CSG) mining. Together with supporters, they met with council staff, then the Mayor.

At the April meeting the Mayor put forward a Mayoral Minute Against CSG mining activities in the Dubbo LGA. This was followed by community consultation showing 94% of respondents were opposed to CSG activities.

Last week councillors unanimously voted to ban CSG mining in their area. This may affect Santos, which holds a petroleum exploration licence (PEL) over the Goonoo Forest, north of Dubbo.

Nanna Sally Forsstrom said that, in an era of drought and climate change, the precious nature of our underground water was all the more apparent.

“We have seen communities across our region stand together against the threat of unconventional gas, it’s wonderful to see a proactive stance taken here in Dubbo,” she said.

Mayor of the Dubbo Region, Councillor Ben Shields, said Council determined its position after hearing the views of the community formally through a public submission process.

“Some 94 per cent of the survey responses were against Coal Seam Gas exploration and development in our LGA,” Cr Shields said.

“Several submissions raised specific concerns on the potential impact on the natural environment, ground water supplies, agricultural land and threats to biodiversity. As a result, Council has



*Dubbo: Nanna Sally Forsstrom, Uncle Ray Peckham and Nanna Margaret Evans
Photo: Northern Daily Liberal*

resolved not to support the exploration and/or development of Coal Seam Gas production in the Dubbo Local Environmental Area,” he said.

Negative impacts, no lasting benefits

Council resolved this position on the following basis:

- Coal Seam Gas production and development including fracking has shown to have negative impacts on water supply to agriculture and the production capacity of rural lands.
- The exploration and production of Coal Seam Gas has not shown to provide any lasting positive economic impacts.

• The NSW Planning System does not provide satisfactory consideration of the environmental and economic costs to the community from Coal Seam Gas exploration and development.

The Mayor said, “Ultimately, any application for CSG exploration or production is a State Government decision.

“However, following this decision Council will oppose any application based on the potentially significant impacts on agricultural land and the overwhelming community opposition to CSG development in the region.

“Council has made a clear statement to oppose Coal Seam Gas Exploration and Development,” he said.

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• P 2: Mystery well near Chinchilla water supply

• P 4: Call to monitor abandoned gas wells

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<https://knitting-nannas.org/bulletins.php>

Mystery well: Origin drills next to Chinchilla water supply

Locals in the Chinchilla gasfields are mystified by the nature of an apparent water monitoring bore just 450 metres from the town's water supply.

The presence of many big names in gas, such as Halliburton and Toll Energy, at the Origin well site makes the operation look like something much more than monitoring.

It has been speculated this might be necessary because the well is situated within the Linc contamination zone.

Campers at the nearby Chinchilla Weir camping ground have been treated to 24/7 noise and piercing night-time lights for over a week.

Bags of chemicals used in drilling are visible next to a school bus stop on the Tara-Chinchilla Road.

Knitting Nanna Karen Auty, who took these photos last week, is concerned there is nothing on the public record about the well, which is one of at least two mapped for the area.

The Chinchilla Weir, on the Condamine River, also receives treated water from the Kenya gas processing plant. Such water is known to be associated with substances, such as radon, that can't be removed in the treatment process.

The water is not tested for gas by-products before reaching the town's taps.

The Condamine River has famously been set on fire a few kilometres from the weir, where methane gas – likely from fracked CSG wells – bubbles to the surface.

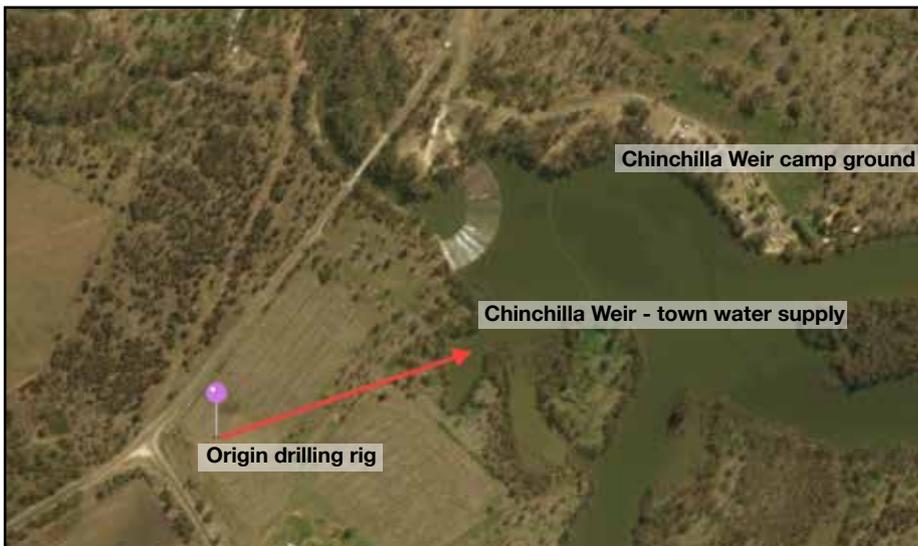
FFB



TOP: the drilling site on the corner of Tara-Chinchilla Road and Avenue Road operates 24/7 with noise and light pollution.

ABOVE: Bags of chemicals near the local school bus stop.

BELOW LEFT: The drilling rig. **BELOW:** Map with drill site 450m from town water supply. Photos: Karen Auty



Call to monitor abandoned gas wells in Australia

GISERA, a gas industry-funded collaboration with CSIRO, published a story in *The Conversation* last week concluding that local communities need more reassurance about the legacy left by coal seam gas wells.

The GISERA (Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance) scientists conceded that the industry would need to accept that abandoned wells should be monitored.

Currently, the gas industry rejects the need for monitoring.

This will be a huge issue, particularly in Queensland where there are 6,000 active CSG wells and plans for thousands more. Plans to frack the Northern Territory could soon see tens of thousands more.

GISERA held workshops with industry and community representatives in Camden and Narrabri, NSW, and Chinchilla, QLD.

“The majority of government and industry representatives expressed strong confidence in the code of practice for each state. When decommissioned correctly, they argued, old CSG wells would not cause legacy problems and would not require further action,” GISERA reported.

“In contrast, a majority of local community participants tended to lack confidence in these codes of practice, and said that clear information about well decommissioning was hard to access or understand. As a result, they had markedly less confidence in the decommissioning process.

“Monitoring was another important issue raised through the workshops. Because the confidence held by government and industry representatives in the codes of practice was so strong and informed by lessons from decades of practice overseas, monitoring has not been seen to be required so far for decommissioned wells, after all steps in the code of practice were completed.

“But local community members disagreed, arguing that ongoing monitoring of decommissioned wells is crucial to detecting and addressing any potential future problems. Instigating a program to monitor decommissioned CSG wells, with publicly accessible results, would go a long way towards addressing the concerns raised by residents and increasing confidence in the industry more broadly,” GISERA found.



One of 6,000 CSG wells in Qld. All will eventually be abandoned.

Photo: Eve Sinton

American experience: toxic and explosive

FFB checked out the well decommissioning experience in the US, where the industry has operated for longer and tens of thousands of oil and gas wells lie abandoned and unmonitored, many in residential areas.

An investigation by award-winning journalist Andrew Nikiforuk, published *The Tye* last year, was informative.

Nikiforuk said that, according to an unreleased report, about 10% of Alberta's 1,500 abandoned oil and gas wells in urban areas are leaking methane, in some cases at levels that create the risk of health damage and explosions.

Anthony Ingraffea, the Dwight C Baum professor of Engineering and an expert on fracking and leaking wells at Cornell University, said the report added more ammunition to the argument that abandoned wells might be one of the key sources of rising methane atmospheric levels on the continent.

“Let's suppose that that statistic of two per cent significant leakers translates to the rest of the country, and to the US for over a million abandoned wells,” Ingraffea said. “That means more than 20,000 leaking wells at 500 times natural background level, at least, some at 5,000 times natural background level of about 1.9 ppm.”

“When will the public be advised of the emergency conditions that exist near the urban center acute wells?” asked Ingraffea.

According to another 2016 report for Natural Resources Canada, methane leaks from active or abandoned oil and gas wells pose “a serious threat to the environment and public safety.”

The highly flammable gas can con-

taminate groundwater, accumulate in buildings and pose an explosion risk, and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

Leaks from oil and gas wells have caused serious explosions throughout North America, including an April 2017 incident in Colorado that killed two people and demolished a home. In that case methane leaked from an abandoned pipeline still connected to a gas well and accumulated in the basement of a home.

The hazard is real and toxic. Inactive and abandoned wells can leak pollutants, including methane and brine, as well as heavy metals and naturally occurring radioactive substances; these pollutants may contaminate groundwater, surface water, or, in the case of methane, be released into the atmosphere.

Leaks caused a string of explosions

Methane leaks from abandoned and active oil and gas wells have caused a string of explosions in Pennsylvania, Colorado and Wyoming, New Mexico and Alberta.

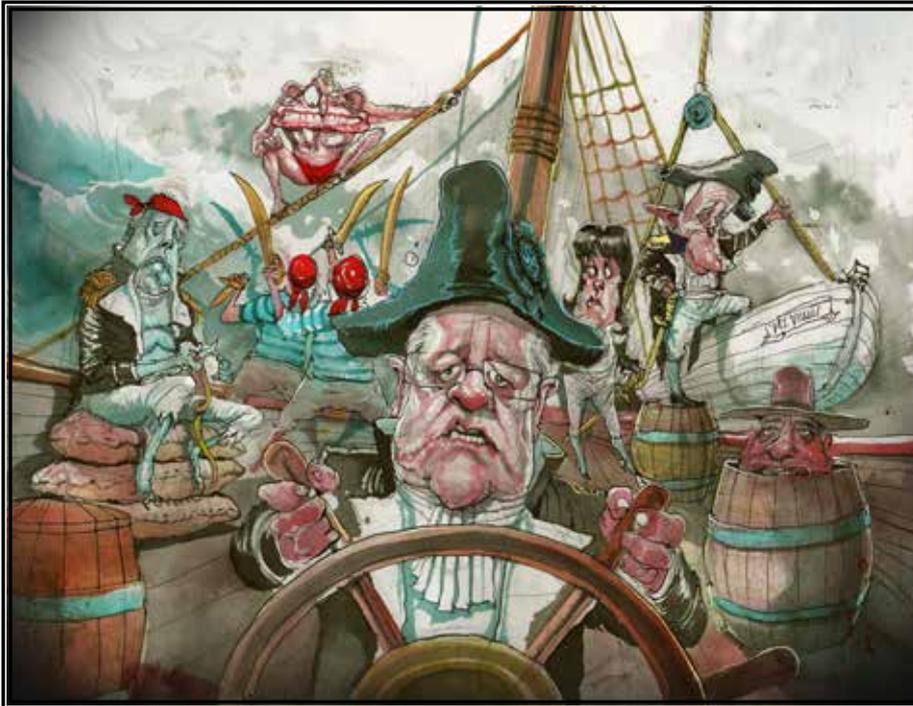
In 2006 accumulating gases, including propane and ethane, blew up a pump house at a farm in Central Alberta and hospitalized farmer Bruce Jack along with two workers.

Researchers estimate that 7-19% of producing wells completed between 2005 and 2007 have been affected by gas migration along the casing annulus, while nine to 28 per cent showed gas leakage through the surface casing. (The annulus is the space between the pipe and drilled rock.)

Alberta has among the most detailed and comprehensive reporting requirements for leaking wells out of seven major oil and gas jurisdictions in North America. But a 2016 report for Natural Resources Canada noted flaws in the system.

“Even in Alberta, with the best reporting standards, there is no third party monitoring of well bore leakage required,” the report noted. “Being the industry is not financially or operationally motivated to report leakage, information ... about wellbore leakage is suspect.”

The American experience shows our community's call for monitoring abandoned wells must be heeded.

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

Barnjarla say no to nuclear waste



The Barnjarla people walked across the Port Augusta bridge recently, in protest against the Federal government's plan to build a national nuclear waste dump in South Australia.

The dump will be sited near Kimba, on farmland, or in the Flinders Ranges near Hawker. The Hawker site is on a floodplain in one of the most seismically unstable regions of Australia.

The Australia Institute (TAI) has released a report questioning the supposed benefits to communities hosting the dump.

It says the promised \$31 million in financial grants is ambiguous, given that some appear to be for projects

that would happen through alternative public funding arrangements. Furthermore, the benefits would be paid over the life-time of the project – up to 100 years.

Assumptions about workforce requirements were questionable, said TAI, with ongoing jobs possibly as few as half-a-dozen people.

Finally, TAI said storing nuclear waste indefinitely at a new facility rather than its current site at ANSTO creates cost and risks during transport, and shifts uninsurable risks to other communities.

Photo: Barnjarla People

Inside the news

As the former PM resigned from parliament, his son **Alex Turnbull** hit out at opponents with some interesting insights. He blamed **rent-seekers backing the coal industry** for felling his father.

He derided efforts to keep **ageing coal-fired power stations** going as like trying to keep a 1994 Ford Laser on the road. Worse, the operators of such plants as Liddell and Gladstone ran the risk of a **horrific industrial accident** that could literally **cook unfortunate employees** like a Chinese dumpling.

Turnbull jr. said people who own a lot of **coal in the Galilee Basin** were exercising **undue influence** on Liberal Party policy. He said “they have assets they probably regret purchasing ... and they’re trying to engineer an outcome which makes those projects economic.”

And sure enough, the new **Morrison government** has come out with **all guns blazing for coal**.

Energy minister **Angus Taylor** said, “It’s ironic that in a country with an abundance of natural resources – **coal, gas, water, solar, wind** – we should be in the position we are today. We have to leverage those resources, **not leave them in the ground.**”

Matt Canavan said **coal and gas should form the centrepiece** of the government’s new energy blueprint. **George Christensen** called for a new fund to support the development of **HELE coal-fired power stations**. See pages 8-11 for the political fire-fight.

While Crib Point residents continue to battle **AGL’s gas import terminal** (p7), the **Victorian** government **warned** the incoming federal cabinet not to interfere with the state’s **fracking ban** (p10).

In NSW, **Dubbo** Regional Council unanimously voted to say they **do not support** the **CSG** industry in the area because it had negative impacts on the environment and no lasting economic benefit (p7).

With most Australians **opposed to new fossil fuel** development, the **Morrison mob** is sure to encounter plenty of public resistance to its plans. Will **Labor** take a lead in progressing to renewables?

In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 25,200 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/protesters-force-lockdown-of-queensland-government-hq-20180827-p5000v.html>

Protesters force lockdown of Queensland government HQ

Aaron Bunch, *Brisbane Times*, 27/08/2018

About 20 senior citizens have sent Queensland's government headquarters into lockdown with their protest against the Adani coal mine.

A spokeswoman at 1 William Street said the protesters entered the foyer with hidden banners about 11am on Monday last week.

Ten police were negotiating with the group, which was demanding a meeting with Environment Minister Leanne Enoch.

They wanted assurances the government would prosecute Adani over an alleged breach of its pollution licence for releasing sludge into wetlands near the Great Barrier Reef in 2017. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/aug/29/adani-group-india-dri-investigation-plea>

Adani Group files plea in India high court to stall fraud investigation

Michael Safi, *The Guardian*, 29/08/2018

Mining conglomerate the Adani Group is trying to prevent Indian authorities from accessing its business records as part of an investigation into an alleged \$4bn fraud by power companies.

Lawyers for Adani on Tuesday filed a plea asking the Bombay high court to quash a formal request by Indian investigators to Singaporean authorities to force the company to produce information regarding its coal imports from Indonesia.

The request is part of an investigation by India's Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) into a \$4.4bn alleged fraud by 40 power companies including six Adani subsidiaries. ...

The companies allegedly used fake middlemen to inflate the price of coal they were importing from Indonesia. ...

Adani has been fighting separate allegations for the past four years that it used a shell company in Dubai to siphon hundreds of millions of dollars



Senior citizens sent Queensland government HQ into lockdown, demanding Adani be prosecuted for breaching a pollution licence. Photo: AAP/Brisbane Times

from the company's books into Adani family tax havens overseas. ...

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.southburnettimes.com.au/news/plans-for-kingaroy-coal-rail-line-revealed/3502643/>

Plans for Kingaroy coal rail line revealed

Jessica McGrath, *Sth Burnett Times*, 25/08/2018

South Burnett property owners are coming to terms with the possibility of a coal rail line running through their land.

Kingaroy Concerned Citizens Group spokesman John Dalton said it appeared more than 170 landholders would be directly impacted by the proposed route. ...

<http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/5608170/call-to-limit-emissions/?cs=1210>

Call to limit emissions

Heidi Kraak, *Latrobe Valley Express*, 27/08/2018

A petition calling on the Environment Protection Authority to regulate power station greenhouse gas emissions has gained almost 3800 signatures.

The 3746-signature petition was instigated by Environment Victoria and calls for the EPA to introduce specific limits on how much greenhouse gas generators can release.

Environment Victoria climate campaigner Cat Nadel said there were

no existing limits on power stations' emissions of greenhouse gas. ...

<https://www.huntervalleynews.net.au/news/local-news/5605746/despite-250-objections-muswellbrook-mine-receives-six-year-allowance/>

Independent Planning Commission approves extension of Mt Pleasant Mine until 2026

Hunter Valley News, 25/08/2018

The state's Independent Planning Commission has approved, with conditions, a proposal to extend the life of a coal mine near Muswellbrook for a further six years.

MACH Energy Australia already has permission to extract 10.5 million tonnes per annum of run-of-mine (ROM) coal from the Mt Pleasant mine until December 2020.

However, the proponent sought permission to continue open cut mining operations there until the end of 2026 – producing 63 million tonnes of coal, with royalties exceeding \$350 million, over that period. ...

The Department of Planning and Environment referred the matter to the Independent Planning Commission for its consideration in June this year after receiving 355 public submissions – including 250 objecting to the proposal. ...

<https://www.theherald.com.au/story/5607650/paying-a-high-price-for-air-pollution/?cs=7573>

New study shows that air pollution is shaving months off human life expectancy

Matthew Kelly, Newcastle Herald, 27/08/2018

At first glance a new international study linking poor air quality to reduced human longevity is hardly new.

After all, the scientific community proved a long time ago that there is no so-called safe level of air pollution when it comes to human health.

What the new study, published in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology Letters* highlights is the potential health effects of inhaling fine air particle pollution, or particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter.

These pollutants are generally derived from coal-fired power stations, dust storms and vehicle emissions, all of which are relevant to Hunter residents.

Despite persistent concerns from Upper Hunter residents about the impact of mining and power generation on their quality of life, the state government continues to argue the region's air quality is relatively good. ...

Doctors for the Environment argued at a Planning Assessment Commission hearing that ... conditions were responsible for a 28.6 per cent increase in Singleton Hospital emergency department admissions between July-September, 2016 and July-September, 2017. ...

<http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-29/old-mine-that-has-poisoned-creek-and-river-in-north-qld/10133118?pfmredir=sm>

The mothballed mine that has poisoned a major Queensland river

Mark Willacy & Alexandra Blucher, ABC, 29/08/2018

Pollution from an old northern Queensland mine has turned a creek that feeds a major river into a toxic contamination zone.

Residents around the Walsh River and Jamie Creek, south-west of Cairns and near the township of Watsonville, have been told not to drink, swim or use the water by the Queensland Government.

The government has tested the site and found the Baal Gammon copper mine, which sits next to the creek, has contaminated the waterway.

Leading environmental engineer, RMIT professor Gavin Mudd, says the level of contamination going into the creek and river is among the worst he has



Baal Gammon copper mine is polluting the Walsh River. Photo: David Sciasci, ABC

ever seen, with aluminium, copper, zinc, and cadmium levels “thousands of times higher than the concentrations we’d like to see”. ...

“It is sort of unbelievable that you’ve got NSW, half of Queensland in drought,” said David Dyer, a Walsh River resident for more than 30 years.

“Here we are, we’ve got a running river that you can’t use.” ...

In March and April this year, officers inspected the mothballed copper mine three times and found contaminated water leaking from the site at each of the inspections.

After the third inspection, they issued an EPO to Baal Gammon Copper, which is ultimately owned by Brisbane businessman Denis Reinhardt.

The department ordered the company to immediately carry out works at the site to ensure no more contaminated water was released.

However, the department has refused to answer questions about what measures, if any, it has taken to enforce the EPO, saying it would be inappropriate to comment due to the ongoing investigation. ...

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-27/an-aboriginal-teen-decides-to-try-fix-contaminated-water/10133842>

Contaminated water is a problem in remote Australia, so an Aboriginal teenager decided to try and fix it

Tom Joyner, ABC, 27/08/2018

An Aboriginal teenager from outback Western Australia has hopes a water filter he engineered for a school project will one day help improve water

quality in places where its health effects are only recently being understood.

Uriah Daisybell, 18, has designed and tested a prototype he said is proven to reduce the presence of nitrates and other contaminants leaking from mine sites into water supplies. ...

“I researched further and [found] some water supplies have been contaminated by heavy metals. That’s why the idea sparked of a filter. ...

GAS, GAS, GAS

<https://www.chinchillanews.com.au/news/see-a-sticker-slow-down-or-go-around/3502214/>

See a sticker? Slow down or go around

Chinchilla News, 24/08/2018

Shell QGC has boosted its driver safety program in the Western Downs region to support its bid to make Queensland roads safer.

The leading natural gas producer, with operations throughout rural Queensland, has added prominent stickers to its vehicles as part of its commitment to minimise safety risks.

All Shell QGC vehicles now display ‘Caution: GPS speed monitored vehicle’ stickers. ...

Shell QGC Upstream Asset General Manager Bill Langin said, “Our drivers are travelling hundreds of thousands of kilometres on country roads and this is an important measure to ensure they get safely home to their families.” ...

<http://mpnews.com.au/2018/08/27/gas-an-important-part-of-the-energy-mix-agl/>

'Gas an important part of the energy mix' – AGL

Kelly Parkinson, Mornington Peninsula News, 27/08/2018

At the recent community rally at Hastings, some key issues on safety and the environment about AGL's Crib Point Gas import jetty project were understandably raised.

First, we agree Western Port is an important environmental area that must be cared for.

AGL is a company that has a keen focus on the environment, sustainability and the communities in which we operate. Therefore, we expect to be held to account on these issues. ...

We've developed plans for this gas import facility because gas is a crucial part of the transition to a low carbon future ...

We identified Crib Point as an ideal location after an extensive evaluation process; because, we could make use of existing infrastructure and minimise our footprint on the environment. ...

Around the world, LNG ships have become common. There are around 500 operating safely every day and there are more than 100 more on order. ...

• *Kelly Parkinson is AGL's senior manager, project engagement.*

<http://mpnews.com.au/2018/08/27/anti-gas-protest-takes-to-the-road/>

Anti-gas protest takes to the road

Keith Platt, Mornington Peninsula News, 27/08/2018

Motorists travelling on Peninsula Link last Wednesday morning were confronted by new road signs.

But rather being instructed about regulating their speed or on which side of the road to drive they were being told that AGL's plans for a floating gas terminal at Crib Point should be scrapped.

Banner held aloft on a bridge spanning the highway proclaimed "Save Westernport" and "#NoAGLgas".

Jack Dewhurst of the Peninsula Environment Action Network said the floating gas terminal and "hundreds of gas ships coming in and out of the harbour would expose the entire ecosystem to environmental destruction, pollution, invasive species, and potential gas plant explosions". ...

AGL's plans to moor a 300 metre long

floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) to convert imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) before being piped to Pakenham.

"What many people don't realise is how destructive this project will be. In order to process the gas the floating gas plant takes in seawater, uses it in the conversion process, then dumps it back out into the bay," Mr Dewhurst said.

He said the process would use up to 450,000,000 litres of water a day. The chlorinated water would then be pumped back into the bay seven degrees below the bay's regular temperature. ...

<https://www.dailyliberal.com.au/story/5614875/no-fracking-way-says-dubbo-lga/?cs=112>

Dubbo Regional Council, community say no to Coal Seam Gas

Orlander Ruming, Daily Liberal, 29/08/2018

Dubbo Regional Council has sent a strong message to those looking to undertake Coal Seam Gas exploration in the region: frack off.

At the recent council meeting, councillors unanimously voted to say they do not support the exploration of Coal Seam Gas Production in the Local Government Area because it had negative impacts on the environment and no lasting economic benefit.

The decision was made after a public consultation period where the overwhelming majority of people were opposed to Coal Seam Gas extraction. Of the 661 responses to council's online poll asking if Coal Seam Gas should be extracted in the region, 94 per cent said 'no'.

Councillor Dayne Gumley said the only thing for council to say was 'lock the gates'. ...

https://www.gastoday.com.au/2018/08/29/government-funding-gas-acceleration-program/?utm_source=Great+Southern+Press+Communications&utm_campaign=9266ec827d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_08_29_05_10&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_367b08f8c2-9266ec827d-104534977&mc_cid=9266ec827d&mc_eid=d364df0152

Government funding Gas Acceleration Program

Gas Today, 29/08/2018

The Australian Government has agreed to provide funds of up to \$2 million to Energy World Corporation (EWC) subsidiary Australian Gasfields as part of its Gas Acceleration Program.

The funding will be used to accelerate the recommissioning of the Eromanga and Gilmore gas fields in Queensland,

with an aim of providing more gas to the east coast market. ...

EWC Executive Director Brian Allen said the funding would allow the project to progress much quicker.

"We are grateful for the funding provided by the Australian Government which will cover part of our expected costs, and are now moving forward to re-establish vehicle access to the wells, pipelines and processing plant at Eromanga. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/aug/27/fracking-frack-master-chris-faulkner-parliament-texas-jail>

Fall of the 'Frack Master': apostle who briefed parliament lands in Texas jail

Tom Dart, The Guardian, 27/08/2018

The self-appointed evangelist of the Texas fracking boom launched into a jargon-laced monologue, prompting the chairman of the UK parliament's Welsh affairs committee to request he speak in plain English. ...

Chris Faulkner, an intense, balding, bearded figure in a charcoal suit and blue tie, leaned forward and continued. He spent 40 minutes educating MPs about his state's embrace of hydraulic fracturing, including the marvel of horizontal drilling in urban areas.

"We've drilled ... underneath downtown Fort Worth, underneath hospitals, schools," he said.

In the autumn and winter of 2013, the so-called "Frack Master" was one of 16 witnesses who appeared before the committee, which was considering the economic and environmental impact of drilling potentially thousands of shale gas wells. ...

But Faulkner was not in fact much of a "technical animal" with a "scientific oil background". According to the US government, he is a fraudster who ran an investment scam worth between \$60m and \$80m. ...

<https://renew.org.au/articles/greenhouse-gas-footprint-what-we-do-and-dont-know-about-gas/>

Greenhouse gas footprint: What we do and don't know about gas

Tim Forcey, ReNew Magazine, Jul-Sept 2018

Energy and environmental planners like to do calculations and compare alternatives. Questions researchers might explore include: Which is cleaner: electricity made from coal or gas or renewables? What is the greenest way to heat your home, have a shower or cook spaghetti?

But there is a problem when it comes to evaluating the greenness of gas. Such comparisons need to be built on data. And, unfortunately, as we found recently in research at the University of Melbourne, although Australia may produce more fossil gas than nearly every other country, when it comes to digging up information around the greenhouse footprint of Australian gas, particularly unconventional gas, data is in short supply. ...

Fossil gas predominantly consists of methane which is a powerful greenhouse gas – with worse climate impacts than carbon dioxide. Our research found that if just 3% of the produced gas is released into the atmosphere, the climate-change impact of this released methane is equivalent to or worse than the climate impact of burning (and thereby converting to carbon dioxide) the other 97%.

It is critical, therefore, that we know how much gas is released during production and other stages. ...

There has as yet been no comprehensive, rigorous, independently verifiable audit of gas emissions from unconventional gas [in Australia]. ...

Although substantive methane emission measurements are not being performed in Australia, under the Obama administration significant progress was made in the unconventional oil and gas fields of the USA. Studies there found methane emissions ranging from 2% to 17% of total gas production. The amount of methane emanating from the US's largest coal seam gas region is so large it could be seen by a satellite (equipped with the appropriate methane-sensing equipment). ...

• *Tim Forcey is an independent energy advisor with 30+ years of experience working in industry and in communities.*

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/former-coal-industry-boss-is-scott-morrison-chiefs-staff-69647/>

Former coal industry boss is Scott Morrison's chief of staff

Giles Parkinson, RenewEconomy, 26/08/2018

The close link between Australia's major coal lobby and the prime minister's office under the Coalition government runs ever deeper, whoever the leader is at the time.

The chief of staff of new prime minister Scott Morrison is John Kunkel, the former deputy CEO of the Minerals Council of Australia, the same group that thoughtfully provided a lacquered

lump of coal for the then Treasurer to wave around parliament in February last year in the middle of a drought. ...

Kunkel's key role continues the close connection and the merry-go-round of advisors between the Minerals Council and key policy advisory positions in the Coalition government.

One of Malcolm Turnbull's key advisors as prime minister was Sid Marris, who was a former policy officer at the Minerals Council.

The man who replaced him as head of environment and climate policy at the Minerals Council is Patrick Gibbons, who was the former advisor to then environment minister Greg Hunt ...

Kunkel's previous work includes with former consultancy Concept Economics, headed by two of the most ferocious opponents of climate action and renewable energy schemes, Henry Ergas and Brian Fisher, who was on Tony Abbott's panel reviewing the renewable energy target. ...

https://reneweconomy.com.au/morrison-names-leading-anti-wind-campaigner-as-energy-minister-49560/?utm_source=RF+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=e-1b28a0b0e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_08_26_10_50&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-e1b28a0b0e-40461137

Morrison names leading anti-wind campaigner as energy minister

Giles Parkinson, RenewEconomy, 26/08/2018

New prime minister Scott Morrison has ended the experiment of combining the energy and environment portfolios, and appointed one of the country's most prominent anti-wind campaigners as energy minister, and a former mining industry lawyer as environment minister. ...

He named Dutton numbers man Angus Taylor as energy minister, and Melissa Price – a former mining company lawyer – as environment minister ...

The appointment of Taylor – along with the retention of Dutton as Home Affairs Minister – seems to be Morrison gift of appeasement to the “shock-jock” Gods that are as suspicious of him as they were of Malcolm Turnbull. Taylor is one of the shock-jock favourites. ...

Taylor is considered a hero by Stop These Things (which refers to environmentalists as “greentards” and other charming names) for his relentless opposition to wind farms. ...

Price, from the WA mining town of Kalgoorlie, had served as deputy to former energy and environment minister Josh Frydenberg ...

She worked as a lawyer with Clayton Utz, specialising in the mining industry, and with mining company Crosslands Resources. ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/can-t-vote-liberal-in-good-conscience-alex-turnbull-blasts-climate-stance-20180827-p50018.html>

Can't vote Liberal 'in good conscience': Alex Turnbull blasts climate stance

Peter Hannam, SMH, 27/08/2018

Alex Turnbull blamed “rent-seekers” backing the coal industry for felling his father Malcolm Turnbull as prime minister, saying it's “impossible” to vote for the Liberal-National coalition “in good conscience” because of its climate stance.

In a wide-ranging interview just days after his father lost power in a party

New energy minister Angus Taylor at his swearing-in with the Governor General. Photo via Facebook



room putsch, the Singapore-based fund manager told Fairfax Media the Liberal Party faced being hijacked by financial interests that stood to make windfall profits if coal-related assets were bolstered by taxpayers.

Those interests “have their hooks into the Liberal Party ... which has no money”, Mr Turnbull said, adding that returns could be “100 to 1” if policies fall investors’ way.

Mr Turnbull’s experience includes a stint at investment banking giant Goldman Sachs. Some of his work has also involved trading debt for Australian-based coal-fired power plants, giving him insights into that industry’s outlook. ...

Mr Turnbull also noted the pressure placed by his father’s government on AGL to keep its ailing Liddell power station going beyond its scheduled 2022 closure date. ...

He said efforts to keep ageing coal-fired power stations going, noting that Western Australia’s bid to stop the Muja plant going – at the cost of \$300 million – “was a terrible failure”.

“Such spending is like trying to keep crappy cars – like a 1994 Ford Laser – on the road.”

Worse, the operators of such plants as Liddell and Gladstone ran the risk of a “horrific industrial accident” that could literally cook unfortunate employees like a Chinese dumping.

Such failures “could create ‘human wontons’ of any staff exposed to the 300-400-degree super-heated steam”, he said. ...

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-28/alex-turnbull-says-coal-miners-have-undue-influence-on-liberals/10170908>

Alex Turnbull: Coal miners exerting ‘undue influence’ on Liberal Party, says son of former PM Malcolm Turnbull

Emma Alberici, ABC, 28/08/2018

Malcolm Turnbull’s son has lashed out at vested interests in the Queensland coal mining industry, who he says are exerting undue influence over the Liberal Party’s energy policy. ...

Speaking to ABC Radio’s PM program, he said it made no economic sense for the Coalition Government to be entertaining the idea of underwriting new coal-fired power plants. ...

Mr Turnbull referred PM to a February 2017 analyst report by new energy finance analysts at Bloomberg.

It stated that if new coal stations were to be built in Australia, electricity prices would be “substantially higher” than with a combination of wind, solar and gas (provided gas markets operated efficiently). ...

Asked whether debate about the economics of coal-fired power was being muddied by the lobbying of coal miners, Mr Turnbull said people who “own a lot of coal in the Galilee Basin (Queensland)” were exercising “undue influence on Liberal Party policy”.

Described as “small miners” he said “they have assets they probably regret purchasing that don’t make a lot of sense anymore and they’re trying to engineer an outcome which makes those projects economic.” ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/ministers-fossil-fuel-blueprint-to-lower-power-prices/news-story/0580b854b2739073d356a9c186411956>

Minister’s ‘fossil fuel blueprint’ to lower power prices

Ben Packham, The Australian, 28/08/2018

Scott Morrison is under pressure to put fossil fuels at the heart of the government’s energy policy, after Resources Minister Matt Canavan called for “a new era of energy and resources abundance” and Liberal elder Nick Minchin urged power prices and system reliability be prioritised ahead of the Paris emissions commitment. ...

Senator Canavan said coal and gas should form the centrepiece of the government’s new energy blueprint.

“We need a new era of energy and resources abundance,” the Resources Minister said. “God has given us an abundance of energy below the ground but we need to convert that to an abundance above the ground to bring on more energy supply and lower prices.” ...

[George] Christensen called for a new fund to support the development of high-efficiency, low-emissions coal-fired power stations. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/powering-australia/resources-minister-matt-canavan-pushes-for-new-gas-deal/news-story/37a434a9b5d7460010aedbb1c9d9e9cd>

Resources Minister Matt Canavan pushes for new gas deal

Ben Packham & Matt Chambers, The Australian, 28/08/2018

Resources Minister Matt Canavan will push LNG companies to lock in sufficient domestic gas supplies to 2020, kickstarting the government’s new

energy policy agenda after the collapse of Malcolm Turnbull’s national energy guarantee. ...

Cabinet minister Karen Andrews last night endorsed coal-fired power as a cheap and reliable source of energy into the future. Ms Andrews, who previously worked as a maintenance engineer at some of Queensland’s coal-fired power stations, said coal would remain a key part of Australia’s energy mix into the future. ...

https://reneweconomy.com.au/can-angus-taylor-stop-the-renewables-and-storage-revolution-70007/?utm_source=RE+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=517353d920-EMAIL_CAM_PAIGN_2018_08_27_11_55&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-517353d920-40461137

Can Angus Taylor stop the renewables and storage revolution?

Giles Parkinson, RenewEconomy, 28/08/2018

Much is expected of new energy minister Angus Taylor, particularly from Coalition politicians and media commentators ... In Tuesday’s *The Australian*, there were no less than three articles (including one on the front page – “Fossil fuel blueprint for power”) urging the new minister to invest in new coal-fired generation, and celebrating the departure of AGL’s chief executive Andy Vesey, who had dared tell them what a dumb idea that was. ...

Labor ... branded him the most “anti renewable” energy minister yet – which is no mean feat, given the competition for that title from predecessors including Martin Ferguson, Gary Grey and Ian Macfarlane.

https://reneweconomy.com.au/a-conversation-about-wind-and-coal-with-australias-new-energy-minister-58705/?utm_source=RE+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=517353d920-EMAIL_CAM_PAIGN_2018_08_27_11_55&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-517353d920-40461137

A conversation about wind and coal with Australia’s new energy minister

Giles Parkinson, RenewEconomy, 28/08/2018

Since the appointment of Angus Taylor as energy minister in the Morrison government on Sunday, RenewEconomy has been deluged by phone calls, texts, emails and social media links from people wishing to share the story of their encounter with the new energy minister on the subject of renewables.

Few were complimentary. Many pointed to his appearance at the “Wind Power Fraud Rally” in Canberra, organised by an anonymous and hate-filled website and which was hosted by shock-jock and renewables opponent Alan Jones. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/30/renewables-forecast-to-halve-wholesale-energy-prices-over-four-years>

Renewables forecast to halve wholesale energy prices over four years

Katharine Murphy, The Guardian, 30/08/2018

The latest renewable energy index compiled by Green Energy Markets confirms analysis by the Energy Security Board that wholesale electricity prices are on the way down because of an addition of 7,200 megawatts of extra large-scale supply from renewable energy. ...

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/5612412/barnaby-joyces-regional-mining-inquiry-comes-to-tamworth/?cs=159>

Barnaby Joyce's regional mining inquiry comes to Tamworth

Jamieson Murphy, Northern Daily Leader, 28/08/2018

Barnaby Joyce is bringing his mining inquiry to Tamworth, in an effort to learn about the relationship between the billion-dollar industry and local businesses.

The New England MP, who is the chair of the Innovation, Industry, Science and Resources Committee, is encouraging locals from New England and the North West to speak up at a public hearing next Tuesday. ...

https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2018/08/30/climate-change-action-off-agenda/?utm_source=Adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=PM%20Up-date%2020180830

Climate change action off the agenda under Morrison government

James Fernyhough, New Daily, 30/08/2018

Energy Minister Angus Taylor has unveiled a new energy policy focused exclusively on reducing electricity prices, in a strong signal the Morrison government will abandon all efforts to lower carbon emissions. ...

"My No.1 priority is very, very simple," Mr Taylor said in a speech on Thursday. "It is to reduce power prices, and to do this while we keep the lights on."

He would do this, he said, by empowering consumers to shop around, cracking down on price gouging, and increasing "reliable supply" – a phrase that has come to refer to keeping coal-fired power stations running.

"It's ironic that in a country with an abundance of natural resources – coal, gas, water, solar, wind – we should be in the position we are today. We have to leverage those resources, not leave them in the ground."

He listed two ways in which this would be done: encouraging states to lift moratoria on coal and gas exploration, and underwrite "new stable low-cost generation for commercial and industrial customers".

The latter appeared to be a commitment for the government to guarantee that coal-fired power stations would remain open. Not a single policy to increase investment in renewables or lower emissions was announced. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/30/angus-taylor-signals-further-taxpayer-investment-in-existing-coal-and-gas>

Angus Taylor signals further taxpayer investment in existing coal and gas

Katharine Murphy, The Guardian, 30/08/2018

The new energy minister, Angus Taylor, says he's not a sceptic about climate science, just the economics of green schemes, and he's declared renewables are "in my blood" and have an important role in the energy system.

But while overtly backing solar and hydro, but not wind – a technology he's long opposed – Taylor has also signalled he wants to encourage new investment extending the life of existing coal and gas plants, and upgrading ageing facilities, with an objective of boosting supply. ...

<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/frack-attack-victoria-warns-new-energy-minister-to-respect-gas-ban-20180829-p500kd.html>

Frack attack: Victoria warns new energy minister to respect gas ban

Adam Carey, The Age, 30/08/2018

The Victorian government has warned Australia's new energy minister Angus Taylor not to try to pressure it to reverse its gas fracking ban.

The state Labor government issued the warning in a strongly worded letter signed by Treasurer Tim Pallas and energy minister Lily D'Ambrosio.

It permanently banned coal-seam gas extraction – also called fracking – in Victoria two years ago and has also imposed a moratorium on conventional onshore gas exploration until mid 2020. ...

The letter calls on Mr Taylor to activate a domestic gas reserve to set aside gas for Australian homes and businesses that might otherwise be piped to Queensland and exported. ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/mad-and-morally-irresponsible-liberal-moderates-roast-new-emissions-stance-20180830-p500r2.html>

'Mad' and 'morally irresponsible': Liberal moderates roast new emissions stance

Nicole Hasham, SMH, 31/08/2018

Senior Liberal figures have labelled the Morrison government's stance on climate change as "mad" and "morally irresponsible" as the party's moderate wing reels at the ultra-conservative takeover of Australia's energy policy. ...

Fairfax Media spoke to several moderate senior Liberal Party figures dismayed at the direction of the Morrison administration's energy policy and concerned at the appointment of Mr Taylor, who has campaigned against wind farms and renewable energy subsidies.

A senior NSW government source said the federal Coalition's avoidance of emissions reduction was "just putting off the inevitable". ...

A senior NSW Liberal MP said any politician who acknowledged the science of climate change was "morally obliged to do something about it".

Government MPs who denied the science were "stupid" while those who believed the science but didn't act "have a moral failing", the source said. ...

Oliver Yates, a Victorian Liberal Party veteran and former head of the federal government's Clean Energy Finance Corporation, said divorcing electricity from emissions reduction was "economically irrational" and "mad".

It was also "a question of morality", he said. ...

Former Liberal leader John Hewson said the government had "no overarching emissions reduction strategy at all. It's a big failing". ...

Alex Turnbull, son of former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull and a Singapore-based fund manager, told Fairfax Media there was "no conflict between cutting emissions and reducing prices" given the cheap cost of renewables.

"This change in tack [by the Morrison government] has other motivations and drivers and they are not consumer welfare," he said, describing the position as "lunacy".

However conservative Liberal backbencher Eric Abetz, a key critic of energy policy under Malcolm Turnbull, on Thursday threw his full support behind Mr Taylor, describing his speech as "a game-changer". ...

News this week ... from previous page

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/business/companies/the-real-reasons-australia-cant-get-its-climate-change-policy-right/news-story/4b515b9ec28d815e29bb-f5ea1468050?csp=d1aebcd9a7086aa3a683d87807407087>

The real reasons Australia can't get its climate change policy right

Charis Chang, *news.com.au* 28/08/2018

Climate change policy appears to be the biggest career killer for prime ministers of every political stripe. But why is it so hard to get it right? ...

[Climate change] policy has been used as a political tool to assassinate at least three prime ministers. ...

Mr Turnbull's son Alex Turnbull told the ABC that people who "own a lot of coal in the Galilee Basin (Queensland)" were exercising "undue influence on Liberal Party policy".

Here are the reasons climate policy is so hard to get right.

We are a coal country

Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal, and the country is also a leading exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG). In 2015, about 40 per cent of Australia's export income was related to energy. ...

Professor of political science at the University of Melbourne Robyn Eckersley said the close relationship between the coal industry and politics could be seen in the revolving door of political advisers who had previously worked for the mining industry, now working for senior politicians.

Politicians have also found jobs in the industry after leaving politics, such as former resources minister Ian Macfarlane who took up a position at the Queensland Resources Council and Sophie Mirabella, who was hired by mining magnate Gina Rinehart ...

In fact, new Prime Minister Scott Morrison's new chief of staff, Dr John Kunkel, is the former deputy chief executive of the Minerals Council of Australia and also worked at Rio Tinto. His new environment minister Melissa Price, was a former lawyer for mining company Crosslands Resources Ltd. ...

People don't like paying more

While [a] Lowy Institute survey indicated there was majority support for taking action against climate change despite the costs, other surveys have showed some were worried about power prices.

A Newspoll ... in October last year revealed 45 per cent of Australians



Malcolm and Alex Turnbull pictured after the 2016 election. Following his father's sacking as PM, Alex has pointed the finger at the mining lobby for disrupting efforts to establish a climate policy. Photo; AAP

surveyed would support abandoning the Paris Agreement if it lowered electricity prices. ...

It's ideological

While there's a lot of talk about sticking up for Aussie battlers, Prof Eckersley said the Coalition seemed to be acting based on economic ideology as well as being driven by nostalgia for the past. ...

Prof Eckersley said the conservatives should be asked why they didn't think climate change was a problem worth responding to and to consider what the costs of not taking action were. ...

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-28/climate-change-is-world-war-3-and-we-are-leaderless/10168962>

Climate change is World War III, and we are leaderless

David Shearman, Doctors for the Environment Australia, ABC, 28/08/2018

"World War III is well and truly underway. And we are losing," writes

environmental activist Bill McKibben, so ... what lessons are there for Scott Morrison? ...

Two of the world's highest per capita carbon emitters, the United States and Australia, have deserted the trenches of WWII by trading ideology for human lives and health. ... Australia's response to climate change is devious; under the guise of action, the transition to renewable energy has been carefully modulated to maintain coal. ...

Both the US and Australia must understand that humanity lives in one atmosphere and all must act decisively and collectively to preserve the common and finite resources of land, sea, air, biodiversity and fresh water necessary for health and wellbeing.

• *Dr David Shearman is the honorary secretary of Doctors for the Environment Australia and Emeritus Professor of Medicine at Adelaide University.*

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