



# 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

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## Gladstone coal gasification project a carbon bomb: 60m tonnes over 30yrs

By Eve Sinton

**A \$1 billion project recently announced for Gladstone is a carbon bomb.**

Australian Future Energy's (AFE) Gladstone Energy and Ammonia Project (GEAP) will belch out two million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually for 30 years.

The project illustrates how governments and industry blithely continue to initiate fossil fuel projects as if there is no prospect of climate disaster.

AFE says the plant will yield 330,000 tonnes per annum of ammonia product, and up to 8 PJ of pipeline quality gas for the east coast domestic gas market.

In addition, the proposed project will generate approximately 90 MW of electrical power, with approximately 25 MW of this being available for export to the local domestic grid.

The project has been fast-tracked by the Queensland Co-ordinator General as a 'co-ordinated project', and welcomed uncritically in mainstream media such as the *Gladstone Observer*.

It will create 800 construction jobs and 200 operational jobs over a 30-year lifespan.

As is typical of resource projects, the company claims 1,280 indirect jobs will be also be created. However, they are using a Queensland Resources Council employment multiplier that has been discredited by economists at The Australia Institute.

The GEAP will devour 1.5 million tonnes per annum of low-quality coal, mostly sourced from the Callide mine.

### Plant will be a 'major hazard facility'

It is classified as a major hazard facility and will require a gigalitre of water every year.

The company says water will be sourced from the Gladstone Area Water Board. A previous concept of the technology discussed using coal seam gas wastewater from the Darling Downs.

The plant will produce a number of air emissions from the gasification and gas purification processes.

These will include sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxides, and particulates PM10 and PM2.5

In addition, there are potential fugitive emissions from gas leaks. Gases produced will include syngas – synthetic natural gas (methane), carbon dioxide and ammonia. There is potential for these gases to leak from pipelines and process plant equipment.

AFE claims that most of the CO<sub>2</sub> will be captured, with potential for carbon

**CO<sub>2</sub> 2 million tonnes annually**

• Continued p2

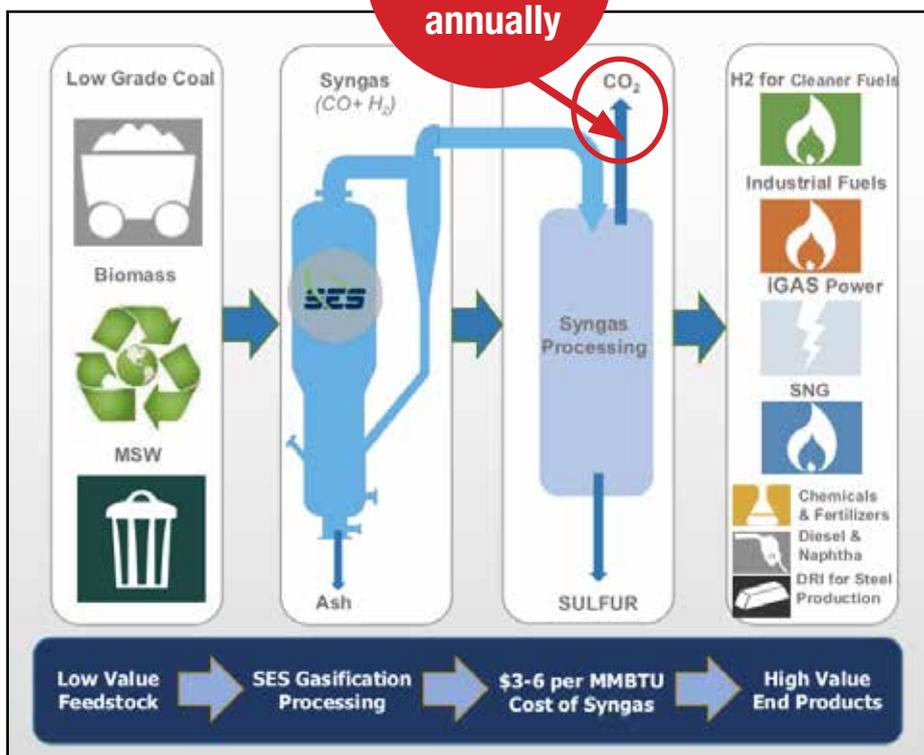


Diagram of proposed Gladstone coal gasification technology, sourced from Australian Future Energy investor presentation, with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions highlighted by FFB.

• P 3: FOI documents expose favour for Adani

• P 4: Appeal for help to stop disaster

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# AFE gasification plant: Another carbon bomb for Gladstone, Queensland

• Continued from p1

sequestration – a technology with zero commercial success to date. The company says it could also be sold directly to ‘available markets’.

FFB notes that one such market could be ‘enhanced oil recovery’, a process that does not guarantee the CO<sub>2</sub> won’t escape into the atmosphere.

AFE says its power plant will periodically have boiler blowdown discharges comprising highly saline waters.

Any unscheduled stoppages in syngas processing will see gases (H<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, CO, CO<sub>2</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>, steam) flared off and released to the atmosphere.

The production of ammonia requires disposal of notable quantities of oxides and sulphides of the heavy metals Co, Ni, Mo, Cu, Zn and Fe.

## American parent company ‘shady’

The coal gasification technology to be utilised on the Gladstone project has been developed by Synthesis Energy Systems (SES) a US-based Nasdaq listed company, which holds approximately 40% of the issued capital in AFE.

Investment researcher White Diamond, writing in 2016, had nothing good to say about SES.

“The company hasn’t had a profitable quarter in over seven years,” White Diamond said.

“Synthesis Energy has a shady past with deals that never go through, and that won’t change despite management’s big talk.

“Yet, management continually talks a big game to keep bringing in new investors to buy the stock so it doesn’t get delisted from the Nasdaq.”

The company currently has some gasification systems operating, the largest being at Yima, China.

Australian Future Energy (AFE) is a privately owned Australian company founded in 2014 by its primary shareholders, coal industry veteran Edek Choros and SES, using SES technology.

## Choros company defeated at Felton

Edek Choros is well-known to the people of Felton, on the Darling Downs, who stymied his company Ambre’s gasification project there after a four-year battle.

The *Courier-Mail* reported, “The final



**Gladstone Energy and Ammonia Project (GEAP) location, 15km north of the city and across the harbour from three Curtis Island LNG export plants.**

Graphic: From Australian Future Energy’s Initial Advice Statement, download here:

<https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/assessments-and-approvals/gladstone-energy-and-ammonia-project.html>

nail for Ambre came with the election of the Newman Government, which rejected the Felton petrochemical scheme because it was not in the public interest because of its location in high value farming land near Toowoomba.”

## “Dropped us to the wolves”

Choros told the *Courier-Mail*, “He [Newman] dropped us to the wolves to please some people. We were probably 20 years ahead of ourselves with that project.

“After fighting everyone at Felton, forget opening a new mine. We are starting with proven technology.”

Choros was referring to a plan to develop the Callide coal mine into a \$2 billion coal gasification project – which has now found a new home in the Gladstone State Development Area. The area is the location of a number of noxious industries such as the three liquid natural gas (LNG) export plants sucking most of the gas out of the Darling Downs.

AFE appointed former Cougar Energy exec Kerry Parker as CEO in March this year.

Having the Gladstone project listed as a co-ordinated project by the Queensland government was a huge boost for AFE. The company has submitted an Initial Advice Statement (IAS) which can be downloaded from the link below the location map.

The next step is preparation of draft terms of reference by the Coordinator-General who will then invite community comment on the matters to be investigated in the EIS.

These may include: ecology impacts; generation of large quantities of pure carbon dioxide; stormwater; wastewater; air quality and dust; ash management; solid waste management; groundwater; cultural heritage; Native Title and Indigenous Land Use Agreements; water supply; amenity impacts – visual, noise and odour; hazard and risk – health and safety.

The project is estimated to commence construction by mid-2020, and start production in mid-2022.

The company also says, in an investor presentation, it will seek funding from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund (NAIF).

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## Friends of Felton

**How a small farming community stood up to Big Coal and won**

The story of the successful community campaign to stop Ambre Energy’s coal-to-liquids operation at Felton, on Queensland’s Darling Downs.



**On sale via the facebook page:**

**Rob McCreath author** (S21 + P&P).

<https://www.facebook.com/mccreathrob/>

# Adani: FOI documents expose double standards on river haul

*Lock the Gate has obtained documents under Right to Information laws in Queensland which reveal that Adani received a special deal on access to 12.5 billion litres of river water compared to other water users, and environmental assessments of it were weak.*

The documents reveal that:

- The licence granted to Adani by the Qld Government gives them the right to take almost as much water from the Suttor River as all other current water users combined, who currently hold nominal entitlements to a total of 15.4GL/annum;
- Landholders objected to the grant of the water to Adani, and highlighted that streamflows in the region are already in decline. Irrigators have previously been refused licences to take less water than Adani from the Suttor River.
- The desktop analysis done by Adani on the take of water is based purely on historical water usage data from 1809-2004, and effectively ignores the impacts of climate change, despite the mine planning to run until 2077;
- The limited desktop analysis undertaken by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines identified threats to lagoons higher on the floodplains and endangered regional ecosystems from the cumulative impact of Adani and other water take.

## 70% want water licence cancelled

This follows the release of polling last week which found 70% of Queenslanders support the cancellation of Adani's water licences to safeguard water resources for Qld farmers.

"It's clear there's been a massive double standard at play between mining and agriculture, with right to information documents revealing in the past irrigators have been refused licences for less water than those granted to Adani" said Carmel Flint, spokesperson for Lock the Gate Alliance.

"Adani now has rights to almost as much Suttor River water as all other water users combined. It is incredibly galling to see Adani get special access to river water for its dirty coal mine as Queensland grapples with a severe drought.

"The environment is also going to suffer as a result of Adani's river water haul, with the department of natural resources identifying risks to lagoons high on the floodplain and endangered regional ecosystems.

"However, most damning is evidence that there has been no assessment of the impacts of climate change, despite the fact this water licence has been granted until 2077.

"We can expect much less water in our rivers over the next 60 years due to a changing climate and local landholders say streamflow is already declining.

"These documents underscore again just how wrong the decision was last week by the Federal Environment Minister to approve Adani's North Galilee Water Scheme to take Suttor river water and pipe it to their mine, without environmental assessment.

"It's a slap in the face to rural communities and a real threat to the environment," she said.

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## 2030 Resources Taskforce report released



*Last week the 2030 Resources Taskforce, set up a few months ago by mining minister Matt Canavan, released its report.*

The document predictably calls for mining ventures to be made easier with approvals streamlined, less regulation and lower taxes.

There were some constructive statements about involving indigenous communities and workers in mining on their land.

There was no mention of climate change. Instead, there was strong promotion of coal and gas industries – like there is no tomorrow!

There was no acknowledgement of environmental issues such as air pollution or depletion of water resources.

The report claims there have been massive benefits to local communities, such as the Surat Basin, from the gas industry (despite well-documented evidence of harm).

## Activists having an impact

The report said, "The sector operates in an environment increasingly challenged by differing regional and national community expectations. Communities rightly want more access to accurate information on resources activities and evidence of the sector's environmental awareness.

"Digital media and social media platforms have enabled activists and anti-resources protestors to more easily share disinformation and influence decision making at the broader community level. This is often to the detriment of local communities, which do not always share their opinions."

The mining industry can't come to grips with the fact that activism is based on facts and science, not 'disinformation'.

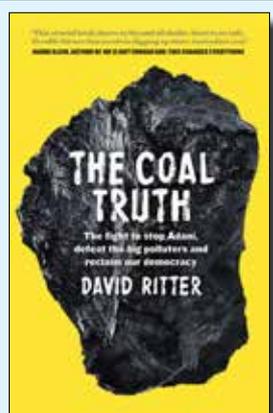
**FFB**

## The Coal Truth

*The fight to stop Adani, defeat the big polluters and reclaim our democracy (\$29.99)*

A timely and colourful contribution to one of the most important struggles in our national history – over the future of the coal industry.

Contributors include Tara Moss and Berndt Sellheim, Adrian Burragubba, Lesley Hughes, John Quiggin, Hilary Bambrick, Ruchira Talukdar and Geoffrey Cousins. Lead author is David Ritter, CEO, Greenpeace Australia Pacific.



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

## Inside the news

**AGL shareholders** had to negotiate a crowd of 50 to 100 **protesters** outside their AGM in Melbourne last week. The group was opposing AGL's plan to start importing gas through **Crib Point** in Victoria's Western Port. (p10). Inside the meeting, the board endured two hours of questioning on its import plans.

Some insights about the character of **Gautam Adani** have emerged in a **new book** (p6). Meanwhile it emerged the company's contractors in India **bulldozed cropland and a burial ground** to make way for a **new power station**, despite the protests of villagers. The inhabitants claim most have not been compensated for the loss of their land.

**Santos** told an investor meeting it's aiming to double its gas output, targeting a production rate of more than **100 million barrels** of oil equivalent by 2025. Santos chief, Kevin Gallagher, did not mention the **Narrabri gas project** at the meeting, and it appears to have been moved out of the company's five core pillars for operation (p8).

The **NSW government** has bought back a **gas exploration licence** covering the coast off parts of Lake Macquarie to **cancel** it. Minister for Resources, Don Harwin, said the cancellation of the licence was "bringing an end to gas exploration on the Central Coast of NSW" (p9).

A new High Court decision means the **Queensland government** – and ultimately taxpayers – will have to foot the clean-up bill from the **Linc Energy** environmental disaster, which will run into the millions. The court rejected the government's attempt to overturn a ruling from March that found **Linc liquidators** were not liable for the clean-up costs at their infamous Chinchilla site (p10).

A new report reveals that more than **one in four federal ministers** have gone on to **work for a lobbyist firm, peak body or other special interest** since 1990. The mining industry is prominent amongst corporate influence peddlars showering gifts of hospitality, such as lavish lunches and footy tickets upon the political class (p11).

## Appeal for help to stop UCG disaster

*Last week, FFB reported that a Supreme Court appeal by the Adnyamathanha people, hoping to stop Leigh Creek Energy putting a match to an underground coal seam, was rejected.*

The William Light Foundation now seeks funding to have the rejection reviewed. Their letter appears below:

Dear Friends of the Flinders Ranges,

We are seeking legal review of the Supreme Court decision last week which spells disaster for the iconic Flinders Ranges. The link below will enable people to contribute to this essential next step to protect the communities and environment.

Please share it widely to your network and post on social media.

<https://www.givenow.com.au/crowdraiser/public/HelpStopCoalSeamGasFlindersRangesLegalAppeal/>

The Flinders Ranges Communities need your support to help appeal the Supreme Court decision to allow UCG (Underground Coal Gasification) proceeding in the Flinders Ranges.

This will need to occur very soon as ignition of the coal underground, on a listed Aboriginal Heritage, site is imminent.

Over 70 species of birds, a large number rare and endangered and now nominated for federal protection, use the site as safe haven to live and breed.

The Leigh Creek Energy Project has neither a social or legal licence and yet the current decision allows them to proceed.

This decision is madness and threatens a major disaster as seen in Chinchilla, Queensland: the Linc Energy disaster.

Please support this appeal to stop corporate and government madness ruining the Flinders Ranges and the Lake Eyre Basin.

Thanks – William Light Foundation

**Campaign information:**

[www.williamlightfoundation.org](http://www.williamlightfoundation.org)

# In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 23,000 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

## THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/coal-protesters-on-recruitment-drive-to-illegally-target-aurizon/news-story/662f6d6a029f63a509ea3b2f07a5aa76>

### Coal protesters on recruitment drive to illegally target Aurizon

Daryl Passmore, *Courier-Mail*, 23/09/2018

Greenies will target freight rail operator Aurizon in a campaign of illegal direct action that threatens to disrupt Queensland's coal exports.

Activists have the rail giant in their sights after Adani announced plans to connect with Aurizon's network to haul coal from its proposed Carmichael mega-mine in Central Queensland. ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/opinion/peter-gleeson-greens-have-stranglehold-on-national-debate/news-story/414696a079cad69774980eddfab9cb0c>

### Peter Gleeson: Greens have stranglehold on national debate

*Courier-Mail*, 23/09/2018

Green activism has never been more powerful in Australia.

It's a force of nature, fuelled by rich-lister financial backing, much of it coming from overseas.

It infiltrates just about every fibre of the Aussie way of life. ...

This extraordinary level of engagement with the community is in stark contrast to the way the Adani company has tried to stay under the radar, ignoring the environmental noise.

Surely, Adani now knows that it has been out-gunned in the PR stakes. It is now engaged in a race against time.

The Federal election is likely in May next year. ... Bill Shorten and Labor don't want Adani. ...

So for Adani it's five minutes to midnight. It's now or never.

[https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/sep/23/adani-coalmine-most-queenslanders-want-water-licence-revoked-poll-finds?CMP=share\\_btn\\_fb](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/sep/23/adani-coalmine-most-queenslanders-want-water-licence-revoked-poll-finds?CMP=share_btn_fb)

### Adani coalmine: most Queenslanders want water licence revoked, poll finds

Ben Smea, *The Guardian*, 23/09/2018

Queenslanders overwhelmingly want the state government to cancel the Adani mining company's 60-year unlimited water extraction licence amid



People from National Doorknock to Stop Adani are on the streets of Bill Shorten's electorate, Moonie Ponds. Photo: Galilee Blockade

growing concern about the severity of the drought.

Polling conducted by ReachTel for the environmental group Lock the Gate shows concern about water extraction by Adani, and the impact on agriculture, is strong among conservative voters. ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/big-green-groups-steering-clear-of-aurizon-protest/news-story/69ee898e0090c61854a5fdaa13bf35f5>

### Big green groups steering clear of Aurizon protest

John McCarthy, *Courier-Mail*, 25/09/2018

Big environmental groups will stay away from planned protest actions against Aurizon and its potential link with the controversial Adani project.

Concerns about any potential impact on their charity status that could occur from illegal activity is understood to be behind the decision to stay away.

There is also some antagonism between the activists and the bigger environmental groups, who they are said to view with contempt.

Aurizon has also warned it will pursue activists through the courts if they break the law during protests. ...

<https://www.1millionwomen.com.au/blog/adani-coal-mine-eco-crime-heres-why/>

### The Adani Coal Mine Is An Eco-Crime. Here's Why.

Olivia Hasler, *1million women*, 25/09/2018

On the Saturday, 8 September 2018, thousands of people across 95 countries peacefully occupied public spaces and demanded real climate action from their governments. The "Rise for Climate" movement's demands were simple: 100% renewable energy. Why? For many people, this form of organised mass environmental protest is the logical response to a year of devastating climate impacts such as deadly heatwaves, droughts, fires and floods alongside a surprising lack of climate action from local leaders. ...

There is a lot of work to be done in order to safeguard our democracy: The right to protest and speak out against government decisions or dangerous corporate activities must be protected. The rules of political lobbying need to be reformed. Stronger laws around the disclosure of campaign financing and political party donations are needed. Our environmental legislation needs to be updated so it can do what it's supposed to do. ...

• Olivia Hasler is a criminology PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania. She has recently completed a major study of the Adani Carmichael Mine as a case of state- corporate crime and ecocide. In recent work she has written about environmental activism and the state for journals such as *Critical Criminology*, reflecting her strong interest in social and ecological justice.

<https://thelogicalindian.com/exclusive/adani-group-farmers-jharkhand/>

## “Fell at officials feet, even then they razed our farms,” Jharkhand farmers claim land taken forcefully for Adani’s powerplant

Ridhima Gupta, *The Logical Indian*, 25/09/2018

In Malli village of Jharkhand’s Godda district, tractors and bulldozers of Adani group razed down the standing crops from the fields owned by at least ten farmers. Despite the Adivasi farmer’s several pleas to the officials, their fields were destroyed ruthlessly. Even as many fell at the feet of the officials, the bulldozers didn’t stop. The farmers claim that almost 16 bighas of their land, including their ancestral burial ground, was illegally grabbed by the Adani group to build a power plant, without any notice being rendered to them beforehand. However, Adani group has refuted all claims. ...

While talking about the compensation allocated by the Adani Power Plant, Hasda said, there are only a few farmers, who have been involved in the land acquirement agreement with Adani Group have received compensation, while the rest have not been paid even a single penny. ...

The Adani group told *The Logical Indian* that the Adivasi’s land was allotted to them by the state government and they have not faulted any rules in acquiring the land. ...

<https://www.afr.com/news/world/asia/the-stupendous-rise-of-indias-new-super-rich-20180925-h15vf4>

## The Billionaire Raj: India’s new super rich and their stupendous rise to power

James Crabtree, *AFR*, 28/09/2018

Given his public reputation, you would expect Gautam Adani to be the boldest and brashest of all Indian tycoons. Yet the man who sat across from me when I first met him in 2012, leaning back in a plush armchair at his corporate headquarters, seemed quiet, even shy.

His office was unexpectedly modest too ...

This year I published *The Billionaire Raj*, a book which grew out of that fascination, and in the process described the stupendous recent rise of India’s new super rich class, of whom Adani is one of the most notorious examples. ...

Although unshakably bold in his commercial dealings, Adani seemed especially doubtful. He was unimposing: not terribly tall, with rounded features and a bulbous nose. His moustache quivered slightly as he spoke, and for a



This cartoon by David Rowe accompanied the Australian Financial Review’s look at James Crabtree’s new book on Indian billionaires.

man with such a forceful reputation, he seemed almost withdrawn ...

• James Crabtree is an associate professor in practice at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore and author of *The Billionaire Raj: A Journey Through India’s New Guided Age* (Bloomsbury).

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-25/adani-plans-to-take-12.5b-litres-of-water-as-farmer-denied/10298354>

## Adani plans to take 12.5b litres of water as farmer denied access in ‘double standard’

Michael Slezak, *ABC*, 25/09/2018

A farmer has been denied access to a river system Adani plans on drawing 12.5 billion litres of water from in what activists are calling a “double standard”, documents obtained under freedom of information laws show.

The mining giant plans to take 12.5 billion litres of water from the Suttor River every year, nearly as much as all local farmers combined.

Despite this amount, the documents show at least one irrigator had their application for a water licence rejected in 2011, leading activists to claim farmers were assessed more harshly than Adani.

The documents also show the modeling used by the company to predict the impacts of the water usage ignored the past 14 years of rainfall data and, despite planning to take water until 2077, it did not take into account the impacts of climate change. ...

<https://www.echo.net.au/2018/09/training-grandparents-protecting-future/>

## Training grandparents and protecting the future

Echonet Daily, 27/09/2018

Lack of government action on the risks of climate change and in many cases their active endorsement of projects that will have long-term negative impact on the future are galvanising a range of citizens and businesses into action.

Yesterday around ten grandparents headed to the corporate offices of Aurizon, one of the biggest coal transporters in Australia, in Brisbane to begin their campaign to recruit and grandparents on how to take non-violent direct action.

‘Experienced trainers guided them through using heavy duty chains, D-locks around their necks, and specialist arm locks for train lines,’ said Galilee Blockade spokesperson Ben Pennings who helped organise the training session. ...

The campaign is currently asking any grandparents and other citizens who are willing to take direct, non-violent action around Australia to contact them. ...

## SACRIFICE ZONE

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

<https://vimeo.com/257444267>

<https://www.cairnspost.com.au/news/national/labor-mp-says-he-will-believe-it-when-he-sees-it-on-adani-plan/news-story/f0ea9631a1a15d960d06b245828ee6f8?log-in=1>

## Labor MP says he will 'believe it when he sees it' on Adani plan

*Madura McCormack, Townsville Bulletin, 26/09/2018*

Mining giant Adani has doubled down on its message that the Carmichael project is underway and will "stand on its own two feet", after comments made by Shadow Federal Treasurer Chris Bowen in Townsville today.

Mr Bowen, who had two days of meetings scheduled with executives from James Cook University, Townsville Enterprise, Townsville City Council, and other business leaders, confirmed he would not be meeting Adani and said he would believe the project was happening when he sees it for himself. ...

## COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.nvi.com.au/>

### Re Whitehaven Vickery coal mine expansion

*Peter Wills, Letter, Namoi Valley Independent, 25/09/2018*

On Thursday last week I went along to hear about the Whitehaven Vickery coal mine expansion on their unviable and unstarted 4.5 million tonne a year coal mine, and was turned away at the door, as were other local farmers.

Its disappointing as a Whitehaven neighbour myself, to their Werris Creek site, to be turned away from gaining a greater understanding and opportunity to discuss what this expansion, and in reality entirely new coal mine in our region means in respect to water, and nearby farmers livelihoods and assets.

What is more disappointing is that farmers, dealing with the worst drought conditions in living memory for most, now have only 42 days ... to read and understand the 4,048 page Environmental Impact Statement/report, whilst many are pushed to the end of their tether with farm priorities. ...

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/5663042/govt-knocks-back-drought-stricken-farmers-plea-for-more-vickery-time/?cs=12>

### Drought-stricken farmers plea for more time to look at Vickery coal mine extension EIS

*Jamieson Murphy, Northern Daily Leader, 24/09/2018*

At least six organisations have called on the state government to think of the

farmers battling the drought, and give them more time to have their say on the Vickery coal mine extension.

The exhibition period for Whitehaven Coal's 4000-page Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has already been extended from 28 days to 42.

But Wando CCC, Namoi Water, People for the Plains, Maules Creek CWA, Lock the Gate and the Greens want it pushed out to 90 days.

However, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) has shut down any talk of a further extension. ...

<https://www.theherald.com.au/story/5660480/coal-minings-relentless-attack-on-water/?cs=308>

### Our Future: Coal mining's relentless attack on water

*Sid Plant, Newcastle Herald, 24/09/2018*

If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and it's not raining then I am planning for an El Nino. As a farmer on Queensland's Darling Downs, that means I can't count on any useful rain until late November – and that's following a long, dry year.

Farmers like me are fighting more than just the drought – we are facing relentless attacks on our precious water courtesy of our country's coal mining industry.

In my backyard, it's the expansion of the Acland coal mine that threatens our farms, our livelihoods and some of the best agricultural land in Australia.

We are not alone.

The federal government, whose new leader says addressing drought is his number one priority, has just waived a proper environmental assessment by scientists of the impact of Adani's plan to extract billions of litres of Queensland river water. ...

Politicians ... continue to support coal mine production, which poses the biggest threat to farmers' water supplies. Instead of developing a comprehensive plan to tackle climate change and protect groundwater, we've seen nothing but blind support for big miners by state and federal members. ...

• *Sid Plant is a Darling Downs farmer, grandfather and member of Farmers for Climate Action*

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/business/citybeat/queensland-governments-inaugural-cheerleader-for-the-mining-sector-quits-post/news-story/10e1ff-27c4a0e85ebdb2dc7574efb48c>

### Queensland Government's inaugural cheerleader for the mining sector quits post

*Anthony Marx, Courier-Mail, 26/09/2018*

The Queensland Government's inaugural cheerleader for the mining sector has quit the post and returned to the private sector. ...

Todd Harrington stepped down from his Resources Investment Commissioner job last month and is now spearheading Whitehaven Coal's expansion in to the Bowen Basin. ...

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/exclusion-zone-established-as-black-smoke-billows-from-goonyella-mine/news-story/c4824c9b565d4a3469505238610ae364>

### Exclusion zone established as black smoke billows from Goonyella Mine

*Melanie Plane, Mackay Daily Mercury, 28/09/2018*

Disaster management officials were last night monitoring a developing situation at North Goonyella Mine north of Moranbah where workers have reportedly been evacuated.

Isaac Regional Council have confirmed the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) took action after residents noticed an unpleasant odour from the mine ...

Mine operators Peabody Energy say mine personnel observed dark smoke coming from the surface ventilation shaft at North Goonyella Thursday afternoon, indicating a potential fire in a portion of the mine. ...

<https://www.amsj.com.au/coal-mine-fire-building-at-north-goonyella/>

### Coal mine fire building at North Goonyella

*John Ninness, Mining Safety News, 28/09/2018*

An underground mine fire is reportedly increasing in intensity at the North Goonyella Mine near Moranbah and an explosion is highly possible. Unofficial reports tonight say that there is a high probability of the fire growing and an explosion is highly probable based on existing gas analysis data. The North Goonyella Mine has been prone to heatings and spontaneous combustion events for some years and a range of recovery actions have been taken several times in the past.

A team of disaster management experts including the Queensland Mines Inspectorate, Professor David

Cliff (University of Queensland – Mine Fire Expert), gas chemists and Union Officials have been monitoring the potential of a serious explosion. ...

## GAS, GAS, GAS

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/25/whitewash-us-oil-and-gas-lobbyists-try-to-discredit-australian-seismic-research>

### 'Whitewash': US oil and gas lobbyists try to discredit Australian seismic research

Graham Readfern, *The Guardian*, 25/09/2018

Some of the world's biggest energy companies are lining up to defend their widely used offshore exploration technique from the conclusions of a small group of Australian scientists, who say the seismic surveys can kill zooplankton and harm invertebrates.

The American Petroleum Institute and the International Association of Geophysical Contractors have been writing to authorities in the United States claiming the work of Associate Prof Robert McCauley, of Curtin University in Western Australia, and his colleagues is "seriously flawed".

API is a powerful lobby group with more than 600 members, including BP, Chevron, Exxon and Shell.

Seismic surveys using underwater air guns are the key tool used by the oil and gas industry to discover more fossil fuels.

The industry claims the technique is largely harmless, but the emerging science could be another spark for conflict between commercial fishing, conservationists, regulators and the oil and gas industry.

Speaking to *Guardian Australia*, McCauley defended his research and said critics would "throw as much mud and confusion" to try and discredit the findings. ...

McCauley, with scientists at the institute of marine and Antarctic studies at the University of Tasmania, found the air guns used in seismic surveys to find oil and gas could kill zooplankton – a vital organism at the base of the marine food web – at a distance of at least 1.2km.

McCauley was also part of research with the same group finding seismic surveys affected the immune systems of lobsters and were linked to deaths in scallops. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/academics-spell-out-the-reasons-for-high-domestic-gas-prices/news-story/8c182390d756ad766e3e53bed41fc422>

### Academics spell out the reasons for high domestic gas prices

Sam Duncan, *The Australian*, 26/09/2018

Domestic gas prices would be significantly lower if there was more market competition and major investment in transportation and pipeline transmission infrastructure, according to academics from Deakin Business School.

Although domestic prices have declined since peaking on the west coast in 2009 and on the east coast in 2016, they remain high relative to the LNG export market.

The export market is competitive, but the domestic market is not, says Dr Shuddha Rafiq, the deputy director of the Centre for Energy, Environment and Natural Disasters at Deakin Business School. ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/santos-aiming-for-100-million-barrels-of-oil-by-2025-20180926-p5061h.html>

### Santos aiming for 100 million barrels of oil by 2025

Cole Latimer, *SMH*, 26/09/2018

Santos is aiming to double its gas output, targeting a production rate of more than 100 million barrels of oil equivalent by 2025.

This massive expansion is driven in part by Santos' \$US2.2 billion (\$3 billion takeover of West Australian Quadrant Energy, which comes with the highly prospective WA offshore Dorado oil wells. ...

During the presentation on Wednesday, Santos rearranged its five core pillars for operation, moving the controversial New South Wales Narrabri coal seam gas project from a core focus to under a broader Queensland and NSW grouping, and turning the West Australian Quadrant assets into its own core pillar.

During the investor meeting's focus on these core pillars, Mr Gallagher did not mention the Narrabri CSG project, although he noted it as an additional growth opportunity. ...

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/5668536/narrabri-council-raises-a-dozen-concerns-with-santos-csg-project/>

### Narrabri council raises a dozen concerns with Santos CSG project in response to submission

Jamieson Murphy, *Northern Daily Leader*, 28/09/2018

Narrabri Shire Council has raised more than a dozen concerns with Santos' coal seam gas project, which it

Documents lodged with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment show Narrabri council was "not satisfied" with six aspects of the proposal, while calling for an "independent assessment" of a further eight.

A main concern for council was the lack of transparency in the project's proposed environmental monitoring system. ...

Council wants state-government agency NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to oversee the monitoring, including nearby air quality, noise, water quality and the release of treated water in to local waterways.

It also requested the results of EPA's monitoring be publicly available on its website.

Another big sticking point was the proposed rehabilitation fund. Council wants a bigger commitment from the company that "covers the true cost of rehabilitation".

Council was not satisfied with Santos' attitude towards the impact the project will have on local roads.

"The proponent does not dispute that the project will result in increased traffic generation," council's report stated.

It wants to enter in to a road maintenance agreement with Santos, "to ensure the Narrabri Shire community is not unfairly burdened by maintenance of road infrastructure as a result of the project". ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/business/group-of-companies-has-snapped-up-prospective-oil-and-gas-exploration-land-in-the-surat-basin/news-story/d6cea2e46d4adac97e5a7fc589645c01>

### Companies snap up prospective oil and gas exploration land in Queensland's Surat Basin

John McCarthy, *Courier-Mail*, 26/09/2018

Veteran investor Nick Mather's Armour Energy is among a group of companies that have snapped up prospective oil and gas exploration land in the Surat Basin following a Government tender.

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New Hope's Bridgeport, Cypress Petroleum and the little known Brisbane company Chi Oil and Gas were the successful tenderers. ...

The companies will need to negotiate land access agreements, fulfil environmental and native title requirements and be granted exploration authorities before exploration can begin.

APPEA chief executive Malcolm Roberts said it was striking that on the same day that Queensland announced more exploration, NSW had closed off 93 per cent of the state. ...

Mines and Energy Minister Anthony Lynham said more than 6600 sqkm will be explored by the companies. ...

<https://www.theherald.com.au/story/5667639/petroleum-exploration-licence-off-lake-macquarie-bought-back-cancelled/>

### **Petroleum exploration licence 461 bought back by NSW government: Minister Don Harwin**

*Matt Carr, Newcastle Herald, 26/09/2018*

The state government has bought back a gas exploration licence covering the coast off parts of Lake Macquarie to cancel it, Minister for Resources Don Harwin announced on Wednesday.

The Petroleum Exploration Licence, PEL-461, was granted in 2008 and covered about 15,000 hectares.

Its footprint fell around Wyee, Budgewoi and Swansea.

Mr Harwin said the cancellation of the licence was "bringing an end to gas exploration on the Central Coast of NSW". ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/consumer-affairs/perfect-storm-of-stuff-ups-agl-in-regulator-s-sights-after-third-violation-20180927-p506a3.html>

### **'Perfect storm of stuff-ups': AGL in regulator's sights after third violation**

*Cole Latimer, SMH, 27/09/2018*

Energy giant AGL has had its third run-in with the regulator in a fortnight, copping a \$56,000 fine for wrongly cutting off a customer's power for nearly four months.

On Monday, Victoria's Essential Services Commission (ESC) fined AGL \$3 million for failing to meet its carbon emissions obligations, and the week before, the ESC threatened to re-view its licence to operate in the state unless it provides correct customer complaints data by the end of October.

"This is a perfect storm of stuff-ups by AGL, but it's a storm of their own

making," ESC chairman Ron Ben-David said. "If they don't get themselves in order then we will take action. In the last week and a half, AGL has had three major, albeit unrelated, issues." ...

<https://www.balonnebeacon.com.au/news/mps-explore-coalface-of-csg/3535568/>

### **MPs explore coalface of CSG**

*Balonne Beacon, 28/09/2018*

A ministerial visit to gas operations in the Surat Basin was a well-timed venture on Wednesday when state MPs toured sites near Roma.

Stephen Bennett from Burnett, Rob Molhoek from Southport and Dale Last from Burdekin joined local member Ann Leahy for a tour of Santos and Senex sites to learn about the industry's environmental practices and relationship with the region.

Mr Bennett said he would be going home, back to his electorate armed with facts to start conversations about prospecting.

"We're having conversations around what extraction industries might look like around the Bundaberg/Wide Bay area," he said. ...

The MPs commended industry efforts and Ms Leahy highlighted improvements in coexistence of the industries. ...

"We know the gas is there and can be utilised for the next few decades but we have to make sure we look after agriculture because it will be there after gas as well.

"As legislators we need to be listening to both sides of the story and I think that's one of the things I've said is that 'yes, we talk to the gas companies but we also talk to the land owners as well.'" ...

"We drive around Roma and we see success, we see vibrancy, we see sustainable businesses operating, but more importantly the employment and the gross domestic product that is coming out of this industry. ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/terrible-rising-gas-output-lifts-australia-s-greenhouse-gas-emissions-20180928-p506q9.html>

### **'Terrible': Rising gas output lifts Australia's greenhouse gas emissions**

*Peter Hannam, SMH, 28/09/2018*

Australia's greenhouse gas emissions have continued to climb, reaching the highest levels on a quarterly basis since 2010, led by a surge in gas production.

For the 12 months to March 31 2018, emissions totalled 529.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent, up 1.3 per cent from a year earlier, the Environment Department said ... Fugitive emissions, mostly from the gas sector, jumped 13.7 per cent. ...

Adam Bandt, the Greens climate spokesman, said the timing of the data release was aimed at minimising attention.

"Dumping this terrible news on Grand Final eve is a disgrace," Mr Bandt said. "Pollution is going up, the government boasts it has no renewables policy and global warming is getting worse." ...

Kelly O'Shanassy, Australian Conservation Foundation's Chief Executive Officer, said it was "frankly embarrassing that climate pollution continues to rise in a wealthy country like Australia". ...

## **IMPORT INSANITY**

<http://mpnews.com.au/2018/09/24/agl-reviews-power-discount-offer/>

### **AGL reviews power discount offer**

*Keith Platt, Mornington Peninsula News, 24/09/2018*

Power company AGL is considering bringing forward its offer of discounts for businesses along a proposed gas pipeline between Crib Point and Pakenhams.

The pipeline is an essential part of AGL's plan to moor a 300 metre long floating gas terminal at Crib Point to process imported liquefied natural gas (LNG). ...

AGL senior manager – project engagement Kelly Parkinson has told The News that the company "provides a community offer in every community where we operate". ...

"In terms of Crib Point, the full details for the offer have yet to be decided. The offer would not usually be made available until a final investment decision is made but we are reviewing this to see if the offer can be brought forward." ...

The review of the discount offer comes as state planning minister Richard Wynne is deciding on the need for AGL and the pipeline layer APA Transmission to undertake full environmental studies into the effects of the gas terminal project at Crib Point. ...



AGL shareholders had to negotiate a crowd of Crib Point protesters at the company's Melbourne AGM last week. Photo: Save Westernport

<https://www.afr.com/business/energy/electricity/agl-energys-brett-redman-sticks-with-liddell-coal-plant-closure-plans-20180924-h15th4>

### AGL Energy's Brett Redman sticks with Liddell coal plant closure plans

Angela Macdonald-Smith & Ben Potter, AFR, 26/09/2018

AGL Energy interim chief executive Brett Redman is pushing ahead with the company's controversial plan to shut the Liddell coal power plant in 2022 in defiance of the federal government but held out an olive branch, saying AGL wants a co-operative relationship. ...

Mr Redman told shareholders at AGL's annual meeting in Melbourne that the strategy to shut the ageing generator and eventually cease coal power generation is driven by safety and carbon risks and later told reporters the company continuously reviews its plans but there was no change to the scheduled date for Liddell's closure. ...

But the board endured two hours of questioning on its plans to build a liquefied natural gas import terminal at Crib Point in Westernport Bay, an area environmental groups say is too sensitive for such a development because it would threaten whales, dolphins and the ecologically significant Ramsar Wetlands.

Shareholders had to negotiate a crowd of 50 to 100 protesters outside the meeting venue, opposing AGL's plan to start importing gas through Crib Point in Victoria's Western Port.

Environment Victoria chief Mark Wakeham said the group opposed the LNG import terminal because it would bring more carbon-intensive gas to Victoria than the gas from the Bass Strait that the state has long relied on, which does not need to be processed and shipped. ...

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/protesters-descend-on-melb-agl-meeting-over-gas-terminal/video/8cc5b0a12369cf65cc80ff56a1adafb7>

### Protesters descend on Melb AGL meeting over gas terminal

AAP, Daily Telegraph, 26/09/2018

Protesters gathered outside the AGL annual shareholder meeting in Melbourne to oppose the energy company's plans for a floating gas processing factory in Victoria. Environment Victoria chief executive Mark Wakeham, speaking with AAP, says the terminal goes against AGL's representation as smart and cleaner energy provider. Save Westernport co-founder Julia Stockigt, also speaking to AAP, says there is no guarantee the plans will reduce gas prices for Australians currently experiencing rocketing power prices. ...

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 with your comments & tips

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/agl-steps-up-drive-to-develop-australias-first-lng-import-facility/news-story/0ba948a609b-c1d5933753d79faad9567?login=1>

### AGL steps up drive to develop Australia's first LNG import facility

Perry Williams, The Australian, 27/09/2018

AGL Energy has defended its plan to develop Australia's first LNG import facility in Victoria as a necessary move to boost gas supplies for the domestic market before a forecast supply crunch in 2021.

The power giant's annual meeting yesterday attracted dozens of protesters outside the Melbourne venue and a barrage of questions from shareholders about the impact of its Crib Point gas import scheme on an environmentally sensitive area. ...

## THE LINC STINK

<https://www.chinchillanews.com.au/news/taxpayers-to-foot-linc-clean-up-bill/3536351/>

### Taxpayers to foot Linc clean-up bill

Amani Vassilou & Brooke Duncan, Chinchilla News, 28/09/2018

A new High Court decision has meant the State Government – and ultimately taxpayers – will have to foot the clean-up bill from the Linc Energy environmental disaster, which could run into the millions.

The decision on September 19, rejected the government's attempt to overturn a ruling from March that found Linc liquidators were not liable for the clean-up costs at their infamous Chinchilla site

Earlier this year, the underground coal gasification company was fined \$4.5 million after being found guilty of five counts of wilfully and unlawfully causing environmental harm between 2007 and 2013. ...

For Environmental Defenders Office chief executive Jo Bragg, the decision is concerning because it means "there is potentially greater pressure on the public purse to clean up after mining companies go broke". ...

Tom Marland, the principal of Marland Law - a firm representing landholders near the former Linc Energy site in relation to a potential class action - agreed, saying the decision leaves the State Government short millions of dollars in penalties for environmental damage.

"It means Queensland taxpayers' money will need to be used for the costs of cleaning up the contamination, to go with the money already spent in the

unsuccessful appeal in the High Court," Mr Marland said.

The decision, he said, also had ramifications for future cases.

"The High Court's decision sets a dangerous precedent that a company can simply declare bankruptcy to avoid facing their obligations under Environmental Authorities," Mr Marland said.

But for Chinchilla and Hopeland landholders, the damage has already been done, regardless of whether Linc liquidators are held liable.

Hopeland landholder of 40 years Michael Tuohy said the saga had devalued his property to become "virtually worthless". ...

## FOSSIL POLITICS

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-24/lobbying-gifts-jobs-relationships-and-donations-affect-democracy/10282852>

### The influence game: How to access power in Australia

Margot O'Neill, ABC, 24/09/2018

In the past three years, nearly 70 per cent of federal ministers and shadow ministers have accepted corporate hospitality, which can be anything from a lavish lunch, to tickets to the AFL grand final, to airline lounge memberships.

More than a quarter of senior and assistant ministers took jobs with special interests after leaving politics, many in the industries they used to regulate.

And major business donors to political parties in government are more likely to get access to senior ministers.

Australian politics has a money problem," a new report from the Grattan Institute detailing these findings says. ...

"Powerful groups have triumphed over the national interest in many recent debates."

The Grattan Institute report, *Who's in the Room? Access and influence in Australian politics*, found multi-billion-dollar industries whose profits can be heavily affected by government regulation, such as mining, property, gambling, finance and transport, seem to get the most meetings. ...



**The Grattan Institute report, *Who's in the Room? Access and influence in Australian politics*, can be downloaded here:**

<https://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/908-Who-s-in-the-room-Access-and-influence-in-Australian-politics.pdf>

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/revolving-doors-gold-en-escalators-and-the-demise-of-climate-and-energy-policy-53513/>

### Revolving doors, golden escalators and the demise of climate and energy policy

Giles Parkinson, *RenewEconomy*, 24/09/2018

Here are two questions that go to the state of Australia's policy making and the health of its democracy – and are particularly relevant as we watch, in horror, the course that climate and energy policy is taking in this country.

Australia's policy making is dominated – as we suspected – by the visible, but mostly invisible hand of vested interests and lobbyists. The extent of this is revealed by a new report from the Grattan Institute.

The report reveals that access and influence are heavily skewed towards the businesses and unions that have the most to gain (and lose) from public policy, and how vulnerable it is to regulatory capture.

And here is where we get the two Orwellian responses to two crucial questions highlighted by Kate Griffiths, one of the co-authors of the report.

Q1: What is the penalty if you are caught lobbying on behalf of a company and/or industry, without being registered as a lobbyist.

Answer: De-registration. The penalty for acting as a lobbyist with registration is to lose the registration that you didn't have.

Q2: What is the penalty if you are a

former government minister who has left parliament and you are discovered lobbying in the area of your former portfolio?

Answer: The penalty for a former minister acting as a lobbyist in his former portfolio is the loss of ministerial duties you no longer have.

Absurd? As Griffiths notes: "It is as ridiculous as it sounds."

And it may explain how it is that Australian politics, and policies, are so corrupted. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/sep/23/one-in-four-australian-ministers-go-on-to-work-for-lobbyists-or-special-interests-study-finds>

### One in four Australian ministers go on to work for lobbyists or special interests, study finds

Christopher Knaus, *The Guardian*, 24/09/2018

More than one in four federal ministers have gone on to work for a lobbyist firm, peak body or other special interest since 1990, a major new study has found. ...

The report finds that Australia's policymaking process is vulnerable to being hijacked by vested interests at the expense of the public.

The Grattan Institute tracked the career of 191 ministers and assistant ministers who have left parliament since 1990, using news reports, Wikipedia and LinkedIn to track their subsequent work. About 28% ended up in lobbyist firms, peak bodies, big business or consulting firms.

# News this week ... from previous page

The Grattan Institute researcher and report author Danielle Wood said the movement was not inherently bad. But, she said, depending on the timing, it allowed former ministers to use inside government information and special access to benefit their new employer. It also called into question – in the public's mind, at least – their decisions in government. ...

[https://reneweconomy.com.au/trevor-st-bakers-coal-power-blues-18000/?utm\\_source=RE+Daily+News-letter&utm\\_campaign=b39c6cf031-EMAIL\\_CAM-PAIGN\\_2018\\_09\\_25\\_11\\_29&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_46a1943223-b39c6cf031-40461137](https://reneweconomy.com.au/trevor-st-bakers-coal-power-blues-18000/?utm_source=RE+Daily+News-letter&utm_campaign=b39c6cf031-EMAIL_CAM-PAIGN_2018_09_25_11_29&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-b39c6cf031-40461137)

## Trevor St Baker's coal power blues

Bob Burton, *RenewEconomy*, 26/09/2018

Trevor St Baker has a decades-long history in Australia's coal power sector and has emerged as one of the most prominent opponents in the ranks of the power industry of a rapid transition to greater renewables generation.

As opposition to renewables from Australia's largest electricity utilities has faded, St Baker has emerged as one of the few dissenting voices left.

Most recently, St Baker's growing profile has landed him a role as a guest speaker at the Liberal and National

Party's pro-coal Monash Forum meeting on October 16. ...

St Baker morphed his energy consultancy into ERM Power, a private power company. ... Publicly available data reveals that ERM Power has donated at least \$197,640 to political parties over the last decade, with the Liberal National Party (LNP) in Queensland accounting for over half.

While the bulk of the donations went to conservative parties, the Labor Party in Queensland, NSW and nationally landed just over \$80,000. (Since 2013–14 ERM Power has made no donations over the disclosure threshold.)

Helping to guide ERM Power's political strategy was SAS Consulting Group, a lobbying firm which boasts Larry Anthony, the former National Party member in the House of Representatives for the northern NSW seat of Richmond as its director. (Larry Anthony is the son of former National Party politician, Doug Anthony, who was Deputy Prime Minister under Malcolm Fraser.) ...

Over the last few years, St Baker or his companies have been putting their hands up for every near-dead coal plant around the country. ...

Ahead of the final internal Liberal Party negotiations over the ill-fated National Energy Guarantee a little over a year later, St Baker proclaimed that if the government undertook to underwrite the costs of new 'baseload' power generation, his company would be interested in a new 800–1000 MW coal plant possibly at Vales Point.

But for all his business savvy and political connections, St Baker has missed the mark when it comes to renewables. ...

As a private owner of a large old coal plant with an uncertain future, St Baker's deep conservative political roots, well-connected lobbyists and generous donations to political parties may well yield little benefit.

As St Baker seeks loans worth up to \$200 million in debt funding to buy out his partner's half share of the Vales Point Power Station, the prospect that renewables could grow far faster than expected may well shatter the dreams of one of Big Coal's last true believers.

• Bob Burton is the Editor of *CoalWire*, a weekly bulletin on global coal industry developments published by *CoalSwarm*.

FFB

## Interview: CSG on the Darling Downs

Karen Auty talks about the CSG water that goes into the Chinchilla drinking water supply, the health impacts on gasfield residents, and the visits by politicians and government reps who then do nothing to help... and much more.

### Recommended listening!

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



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

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

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

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

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<https://www.thebentleyeffect.com/>

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