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KNITTING NANNAS AGAINST GAS

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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Fair dinkum fail: 135 fossil breakdowns

The Australia Institute Climate & Energy Program has released its Gas & Coal Watch 2018 review, which tracks unscheduled breakdowns in gas and coal plants across the National Energy Market (NEM).

“Our research demonstrates the threat to the reliability of electricity supply in the NEM. As we’ve seen this Summer, extreme heat events are increasing as our already antiquated coal fleet continues to age,” said Mark Ogge, Principal Advisor at The Australia Institute.

“It is clear Australia’s gas and coal power fleet, some of which pre-dates colour television, failed to deliver ‘reliable fair dinkum’ electricity in 2018.

“Our research showed, however, that it is not just the age of Australia’s coal fleet that is causing it to fail. In fact, per gigawatt capacity it was the new so-called “HELE” coal plants which broke down more often than their ageing black coal counterparts – coal-fired power is simply unreliable in the heat.

“Solar power has consistently stepped up as gas and coal plants failed. While fossil fuel generation becomes less reliable in the heat, on hot days Australians can count solar power for a consistent supply of electricity.

“Extreme heat leads to peak demands but also peak solar energy. If commentators are going to question solar energy reliability ‘when the sun doesn’t shine’ then Australia ought to take advantage of when it does, and when the grid needs it most.

“Last summer, solar significantly reduced and delayed the levels of peak demand by many hours, which is crucial in avoiding electricity shortfalls and keeping prices down.



AGL’s Liddell power station is one of the nation’s most unreliable, with 11 breakdowns in 2018. It is scheduled for closure in 2022. Photo: AGL

“Hundreds of millions of tonnes of greenhouse gas pollution is pumped into the atmosphere every year by Australia’s coal and gas power plants, fuelling global warming and increasing extreme heat, drought and bushfires that are devastating vast areas of Australia now.

“It is far from ideal that Australia’s National Electricity Market relies on emergency reserves from outside the market to get through the Australian summer. This simply drives electricity prices up, without addressing the underlying systemic issues causing these breakdowns.”

• *The report can be downloaded here:*

http://www.tai.org.au/sites/default/files/P652%20Gas%20Coal%20Watch%202018%20%5BWEB%5D_0.pdf

Key findings:

- The Australia Institute’s Gas & Coal Watch found 135 breakdowns at gas and coal plants in 2018, equivalent to one breakdown every 2.7 days
- 118 breakdowns of coal power plants, equivalent to one breakdown every 3.1 days
- Per gigawatt capacity, brown coal plants suffered more than twice as many breakdowns as black coal plants.
- New technology black coal plants (so-called “HELE” plants) suffered more breakdowns per gigawatt than their ageing black coal counterparts.

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• **P3: IEFFA supports coal prohibition bill**

• **P7: Stop Adani Convoy to set off in April**

• **P16: BREAKING: Mine rejected due to climate**

NSW gas & coal power: 27 breakdowns in 2018

NSW suffered 27 major breakdowns at gas and coal fired power-plants in 2018 – more than one a fortnight – removing hundreds of megawatts of energy from the grid suddenly and without warning.

The Australia Institute Climate & Energy Program's *NSW Gas & Coal Watch* analysis of 2018, tracks unscheduled breakdowns in gas and coal plants across the National Energy Market (NEM).

"NSW's aging coal generators are a threat to the reliability of the state's energy system – this should be a key concern for policy makers," says Rod Campbell, Research Director at The Australia Institute.

"Every time gas or coal generators break down, hundreds of megawatts of capacity are instantaneously removed from the grid without warning. This puts undue pressure on the electricity system, risking blackouts and pushing up power prices.

"Gas and coal generation is least reliable in the heat – which is often when we need it most. With heatwaves increasing dramatically as a result of global warming, reliance on these outdated technologies will be an ever-increasing liability for NSW.

"Coal plants in NSW pump around 50 million tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere every year, fuelling the ever-increasing heatwaves that are causing these breakdowns in the first place. It's an on-going and vicious cycle that must end.

Key findings:

- NSW gas & coal fired power stations broke down 27 times during 2018 – more than one break down every fortnight.
- Every coal power station in NSW experienced at least one breakdown.
- The most breakdowns were experienced at the aging Liddell (11 breakdowns) and Vales Point (5 breakdowns) power stations.
- The new and supposedly 'state of the art' Tallawarra gas power station experienced three breakdowns.
- During the June "energy crisis" last year, over half of NSW's coal and gas generators were offline while wholesale electricity prices spiked to around \$2400 per MWh five times in just one week.

"NSW lags behind the country, and much of the world, in the transition to clean energy. The state has some serious catching up to do and addressing the unreliability of gas and coal fired power will be one of the first challenges.

"Policy makers need to respond to this challenge and manage NSW's transition to cleaner, more reliable and more affordable power."

• The report can be downloaded here:

<http://www.tai.org.au/sites/default/files/P651%20The%20heat%20goes%20on%20-%20NSW%20Gas%20%26%20Coal%20Watch%20Wrapup%20%5BWEB%5D.pdf>



APPEA appoints new chief executive

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) has announced the appointment of Andrew McConville as APPEA's new chief executive.

McConville's appointment follows the resignation of Dr Malcolm Roberts, who has been chief executive since June 2015.

McConville most recently worked in Switzerland as global head of external affairs and communications for agricultural tech company Syngenta.

He has also worked in senior corporate affairs and management roles in the banking and food sectors as well as



New APPEA chief Andrew McConville.

being a former policy adviser to the Victorian Government.



Minerals Council jumped the gun

A premature attack from the NSW Minerals Council has fallen flat, with Lock the Gate free to continue running a television advertisement in the Hunter region urging for farmland to be protected from coal mining.

The ad, which began running on local television stations last month, calls for the productive farmland of the Hunter Valley to be protected from coal mining, protections for which the Alliance has campaigned for close to a decade.

The NSW Minerals Council accused Lock the Gate of breaching NSW electoral law by publishing the ad, but Lock the Gate referred the matter to the NSW Electoral Commission which has confirmed it is satisfied the ad does not constitute electoral expenditure.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Georgina Woods said, "Lock the Gate has worked with people in the Hunter Valley for years advocating for the farmland and water resources to be protected from mining.

"This ad is part of that ongoing work, which will continue for as long as there are unbalanced laws that put farmland at risk, and we are pleased that the NSW Electoral Commission has reviewed it and felt satisfied that it does not constitute electoral expenditure.

"This advertisement is not about a political party: it is about protection of farmland from coal mining and advertisements like this are needed as long as this precious asset is at risk.

"The Minerals Council attack on us has fallen flat and they would be better off spending their time policing their own member groups who frequently breach environmental laws, instead of pursuing misleading claims against farmers and communities.

"We remain committed to fully complying with all relevant laws and we only wish the mining industry would hold itself to the same standard," she said.

• The ad can be viewed here:

<https://vimeo.com/312445524>



IEEFA supports Greens coal prohibition bill

By Tim Buckley, IEEFA

(Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis)

Australia continues to blindly court local and multinational mining companies with one of the largest untapped thermal coal deposits in the world, despite the global pipeline of new coal-fired power plants continuing to shrink and global warming becoming blatantly obvious due to extreme record-breaking weather events.

Beneath the Galilee Basin in Central Queensland, Australia, is a 500 km-long measure of low energy, high ash coal which six mining entities want to get their hands on, including Adani's proposed Carmichael mine, the Chinese Meijin Energy Group MacMines' China Stone, Hancock Prospecting's Alpha, Alpha West and Kevin's Corner, the South Galilee Coal Project (SGCP), Australian businessman Clive Palmer's long delayed China First, and Resolve Coal's Hyde Park proposal.

An Australian government politician, the Greens Senator for Queensland, Larissa Waters introduced a bill to Parliament on December 5, 2018, prohibiting any thermal coal development of the Galilee Basin, prior to mining licences being issued (Adani has been issued a mining lease although it is the only one).

Bill currently open for consultation

Currently open for consultation, IEEFA notes the Galilee Basin (Coal Prohibition Bill 2018) is consistent with global coal forecasts, the shrinkage of the global pipeline, and the movement of global financial institutions away from thermal coal.

Global forecasters have predicted the seaborne thermal coal market will shrink by more than half within two decades if countries, corporates and financiers around the world collectively act on the Paris Agreement. Modelling a stagnant outlook for coal to 2022, the International Energy Agency (IEA) acknowledges global coal use likely peaked in 2014, reflected in Australia where thermal coal exports peaked in 2016 and are now likely in a long term and ultimately terminal decline.

While global coal plant capacity has risen over the last decade, the less well documented half of the story is that global coal plant utilisation has



Galilee Basin coal export projects. Map: galileebasin.org

dramatically declined. The capacity utilisation rate of the global coal-fired power plant fleet hit a new record low in 2018, exceeding the record low set in 2017, and set previously in 2016, and the record low set every year this past decade.

IEEFA notes the global seaborne thermal coal market is not likely to reverse the inevitable technology, finance, cost and policy-driven direction of a slow and ultimately terminal decline in coal volumes. The technology disruption of global electricity markets is well entrenched and unstoppable.

The global market is now pricing low energy, high ash thermal coal exports at an unprecedented discount compared to Newcastle's – the world's largest export port in Australia – benchmark for higher energy content thermal coal. During 2018 the price differential between high energy 6,000kcal coal and the lower energy coal reached a record high. In Australia, the Newcastle benchmark for 5,500kcal coal with 20% ash declined over 2018 and exited the year at just US\$57/t.

Galilee: low energy, high ash

Australia has historically produced high energy, low ash coal from existing regions, and this remains in strong demand. Critically, at the other end of the spectrum is the low energy, high ash coal in the Galilee Basin which is inferior to the Australian / Indonesian / South African / Columbian export

market average. This polarity is a key reason not to develop the low-grade resource in the Galilee Basin.

IEEFA estimates that Adani's proposed Carmichael coal of 4,950kcal energy and 26% raw ash content would currently be valued at a 60.5% discount to the Newcastle 6,000kcal benchmark, suggesting a current price of ~US\$39.50/t. (See Figure 3)

Mining operators at the Galilee Basin could wash the raw coal, marginally reducing the ash content and boosting the energy content, but this would significantly increase production costs and would be subject to seasonal variations including water availability.

Of concern to the drought-stricken Queensland community are the severe water draw-down risks posed by the cumulative impact of multiple, huge coal mining plans for the Galilee Basin. The Adani Group alone wants to extract up to 12.5-billion-litres per year to 2077 from the Galilee Basin's Bellando River for use at their proposed Carmichael mine, with the maximum total water potentially doubling this amount when coal "dewatering" is included.

There are also massive financial risks from opening an entirely new coal basin. The high stranded asset risk associated with the Galilee Basin's remote location combined with the low energy of coal and the need to develop dedicated rail, port, power and road

IEEFA supports Green Party's Galilee coal ban

• Continued from p3

infrastructure stands in stark contrast to the high-energy coal found in other Australian coal basins already in production in close proximity to ports.

The inability to find global financial sector support for the Galilee Basin's investment proposals stems from the rapid cost declines of renewable energy technology and the very clear message of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlighting the need for countries to virtually cease global coal use by 2050.

There is also an ongoing and accelerating global shift away from financing thermal coal and coal-fired power plants.

Australian banks have all made strong commitments to reduce funding for thermal coal mining and coal fired power plants, recognising the global financial risks of climate change. Even China has ruled out funding Adani's Carmichael mine proposal.

Indeed, the progressive global coal-fired power divestment announcements during 2018 were nothing short of staggering.

New thermal coal exits were announced by Japan's (Australia's largest thermal coal export destination) Dai-ichi Life and Nippon Life. Japanese banks also changed their policies to exclude all lending to out-dated coal-fired power plant technologies, while nine proposed new coal-fired power units have cancelled since 2012, including a 2,000 megawatt plant last week.

South Korea's investment in new thermal coal mines also shifted dramatically with the government committing to reduce reliance on thermal coal while progressively decarbonising the economy.

Globally, eighteen major banks divested from coal in 2018 alone, including Standard Chartered, Generali of Italy, HSBC, Hannover Re, Swiss Re, Munich Re, Barclays Bank UK, Export Development Canada and ING (to name a few), highlighting the urgency in which

Any capital development in the Galilee Basin is likely to elevate water risks for local communities, become a stranded asset and create significant financial risks for Australia.

global financial institutions are pivoting away from coal and boosting lending to cheaper renewables and other low emissions alternatives.

Opening a new, low energy thermal coal basin is clearly moving diametrically in the opposite direction to Australia's Paris commitments,

global thermal coal forecasts, and banks and insurer divestment trends.

Rather than sinking more capital into expanding thermal coal supply even as demand declines, Australia should better optimise existing ventures while investing in new low emissions renewable industries of the future, to best transition the Australian economy and limit our collective exposure to stranded assets.

Any capital development in the Galilee Basin is likely to elevate water risks for local communities, become a stranded asset and create significant financial risks for Australia. Absent a detailed, independent cumulative impact analysis showing the consequences of developing up to 300Mtpa of new thermal coal mines in the Galilee Basin, this isolated, marginal coal basin should remain untapped.

• **Tim Buckley is IEEFA's director of energy finance studies, Australasia.**

Read IEEFA's full submission to the Australian Parliament here:

http://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Galilee-Basin-Coal-Prohibition-Bill-2018_IEEFA-Submission.pdf

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NT to be fracked for oil?

Resource companies, including Origin Energy, intend to frack for oil in the Northern Territory's Beetaloo Basin, but the risks of shale oil fracking there have not been considered by a recent inquiry.

Jesse Hancock, part of the Lock the Gate network in Alice Springs, said the scope of the Pepper Inquiry, used by the NT Government to justify removing the fracking moratorium last year, did not specifically include what's being described by companies as "liquids rich gas".

"Fracking companies can call it by any name they want but it's shale oil, and oil presents a much greater risk to communities, especially in terms of transportation," Mr Hancock said.

But Origin Energy told the *Katharine Times* the group had simply misunderstood the phrase "liquids rich gas".

"Origin is not drilling or fracking for oil. There is no basis to these claims," Origin senior external affairs manager Chris Zipf said.

"Liquids rich gas' is gas that presents in the form of a liquid as it comes to the surface as pressure and temp changes – not oil.

"The rigorous processes and controls we have in place – including those being applied following the Pepper Inquiry – are no different whether the source is predominantly natural gas or 'dry gas' – or liquid rich. The liquids are the next step up in the molecule chain – ethane and propane which is LPG or bottled gas; butane which is used as fuel in lighters or condensate.

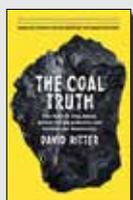
"As the gas comes towards the surface the pressure and temperature changes. The heavier molecules above methane can either stay as gas or begin to form a liquid (hence the term 'liquids rich natural gas'), which is clear and not black like oil."

There has been strong community action opposed to fracking in the NT since the moratorium was removed last year, including a territory wide day of action, and the Frack Finding Tour, which transported a busload of Traditional Owners, farmers, and tourism operators to Canberra to lobby federal politicians last year.

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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.



Doctors sound alarm over coal power air pollution in NSW

A comprehensive new report released by Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) shows NSW's air quality deteriorated markedly in 2018, overshooting the national standards several times and putting the health of people at risk, especially in parts of Sydney and in the Hunter.

The report states that fine particles, which cause the most serious health problem, exceeded the annual standard at 14 locations, up from four to six locations over the previous four years.

In Sydney this includes Parramatta North, Liverpool, Chullora, Richmond, Campbelltown and Prospect.

DEA, which is supported by medical practitioners across the nation, called on the State Government to rapidly respond to worsening air quality.

Failure to act on the evidence outlined in the report will increase heart disease, stroke, diabetes, birth weights and children's lung development.

The report makes the following key findings:

- Particle air pollution in NSW is getting worse, with many sites' annual averages for both fine and coarse particle pollution higher in 2018 than in 2017.
- Fine particles across Western Sydney and the Hunter are exacerbating entrenched poorer health in those regions with many more people exposed to air exceeding the national standards.
- Fine particles, which cause the most serious health problem, exceeded the annual standard at 14 locations, up from four to six locations over the previous four years. In Sydney this includes Parramatta North, Liverpool, Chullora, Richmond, Campbelltown and Prospect.
- The average value for fine particles across comparable monitors rose from 7.51 µg/m³ in 2017 to 7.98 µg/m³ in 2018. This is moving away from the stated national objective that all sites should be below 7 µg/m³ by 2025.
- Coarse particles exceeded the annual standard at nine locations, up from 2 locations in 2017 and none in previous years. All but one of these locations are in the Hunter Region. These sites include Singleton North West,

Muswellbrook, Mayfield and Wagga Wagga North.

Dr John Van Der Kallen, chair of DEA NSW said, "Throughout 2018 many of my patients have commented on worsening air quality which is now supported by the data.

"The NSW government has dropped the ball on dealing with air pollution, and 2018 has seen a deterioration in air quality with many monitors exceeding the NEPM national standards.

Coal mining, transport, power to blame

"Worsening air quality has occurred at the same time as an increase in electricity production from coal fired power stations such as Eraring. It is time for the government to act on pollution from coal fired power stations.

"Of the 14 monitors in the Upper Hunter, seven are now over the NEPM standard for PM10. Last year it was only two. Even in the Newcastle suburbs, Mayfield and Carrington are now over the national standard. The cumulative impacts of mining and transport of coal are being seen in a deterioration of air quality.

"There is no room for further coalmine expansion as any new projects will make air quality worse and it is already above national standards"

"In 2018, over 30 doctors requested that the Minister for the Environment, Hon. Gabrielle Upton, visit the Hunter Valley to see for herself the air quality problem however she did not visit and now the situation has worsened.

We hope the upcoming state election offers the major parties the opportunity to stand up for the health of the public."

Dr Ben Ewald, author of the report said, "Two years ago several members of Doctors for the Environment Australia took part in the government's review process called "Clean Air for NSW" but since then air quality has moved in exactly the other direction. This analysis examines the trends in the quality of our air since that review which was never finalised."

• *The report can be downloaded here:*

<https://www.dea.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Clean-Air-for-NSW-2018-Update-02-19.pdf>

Wambo mine bad for air quality

The Hunter Valley's already unacceptable air quality will reach disastrous levels should the new United Wambo coal mine be approved, according to Lock the Gate Alliance.

The Independent Planning Commission held a public meeting concerning the mine proposal at Singleton on Thursday (February 7).

The meeting came as Office of Environment and Heritage data reveals last year was the worst year for air quality since monitoring in the Hunter Valley was established.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Georgina Woods said the air shed simply could not cope with any more open cut coal mines.

"This project illustrates why we need proper cumulative impact assessment in the consideration of coal mines. People in Singleton Shire last year suffered air quality below the national standard and this mine will only add to that health burden," she said.

Air standards already breached

Ms Woods said air quality data from 2018 has been finalised and that five of the nine monitoring points near the new mine proposal were already breaching annual standards for particle pollution.

"United Wambo is also going to worsen the drawdown of two productive alluvial aquifers that other mines have already caused," she said.

"In addition to that, it will clear 250 hectares of a nationally critically endangered ecological community that other mines have been given the go-ahead to clear.

"As far as cumulative impacts go, this one is the pit that breaks the back of Hunter Valley communities, water resources and biodiversity.

"The Independent Planning Commission needs to look at this proposal in the context of the environmental and social damage that is already being inflicted on the Hunter region, and refuse to approve it."

Resource co's bankroll politicians

The latest Australian Electoral Commission donations report released this week, has once again exposed the cosy relationship between resource companies and political parties.

Among the mining and gas companies who dug deep was Adani, which donated a total of \$35,000 to the Liberal Party of the ACT, and \$15,000 to Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party.

Other major resource donors included Origin and Santos, who donated \$110,000 and \$182,000 respectively to the Liberal, National, and Labor parties.

Meanwhile, Whitehaven donated \$35,000 to the Federal Liberal Party, Glencore donated \$20,000 to Katter's Australian Party, and the Minerals Council of Australia donated a total of \$94,000 in total to the Liberal, National, and Labor parties.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Georgina Woods said mining companies were getting away with damaging communities while handing out tens of thousands of dollars to political parties that were meant to represent the people living in those communities.

She said it was even more insulting because many of those companies that made large donations did not pay a single dollar in tax.

"Santos and Origin paid no corporate tax despite making large income from harming land and water with their activities. They paid no tax, and yet make these political donations, short-changing the public both times," she said.

"Coal companies Adani and Whitehaven also paid nothing, while Glencore paid a minuscule amount of just \$1,000 on an income of more than \$1.5 billion.

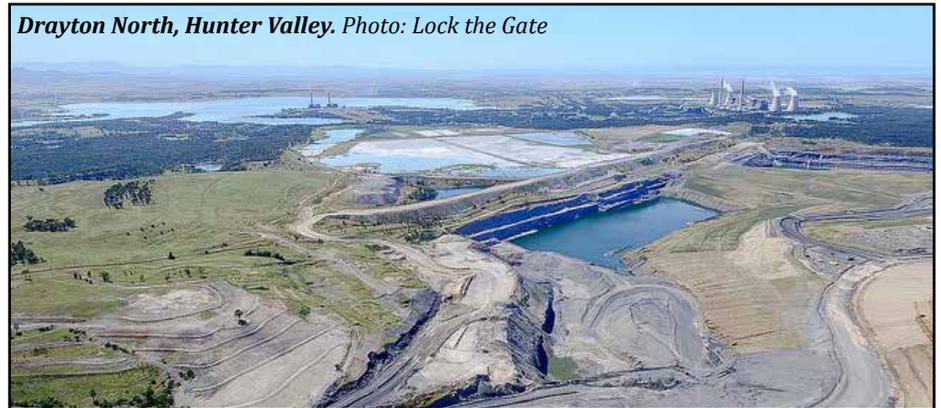
"These companies have the cash to splash to keep politicians in their thrall.

"The system is clearly broken when big mining can make these massive donations while destroying communities, land and water across the country."

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Coal: Hunter Valley needs to move on

Drayton North, Hunter Valley. Photo: Lock the Gate



A new report dramatically predicts that early action to diversify the economy and invest in regional development could ensure the Hunter Valley avoids the worst economic impacts of a decline in coal mining as the world moves towards a renewable energy future.

The report, 'Weathering the storm: The case for transformation in the Hunter Valley', was written by researchers at the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and commissioned by Lock the Gate.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Georgina Woods said politicians and other community leaders could no longer take a business as usual approach to the coal mining industry in the Hunter.

"Our elected representatives need to be up front with residents – the time to diversify our economy is now. If we fail to do so, it will be at our peril," she said.

"Mining represents 31% of all jobs in Muswellbrook and 41% of jobs in Singleton. This makes the two shires vulnerable to changes in global coal demand and markets, particularly in Asia, where close to 90% of the coal mined in the Hunter is burned.

"When coal prices and demand fluctuated from highs of \$166 in 2008 to lows of \$83 in 2014, employment in the coal mining industry fell by 25% over three years – this showed how vulnerable these communities are."

The report uses the International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook forecasts for world coal demand and production under a Sustainable Development Scenario (SDS).

The SDS assumes that Paris Agreement climate change goals are met along with ensuring universal access to modern energy services. NSW and Federal Governments have both committed to

meeting Paris Agreement goals.

"The report outlines a scenario where if we continue with business as usual, employment in the Hunter coal industry would fall by 5,199 jobs by 2040 and wages and salaries by \$705M, as the world acts on climate change," Ms Woods said.

"Expert analysis shows that lack of economic diversity currently in Muswellbrook and Singleton means that workers will not be able to move into alternative employment while remaining in the region.

"There is hope, but we need our politicians to be upfront with the public and to provide support to start diversifying the economy now.

"Previous examples of rapid structural adjustment around the world and in Australia have shown that it is absolutely crucial to acknowledge and prepare for change in advance, and for governments to provide substantial financial support.

"The UWS analysis also identifies a positive scenario for the Hunter if we take early action and diversify - 595 more jobs could be created than will be lost from coal mining and local wages and salaries could increase by \$315 million to 2040.

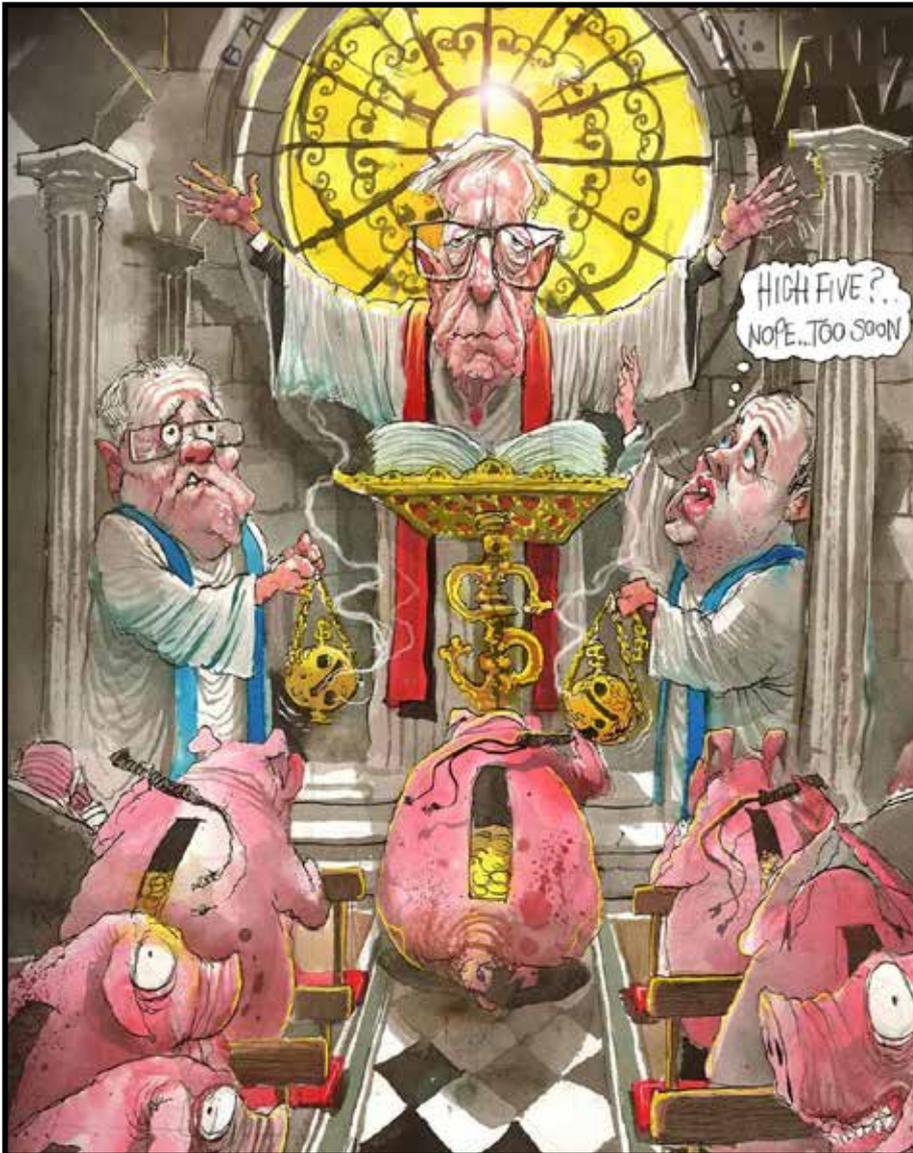
"The community has been calling for a plan to diversify the Hunter and prepare for coal's decline and this new analysis confirms that is the only path that can protect the Hunter, it's workers and communities.

"This change is happening now, and we can either adapt, prepare and prosper, or rest on our laurels and see the Hunter's economy crumble before us."

• **The full report can be seen here:**

https://www.lockthegate.org.au/weathering_the_storm_transforming_the_hunter_valley

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

Stop Adani Convoy to set off in April

Bob Brown's Stop Adani Convoy is scheduled to depart from Hobart on April 17.

"Citizens from around the nation will join and travel together in convoy, with a vanguard of electric vehicles, to the mine region west of Mackay," he said.

"Our aim is to have political parties and candidates commit to stopping the mine using the power the Australian electorate gives them. This is a vote-galvanising environmental issue like no other since the Franklin Dam controversy in the run to the 1983 election. It is going to be huge."

The convoy will hold public meetings and rallies along the route, before arriving at Bowen in North Qld. These events will be co-hosted with Frontline Action on Coal and Sea Shepherd.

The draft itinerary includes stops in: Melbourne • Albury • Canberra • Sydney • Newcastle • Byron Bay • Brisbane • Maleny • Hervey Bay • Mackay • Bowen.

See: <https://www.bobbrown.org.au>


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Inside the news

As FFB was about to publish today, welcome **breaking news** emerged: **Rocky Hill coal mine** near Gloucester will not be built following a **landmark ruling** in the Land and Environment Court. The *Sydney Morning Herald's Peter Hannam* reported that Justice Preston noted "significant **adverse social impacts** on the community" from the proposed mine but – in a **court-first in Australia** – highlighted the **climate impacts of coal mining**. See more on p16.

The ruling will send shivers down the spines of **Adani** and other **Galilee Basin** coal mine proponents, as the **war of words** over the Carmichael Mine continues (p8-10).

Adani chief **Lucas Dow** continued to **bluster** at the Queensland government, and the company's Abbot Point coal terminal **spilled** more **dirty water** into adjacent wetlands during unprecedented flooding. Meanwhile, former Greens leader **Bob Brown** announced his **'Stop Adani Convoy'** will travel from Hobart to the coal port of Bowen on the Queensland coast over a fortnight, starting from April 17.

There was some **good news** this week – an ANU study has found Australia's **electricity sector is on track** to meet Paris Agreement targets five years ahead of time, thanks to the installation of **renewables** (p13).

Deputy PM and Nats leader **Michael McCormack**, while viewing **dead fish** near **Menindee** said (p13), "We don't want to go down a path of renewables, which is not going to solve anything, apart from de-industrialising Australia ... and push electricity bills into the unaffordable state."

But Nationals NSW Primary Industries Minister, **Niall Blair**, says the **impact of climate change on farming is now undeniable**, conceding his views differ from "many of my colleagues" (p16).

The need for effective climate action is exquisitely expressed by **Richard Flanagan** in *The Guardian* (p15), and **FFB** recommends you click the link and **read** the full article.

The devastating and unprecedented **climate disasters** of this summer are finally changing some minds.

In the news this week

This week Fossil Fool Bulletin has summarised 28,450 words of news for your convenience. [Click on the links](#) to view original articles. (Subscriptions may be required)

THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/un-rebuked-by-traditional-owners-over-meddling-in-adani-coalmine/news-story/ead4ef87342338fa5a7624cf8d9e07f6>

UN rebuked by traditional owners over meddling in Adani coalmine

Jared Owens, *The Australian*, 02/02/2019

Aboriginal traditional owners have demanded an apology from the UN over its intervention in the Adani coalmine row on behalf of an American green lobby group.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination wrote to Australia in December to warn that the indigenous land-use agreement overwhelmingly approved by Wangan and Jagalingou clan members in 2016 could violate a racial discrimination treaty.

The committee had been lobbied by Earth Justice, a US-based environmental law firm, on behalf of Adrian Burragubba, who leads a minority group of W&J people opposed to the mine planned for Queensland's Galilee Basin.

In a rebuke to the UN, traditional owner [Les Tilley] wrote back on Thursday to insist that the majority of clan members still supported the agreement with Adani, which included \$250 million of economic opportunities, guaranteed jobs for W&J people, and education and training packages. ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/adani-donates-to-liberal-party-and-one-nation-but-snubs-labor/news-story/be12f0f952376a052e4e0e198e7f348a>

Adani donates to Liberal Party and One Nation but snubs Labor

Steven Scott, *Courier-Mail*, 02/02/2019

Indian mining giant Adani donated \$35,000 to the Liberal Party and \$15,000 to One Nation but shunned Labor last year as it tried to secure support for its Carmichael mine in central Queensland. ...



Chris Bowen is leading the push in Labor NOT to #StopAdani. He's also didn't want these #GreyPower champions at his fundraising lunch in Melbourne oh Thursday. Photo: Grey Power Climate Protectors

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/adani-seeks-regulatory-approval-for-160mw-solar-farm-in-whyalla-48643/>

Adani seeks regulatory approval for 160MW solar farm in Whyalla

Giles Parkinson, *Renew Economy*, 31/01/2019

Adani, the Indian energy giant fighting a major public backlash over its proposed mega coal mine in Queensland's Galilee Basin, is also pushing ahead with another major solar project, and has sought regulatory approval for the construction of a 160MW solar farm in Whyalla.

The Whyalla solar farm will be located close to the Whyalla Steelworks, bought by UK billionaire Sanjeev Gupta, who intends to construct 1GW of solar and storage to reduce the plant's energy costs, and for other major energy users in the state. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/anti-adani-mine-activists-spitting-on-native-land-rights/news-story/4e200aa43b738e9c0fd40683f592e44>

Anti-Adani mine activists 'spitting' on native land rights

Jared Owens, *The Australian*, 04/02/2018

Resources Minister Matt Canavan has accused white activists of "spitting in the face" of native title by campaigning to override the wishes of indigenous owners who have voted overwhelmingly to host Adani's proposed coalmine.

The minister's comments came after Wangan and Jagalingou people demanded an apology from a UN committee that urged the Morrison government to consider suspending the project without first consulting the traditional owners. ...

STOP WATER MINING
THE NEXT RESOURCES BATTLE



<https://www.afr.com/news/politics/townsville-floods-hits-queensland-exports-abbot-point-terminal-closed-20190204-h1atk2>

Townsville floods hits Queensland exports, Abbot Point terminal closed

Mark Ludlow & Luke Housego 04/02/2019

One of Queensland's biggest coal export terminals, Abbot Point, has been closed due to the Townsville floods with concerns the monsoon-like conditions will move further south and affect coal production in the Bowen Basin. ...

Abbot Point coal terminal, south of Townsville near Bowen, has been shut, with heavy rain and winds making it impossible to export coal to waiting ships off the coast.

A spokeswoman for Adani Australia, which owns the terminal which is used by big miners such as BHP and Glencore, said the quantity of the rain, which had soaked existing coal stockpiles at the port, and dangerous conditions off-shore had resulted in it being closed until the weather improved. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/un-to-be-told-stop-fighting-adani/news-story/5ccac35e0962b8c5ae98c31e6d65d09>

UN to be told: stop fighting Adani

Jared Owens, *The Australian*, 05/02/2019

Australia will formally reject the UN's intervention over the Adani coalmine, accusing it of blindly accepting inaccurate claims of green activists and dismissing the majority support of indigenous landholders. ...

Resources Minister Matt Canavan yesterday said the Morrison government would write to the UN committee to formally correct the "clear errors" in its understanding of Australian law. ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/bigger-than-franklin-bob-brown-to-lead-anti-adani-road-convoy-20190206-p50w1o.html>

'Bigger than Franklin': Bob Brown to lead anti-Adani road convoy

Peter Hannam, *SMH*, 06/02/2019

Environmental activist Bob Brown says his planned road convoy to protest the proposed giant Adani coal mine in Queensland will be bigger than the protest to stop the damming of Tasmania's wild rivers in the 1980s.

His foundation's 'Stop Adani Convoy' plans to travel from Hobart to the coal port of Bowen on the Queensland coast over a fortnight starting from April 17...

The ferry and road trip has lured more than 800 participants, a number that Mr Brown expects to swell as the convoy snakes through Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane on its way north. ...

The organisers, including the Frontline Action on Coal, plan a series of public events along the convoy's path.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/national/adani-coal-mine-protest-from-hobart-tipped-to-be-as-big-as-the-franklin-says-bob-brown/news-story/1f0ab4236b706ab98ce7057ff68ca239?csp=496493251e21a8448ad5cf79c62d47ba>

Adani coal mine protest from Hobart tipped to be as big as the Franklin, says Bob Brown

Anne Mather, *Hobart Mercury*, 06/02/2019

Thousands of people are expected to take part in a convoy of protesters travelling from Hobart to Central Queensland if the Adani coal mine is approved.

Veteran environmentalist Bob Brown already has hundreds signed up to the "peaceful protest convey", which he launched Wednesday. ...

The convoy, which would be led by a fleet of electric cars, is planned to travel from Hobart, through Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane – with public rallies in the capitals.

It will then head to the Galilee Basin, Central Queensland, where a large gathering is planned next to the site of Adani's proposed coal mine. ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-07/adani-coal-terminal-releases-water-wetlands-near-abbot-point/10791692>

Adani coal terminal releases more water into wetlands near Abbot Point port

Ashleigh Stevenson, *ABC*, 07/02/2019

Monsoonal rain hitting north Queensland has resulted in a release of water from Adani's Abbot Point coal terminal site into the adjacent Caley Valley wetlands.

In a statement, Abbot Point Operations – which is owned by the Indian mining giant – said an inspection of the site on Thursday showed floodwater had been released into the Caley Valley wetlands from an authorised release point.

"The inspection indicates there has been no release of waters into the marine environment or the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, however floodwater has been released to the Caley Valley wetlands from an authorised release point," a company spokesperson said. ...

Peter McCullum from the Mackay Conservation Group said he was con-

cerned that any possible damage might not be promptly assessed.

"Any water that comes out of a coal port is likely to have significant contaminants in it," he said.

"The Government said back in September last year that they would have monitoring in place at Abbot Point in order to determine whether there was any contamination of those wetlands during the upcoming wet season.

"But as far as we know they don't have anything in place to monitor in real time." ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/flood-water-at-adanis-abbot-point-coal-terminal-released-into-wetlands/news-story/a25e7cfa84f8dca93259e843c7cb5ab>

Flood water at Adani's Abbot Point coal terminal released into wetlands

Steven Wardill, *Courier-Mail*, 07/02/2019

Flooding at Abbot Point coal terminal has caused a release of water into the sensitive Caley Valley wetlands.

Indian miner Adani, which owns the port, reported the water release to the Department of Environment and Science today but insist no damage has occurred.

A similar spill happen during Cyclone Debbie in 2017, which prompted several long-running investigations and court cases which are still ongoing. ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/adani-chief-rues-original-plans-for-mega-mine-20190207-p50w-bh.html>

Adani chief rues original plans for 'mega-mine'

Nick Bonyhady, *SMH*, 07/02/2019

The chief executive of major coal miner Adani says he rues the way the company's controversial Carmichael coal mine was originally announced as a 60 million tonne mega-mine in 2010 before being scaled down to a 10 million tonne project last year.

"Originally [around] our project there was a lot of mythology: 'It's going to be the world's greatest mine', and to be honest some of that was probably self-inflicted on our part," Lucas Dow told the Sydney Mining Club on Thursday.

"And if we had our time again we probably would've gone about it a little differently." ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/galilee-basin-delays-risk-foreign-investment-adani/news-story/6284fd5fe06cde916767205a528632bd>

Galilee Basin delays risk foreign investment: Adani

Perry Williams, *The Australian*, 08/02/2019

Adani has warned that planned foreign investment in Queensland resources projects might take a hit as international miners balked at fresh state government delays for the company's planned Galilee Basin coal mine. ...

Frustrations over delays approving plans to protect the [black throated] finch and a separate groundwater scheme had the potential to curtail investment in the state, Adani chief executive Lucas Dow said. ...

<https://www.afr.com/news/politics/adani-yet-to-sign-royalties-deal-with-queensland-government-20190207-h1ayhi>

Adani yet to sign royalties deal with Queensland government

Mark Ludlow, *AFR*, 07/02/2019

Indian energy giant Adani has yet to sign a royalties agreement with the Queensland government for its controversial \$2 billion Carmichael mine.

In a further setback for the mine and rail project – which has become a lightning rod for environmental activists across the country – it can be revealed that while there was an in-principle agreement about a royalty framework for the project, it has yet to be finalised between the company and the Palaszczuk Labor government.

It comes as big miners have joined forces with the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union to back Adani's Carmichael mine and rail project as well as the opening up of the frontier Galilee Basin to create thousands of jobs in regional Queensland. ...

The QRC and the CFMEU said the six projects proposed in the Galilee Basin, with a total cost of \$36 billion, would support 13,900 jobs during construction and 12,800 jobs over the life of the mines – not to mention hundreds of millions of dollars in extra coal royalties going into state coffers. ...

COAL ROCKS ON

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/markets/china-restricts-coking-coal-imports/news-story/c5835a76966d61e71ff72e27d2e6849e>

China restricts coking coal imports

Perry Williams, *The Australian*, 02/02/2019

China has restricted imports of Australian coking coal at up to a dozen ports in the northeast in a move that may

hamper the nation's biggest export market amid high prices for the raw commodity.

Ports in northeast China have been verbally informed that shipments of Australian coal face lengthy custom delays, although no formal written notifications have yet been divulged by harbour authorities.

Affected sites include those in Dalian, Shantou and Jintang, according to industry sources ...

More than 300 dry-bulk freighters are sitting idle outside Chinese ports, according to Refinitiv data cited by news agency Reuters.

The import restrictions may intensify trade tensions between Australia and its largest trading partner amid speculation "Sino-Australian relations" were offered as one reason for the move by Chinese authorities. ...

https://thewest.com.au/news/wa/muja-cd-power-plant-secret-report-puts-collie-plant-at-2025-shutdown-ng-b881091407z?utm_campaign=share-icons&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&tid=1549079754159&fbclid=IwAR02W0_YFjBt-AqIz5TL8nQdxsLeK_TuMsnCY_Vda8Bjd6Hr9daGURJPvVA

Muja CD power plant: Secret report puts Collie plant at 2025 shutdown

Daniel Mercer, *West Australian*, 02/02/2019

WA's biggest coal-fired power station faces closure within six years amid an onslaught of renewable energy that is making it increasingly unviable, a secret report shows.

A study prepared by the State Government's chief energy adviser – the Public Utilities Office – shows the giant Muja CD power plant near Collie is likely to be shuttered by 2025. ...

<https://www.theherald.com.au/story/5889426/report-time-is-up-for-coal-in-the-hunter/?cs=12>

Report argues case to transition away from coal dependence

Matthew Kelly, *Newcastle Herald*, 06/02/2019

More than 5000 jobs and \$705 million in wages will be lost from the Hunter without investment in new employment and industries over the next two decades, a new report arguing for the need to transform the Hunter's economy away from reliance on coal has warned. ...

It argues the Hunter's economic future is "intimately bound up with global efforts to prevent dangerous climate change."

It notes that coal mining contributes 58 per cent of the economic output of the Singleton and Muswellbrook shires. ...

<https://www.theherald.com.au/story/5889148/preparing-for-projected-coal-downturn/>

Lock the Gate study says Singleton and Muswellbrook will need transition help away from coal

In a new report, *Weathering the Storm: The case for transformation in the Hunter Valley*, researchers commissioned by environmental lobby group Lock The Gate paint a dire future for the coalmining regions of Muswellbrook and Singleton unless government assistance is provided to counter a projected decline of the coal industry. The study, prepared by academics from the University of Western Sydney, models the impact on the regional economy if the Hunter's output of coal was to fall by 55 per cent between now and 2040. ...

<https://www.theherald.com.au/story/5890702/minerals-council-says-hunters-coal-industry-has-a-bright-future/>

NSW Minerals Council says the Hunter's coal industry has a bright future

Matthew Kelly, *Newcastle Herald*, 06/02/2019

The NSW Minerals Council believes global demand for coal will increase slightly by 2040, with coal demand in across South East Asia to more than double.

The organisation's chief executive Stephen Galilee disputed the findings of the Lock the Gate commissioned report *Weathering the Storm* ...

"Despite the false claims made by Lock the Gate, the International Energy Agency expects global demand for coal to increase slightly by 2040, with coal demand in across South East Asia to more than double," Mr Galilee said.

"Lock the Gate has ignored this main Scenario and instead based their report on a scenario that assumes that countries around the world will take further unspecified action beyond their actual Paris Agreement commitments."

"Lock the Gate are opposed to mining. They want to shut down all of the Hunter's coal mines, putting 12,000 Hunter coal miners out of work and damaging 5,000 Hunter businesses that supply the mines."

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BULLETIN

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

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/5890735/whats-the-next-step-in-the-vickery-coal-mine-process/>

What's the next step in the Vickery coal mine process?

Jamieson Murphy, Northern Daily Leader, 06/02/2019

While local farmers were frustrated by comments “putting personal gain over the bigger picture” at the Vickery public hearing in Gunnedah, the final decision will rest on the shoulders of an independent panel.

Now that the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) has held public hearings in Gunnedah and Boggabri, the panel will now compile a report identifying the key issues, which will guide the full assessment by the NSW Department of Planning.

It's hope the reported will be finalised by the end of March, however it may be later given the public hearings were pushed back from December to February. ...

<https://www.huntervalleynews.net.au/story/5890437/significant-delays-expected/>

Loaded Pacific National coal train derails in Upper Hunter on route to Port of Newcastle

Hunter Valley News, 06/02/2019

A coal train derailed in the Hunter Valley along the Sandy Hollow rail line with as many as six laden wagons reportedly coming off the rails.

The incident occurred near Baerami, west of Denman, sometime on Tuesday night.

It is expected to cause significant delays for the busy Mudgee-Newcastle coal route. ...

Pacific National has confirmed it was one of their locomotives involved. The train was returning from the Moolarben coal mine, north-east of Mudgee.

MINING MAYHEM

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2019-02-01/lake-torrens-drilling-aboriginal-support/10766686>

Flinders Ranges Aboriginal elders voice support for exploratory drilling on Lake Torrens

Gary-Jon Lysaght, ABC, 01/02/2019

Some Aboriginal elders have given their support for an exploratory mining operation currently underway on the surface of one of Australia's largest salt lakes.

Aeris Resources and Argonaut Resources are searching for deposits of



Wittenoom (above) is contaminated with mountains of deadly blue asbestos tailings. Photo: State Library of WA

iron oxide copper-gold (IOCG) underneath the surface of Lake Torrens, in South Australia's far north.

The lake is roughly 400 kilometres north of Adelaide and is associated with a Dreamtime story told by the traditional owners of the Flinders Ranges.

The Adnyamathanya Dreamtime story tells of how Lake Torrens is the grave site of a frilled-neck lizard that lived in the Flinders Ranges. ...

Elder Malcolm McKenzie said mining operations and Dreamtime stories can coexist together. ...

Another Adnyamathanya elder, Angelina Stewart, said she supports the development, but said care needs to be taken to protect sacred sites. ...

<https://www.afr.com/business/don-harwin-nsw-open-for-battery-metal-mining-of-nickel-cobalt-scandium-20190206-h1axtd>

Don Harwin: NSW open for battery metal mining of nickel, cobalt, scandium

Brad Thompson, AFR, 07/02/2019

The Berejiklian government will move to streamline the approval process for exploration and new mines under a minerals strategy released today as looks to unlock the potential of lesser-known nickel, cobalt and scandium deposits.

The strategy includes reaching out to big investors and providing detailed data about resources considered ripe for exploration. ...

Resources Minister Don Harwin said NSW was very much open for business when it came to socially and environmentally responsible metal exploration and mining. ...

The strategy flags a review of the Mining Act and other regulations to encourage investment and the remove of licence conditions around low-level surveying of potential mine sites. ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-08/elders-demand-clean-up-asbestos-waste-wittenoom-gorge/10781322>

Elders demand asbestos tailings at Wittenoom Gorge be cleaned up

Kirsti Melville, ABC, 08/02/2019

When the owners of Western Australia's Wittenoom mine closed it down in 1966, they walked away, leaving behind three million tonnes of asbestos tailings.

Breathing in just one fibre of blue asbestos can kill – but giant, slate-blue glaciers of tailings still stream down the sides of Wittenoom Gorge. ...

Now, the country's traditional owners, who have one of the highest mortality rates from mesothelioma of any group, anywhere in the world, are demanding the site be cleaned up. ...

“We want Wittenoom Gorge cleaned up so we don't have more of our people contracting mesothelioma,” [Banjima man] Maitland Parker says.

“Fine, it costs millions and millions. So what? People's lives are worth millions too.

“It's our bloody homeland, it's our country and we want it fixed up. We can't afford to delay anymore.”

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-07/time-lapse-images-show-dramatic-flood-rise-north-west-qlld/10791932>

Flood impact in north-west Queensland revealed in dramatic time-lapse vision

Tim Swanston, ABC, 08/02/2019

Queensland Rail (QR) has revealed amazing pictures of train tracks engulfed by rising floodwaters at Corella Creek in the state's north-west. ...

QR said it also discovered on Thursday afternoon that a freight train carrying metals had been toppled by rising flood waters in Nelia, east of Cloncurry.

In a statement, QR CEO Nick Easy said aerial inspections showed wagons at varying angles that some of the train's contents – zinc, lead and copper – had spilled into floodwaters. ...

GAS, GAS, GAS

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-31/fracking-company-unlikely-to-repair-environment/10743922?fbclid=IwAR0T0EIM0C7P8OWde14xExULAKGt6TyRjMP7y-q4f0YeDjLBdXiWPTHZMq>

Fracking exploration rehabilitation costs likely to be borne by taxpayers after company collapse

Ben Collins, ABC, 31/01/2019

Taxpayers are at risk of inheriting the clean-up bill for a company that experts say is 'highly unlikely' to be able to fund environmental rehabilitation of gas fracking exploration wells.

New Standard Energy (NSE) was one of a number of petroleum exploration companies that rode a wave of interest in the potential of shale gas deposits in the vast Canning Basin, which underlies half-a-million square kilometres of the west Kimberley and Great Sandy Desert. ...

The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) directed the company in mid-2018 to rehabilitate the sites drilled at the height of interest in gas fracking in the Canning Basin.

But according to Professor Kingsley Dixon from the ARC Centre for Mining Restoration, New Standard Energy was unlikely to have the resources to undertake environmental rehabilitation ...

Dr Dixon said that New Standard Energy was typical of 90 per cent of mining and exploration activities that posed a risk of becoming public rehabilitation liabilities because of inadequate planning and insufficient funding. ...

<https://www.afr.com/business/energy/gas/aj-lucas-owned-cuadrilla-says-british-fracking-yields-promising-results-20190206-h1ay90>

AJ Lucas's Cuadrilla says British fracking yields promising results

Hans van Leeuwen, AFR, 06/02/2019

Cuadrilla Resources, the British shale gas explorer half-owned by ASX-listed AJ Lucas, has announced positive test results from its controversial fracking operation at Preston North End, but warned it remains hamstrung from full production by heavy environmental restrictions.

The company said the first few months of hydraulic fracturing had revealed a "rich reservoir of recoverable high-quality natural gas". ...

Chief executive Francis Egan said the testing had been heavily curtailed by British government regulations that required an 18-hour pause in fracking every time a tremor of 0.5 or more on the Richter Scale was recorded. ...

Mr Egan said the 0.5 tremor threshold was 30 times lower than that applied to construction and quarrying. ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-07/victorian-first-energy-from-waste-project-gets-green-light/10791686>

Australian Paper to proceed with Victorian-first energy-from-waste project

Jarrod Whittaker, ABC, 07/02/2019

Australian Paper says it will proceed with its plan to use kerbside rubbish to help power its Maryvale paper mill after completing the project's feasibility study.

The company will develop the \$600 million plant in partnership with waste management company Suez at the Latrobe Valley mill, east of Melbourne.

The plant will generate 225 megawatts of electricity and divert 650,000 tonnes of Gippsland and Melbourne rubbish from landfill. ...

Environmental advocacy group Environment Victoria fears waste, which could be recycled, could be used in the project if it goes ahead. ...

"Once you're burning plastics you're really just running a fossil fuel station."

Environment Victoria also fears that plastics burnt by the plant will generate toxic chemicals.

"Some of those will be captured by the pollution controls on the plant, but a lot of those will go out the chimney stacks," Dr Aberle said.

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theland.com.au/story/5878011/we-are-fighting-fires-on-all-sides/?cs=5739&fbclid=IwAR3DK-bibK7QLA7n1t6RWp1Mt0pTE7FEbmlAUXAi2j13opVn0F-WgLSv-0630>

Opinion: Climate change matters, respect science

Neil Westcott, The Land, 31/01/2019

It was 2am before I stumbled into bed, still smelling of smoke from the fire I'd been out fighting.

As a farmer for 40 years and an RFS volunteer for just as long, this was hardly my first late night.

As I laid there struggling to get to sleep it occurred to me that our industry is now fighting fires on all sides – fires fuelled in part by wilful ignorance, and a total disrespect for science and future generations. ...

I'm tired, angry and downright disappointed in the complete lack of leadership from our industry and government on the single greatest threat we face.

The truth is the world's leading scientists are calling for action to cut greenhouse gas emissions from all sides. ...

Every half a degree matters. Every year matters. Every action matters. ...

• Neil Westcott is an Alectown farmer, Parkes Councillor and Farmers for Climate Action supporter.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/governments-not-keeping-pace-with-climate-change-impacts-scientist-20190205-p50vun.html?csp=3fa21b3379a63d5568f0ad75850876f0>

Governments not keeping pace with climate change impacts: scientist

Tony Moore, SMH, 05/02/2019

One of Australia's leading scientists has warned the Queensland and federal governments that they are not keeping pace with the impacts of climate change.

Queensland's recent extreme weather – bushfires, heatwaves, coral bleaching, drought, Cyclone Penny, Townsville's floods – showed the state was clearly experiencing climate change, Professor Ian Lowe said.

"What I think is a reason for concern is that the science in the 1980s was saying that – if the [1980] climate models were right – by about 2030 there would be observable changes in climate that would be impossible to ignore," Professor Lowe said.

"Now I think you could say that, if anything, the science of the time was being unreasonably cautious," he said.

"I think you would have to be in deep denial not to accept that there are unmistakable signs of climate change." ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-06/could-climate-change-make-australia-uninsurable/10783490?fbclid=IwAR0919d5V32RtWklX3NkTJkQpacE7HECwmahtXJmqEI-xCPNhHNRH59bdmE>

Could climate change make it harder to get insurance in Australia?

Ange Lavoipierre & Stephen Smiley, ABC, 06/02/2019

At the moment, Townsville is more or less underwater and large parts of Tasmania are on fire.

So what impact does a climate-driven disaster have on local insurance premiums? And could it ever reach a point where insurance is no longer offered in certain areas?

Could we become too disaster-prone to insure?

The director of the Climate and Energy Program at the Australia Institute, Richie Merzian, says it's a very real risk.

"We will get to a certain point, somewhere between say 3 degrees or 4 degrees above pre-industrial levels, and a world like that will see situations where cities, entire coastlines, do become uninsurable," he said.

Mr Merzian said in that case "the basic safety net that's provided by the private sector just becomes too prohibitively expensive".

He said in that instance, the burden will fall back on the taxpayer. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/feb/07/michael-mccormack-makes-first-visit-to-menindee-since-fish-kill-were-all-experts-in-hindsight>

Michael McCormack makes first visit to Menindee since fish kill: 'We're all experts in hindsight'

Amy Remeikis, *The Guardian*, 07/02/2019

The Nationals leader Michael McCormack has made his first visit to Menindee since the ecological disaster which led to the death of up to a million fish, claiming "we're all experts in hindsight".

The deputy prime minister visited the fish-kill ground-zero site with local Nationals MP Mark Coulton, who was also making his first visit since the mass death was reported early last month. ...

McCormack ... told reporters "we're all experts in hindsight" when asked if the river could have been managed better. ...

When asked about climate change, McCormack pivoted to attack Labor over energy policy differences.

"We are looking at climate, of course, climate has been changing since year dot," he said. ...

"We don't want to go down a path of renewables, which is not going to solve anything, apart from de-industrialising Australia and making sure we don't do manufacturing here and push electricity bills into the unaffordable state."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-08/australia-ahead-of-paris-agreement-target-by-five-years/10789810>

Australia on track to meet Paris Agreement targets five years earlier than expected, research finds

Gary-Jon Lysaght, ABC, 08/02/2019

Australia is on track to meet its Paris climate commitments five years earlier than expected – in 2025 – according to new research from the Australian National University. ...

"The electricity sector is on track to deliver Australia's entire Paris emissions reduction targets five years early, in 2025, without the need for any creative accounting," lead researcher Professor Andrew Blakers said.

"We have excellent wind, excellent sun, a very vigorous rooftop solar industry and very experienced ground-mounted solar farm and wind farm industry."

Co-researcher Matthew Stocks said cheaper renewable energy was replacing expensive coal-fired power, meaning the cost of achieving the 2030 carbon emission targets in the Paris Agreement would be zero. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/feb/08/australia-can-meet-its-paris-targets-if-government-doesnt-hinder-progress>

Australia can meet its Paris targets – if government doesn't hinder progress

Katharine Murphy, *The Guardian*, 08/02/2019

New research finds Australia is installing renewable energy faster than any other country, a trend that will allow Australia to meet its economy-wide Paris targets five years ahead of schedule if politics doesn't derail the trend, according to new research from the Australian National University.

While emissions have been rising across the economy since the Abbott government repealed the carbon price after winning government in 2013, they have been falling in the electricity sector because of the closure of ageing coal plants and the rapid uptake of renewables. ...

The research notes that in the year to June 2018, total Australian emissions increased by 3.4 megatonnes substantially due to increased liquefied natural gas exports, but predicts that will moderate "because of stabilisation of emissions from LNG, the government's Direct Action program and increased uptake of electric water heaters and electric vehicles". ...

IMPORT INSANITY

<https://www.afr.com/business/energy/gas/lng-import-projects-face-delays-as-investors-ponder-labor-gas-policy-20190204-h1atpx>

LNG import projects face delays as investors ponder Labor gas policy

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 04/02/2019

Construction of LNG import terminals in Victoria and NSW is looking increasingly less likely to begin this year as delays in government approvals and fears of how unions might influence Labor government policy raise doubts over their business cases.

AGL Energy's new chief executive Brett Redman has acknowledged that the utility will miss its target to give the go-ahead this financial year for the proposed Crib Point import terminal in Victoria's Western Port because of the Victorian government's decision that a full environmental assessment be required.

The decision has pushed the timing for a final investment decision into 2020, Mr Redman said, while adding the company believes the east coast "absolutely needs" imported gas.

Meanwhile, Australian Industrial Energy, backed by WA iron ore magnate Andrew Forrest, has run beyond its original end-2018 target for a go-ahead on its proposed terminal at Port Kembla as it awaits clearance from the NSW government. ...

The two projects are among five in all that have been proposed to import gas into the southern states. ...

Credit Suisse energy analyst Saul Kavonic said that despite the crowd of proposals, none may get a green light this year.

"I remain sceptical of an LNG import terminal achieving FID [final investment decision] this year due to poor appetite by industrial buyers, social licence challenges, and the risk posed by a potential new government and pipeline reform to some terminal business cases," Mr Kavonic said.

“LNG import terminal FIDs are likely to be delayed into 2020, but by then pipeline regulatory reforms will likely be kicking in, and we may have a new government less amenable to imports, potentially further reducing the business case.” ...

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/new-coal-projects-to-secure-power-supply/news-story/f687ce9f4c3eeb99bfd1525ccce3166e>

New coal projects to secure power supply

Joe Kelly, *The Australian*, 01/02/2019

The government will consider 10 new power generation projects that include coal under a contentious plan to help restore stability to Australia’s electricity system, after energy was cut to 200,000 homes in Victoria last week.

Nearly 70 investors have seized the chance to compete for federal government backing to develop “firm” power generation projects – including at least two “clean” coal plants ...

The Morrison government has received 66 submissions, raising fears in Greens and Labor ranks that the Coalition could finalise contracts for a new high efficiency, low emissions (HELE) coal plant before the election.

The Australian understands there are 10 proposals entirely geared around coal-fired generation or which include coal as a key part of their energy mix. ...

{Energy minister Angus} Taylor [said], “The federal Liberal-National government will not stand by idly as Labor/Green state governments trash their electricity markets.” ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/australia-institute-met-chinese-to-dissuade-investment-in-new-coal-plants/news-story/5a8c392d41b-cfd0feddc775377775337>

Australia Institute met Chinese to dissuade investment in new coal plants

Joe Kelly, *The Australian*, 02/02/2019

The Australia Institute left-wing think-tank met officials at the Chinese embassy to urge them not to back a new clean-coal plant in Australia, warning it would result in the same political and community hostility experienced by the Adani project.

The progressive research and public policy outfit has engaged with “at least half a dozen high commissions and embassies” in the past six months, including a meeting on Wednesday with Chinese diplomats. ...

Executive director of The Australia

WHICH FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES ARE FUNDING OUR MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES?

2017-18 data

Company	LABOR	LIBS	NATS
Woodside	\$117,700	\$118,500	\$1,100
Santos	\$85,610	\$71,973	\$24,500
Chevron Australia	\$59,000	\$51,219	\$11,660
Alinta Energy	\$68,500	\$25,000	\$25,250
Origin Energy	\$54,500	\$39,670	\$16,425
Caltex	\$44,138	\$52,769	\$0
Minerals Council of Aus	\$41,200	\$43,250	\$10,450
Cartwheel Resources	\$0	\$52,864	\$0
Senex Energy	\$36,500	\$15,400	\$0
St Baker Family Trust	\$0	\$50,000	\$0

MARKETFORCES.ORG.AU/POLITICALDONATIONS

Institute, Ben Oquist, confirmed to *The Weekend Australian* that the think tank had cautioned Chinese officials about the risks in backing a new Australian coal plant. ...

Resources Minister Matt Canavan said *The Australia Institute* was “clearly acting against Australia’s national interest in lobbying other countries’ governments to not invest in Australia”. ...

<https://www.dailyliberal.com.au/story/5886419/anyone-but-nats-forum-roadshow-coming-to-dubbo/>

“They’d want to be better behaved” Anyone But Nats forum roadshow coming to Dubbo

Craig Thomson, *Daily Liberal*, 04/02/2019

Anyone But Nats is bringing its roadshow of forums to the Dubbo RSL on Thursday, February 21 at 6pm.

Anyone But Nats co-founder Charles Tym said he hopes to get a good number of people to the Dubbo evening. ...

Mr Tym said he hopes National Party people that come to the Dubbo forum are better behaved than they were in Mudgee.

“The Nats thought they were going to be a major presence on the night, but they turned out to be a minority,” he said. “Everyone else listened and participated respectfully, but the Nats

group went out of their way to be disruptive. We were respectful to all the candidates including Dugald, and it was a credit to him that he turned up and answered questions, but it was embarrassing for them really and a bit lame the way they behaved. ...

https://reneweconomy.com.au/coalition-energy-plan-unworkable-as-taylor-charges-into-coal-90074/?utm_source=RE+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=6a1c5ede92-EMAIL_CAM-PAIGN_2019_02_05_12_38&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-6a1c5ede92-40461137

Coalition energy plan “unworkable”, as Taylor charges into coal

Giles Parkinson, *Renew Economy*, 05/02/2019

The Coalition government has been warned – yet again – that its proposed “big stick” intervention into Australia’s energy markets is unworkable and will kill investment, even as energy minister Angus Taylor tries to force through before the election what might be the last gasp for coal investment in Australia.

Two major international energy groups – New Zealand’s Meridian Energy and US energy giant GE – have joined what is a near unanimous condemnation of the Coalition’s threat to force divestment in the energy market, and confusing new rules about contracting. ...

While the “big stick” proposals will be the subject of a Senate committee hearing in Melbourne on Wednesday, Taylor is pushing ahead with the government’s proposed tender for “24/7” reliable power in what appears to be a mad rush to lock in contracts before the expected “caretaker” period begins in mid April, ahead of the anticipated mid-May poll. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/feb/05/tasmania-is-burning-the-climate-disaster-future-has-arrived-while-those-in-power-laugh-at-us>

Tasmania is burning. The climate disaster future has arrived while those in power laugh at us

Richard Flanagan, The Guardian, 05/02/2019

Scott Morrison is trying to scare people about economic policy but seems blithely unaware people are already scared – about climate change ...

Two years ago the then treasurer Scott Morrison picked up a large lump of coal. Perhaps he thought it was a great joke for Australia at the expense of a few weird outliers like the Greens and the global scientific community. ...

“This is coal,” Morrison began babbling. “Don’t be afraid don’t be scared won’t hurt you won’t hurt you.”

Almost stuttering in his excitement, missing pronouns, he was gibbering without punctuation. ...

He waved the piece of coal around like it was the sacred Host itself, he swung it high and he brought it so low that for a moment it was as if a wildly guffawing Barnaby Joyce seated next to him might lick it. How they laughed! The ranks of the Liberal Party assembled around and behind, how they all laughed and laughed that day.

Those faces contorted in weird mirth are the grotesque masks of a great and historic crime, deriding not just their political opponents but mocking the future with that pure contempt of power, daring us to remember beyond the next news cycle, to care beyond the next confected outrage, to see past the next lie. It is the image of our age: power laughing at us. ...

What has become clear over these last four weeks across this vast, beautiful land of Australia is that a way of life is on the edge of vanishing. Australian summers, once a time of innocent pleasure, now are to be feared, to be anticipated not with joy but with dread, a time of discomfort, distress and, for some, fear that lasts not a day or a night but weeks and months. Power

grids collapse, dying rivers vomit huge fish kills, while in the north, in Townsville, there are unprecedented floods, and in the south heat so extreme it pushes at the very edge of liveability has become everyday. ...

And tomorrow there will be another welcome photo opportunity at another unprecedented “natural” disaster; another fire, another flood. And when he retires back into his prime ministerial limo I wonder if he laughs. He should. Laugh at us all, Scott Morrison, you and the others who sit with you, grinning fools at the entrance to hell. Laugh and laugh as the ash falls soft as silent despair.

Editor’s note: it’s well worth clicking the link and reading this entire, long, passionate article by Richard Flanagan in The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/feb/06/zali-steggall-says-labor-needs-to-commit-to-stopping-adani-coalmine>

Zali Steggall says Labor needs to commit to stopping Adani coalmine

Katharine Murphy, The Guardian, 06/02/2019

The high-profile independent taking on Tony Abbott in Warringah at the coming federal election says Labor’s climate change policy needs to be more ambitious and include an explicit commitment to block the Adani coalmine. ...

She said Labor, if it wins this year’s federal contest, needed to use whatever regulatory powers it had available to it to stop the project. “We need an orderly retirement of coal, I don’t think we should be entering new projects,” Steggall said.

“The attention should be with renewables, technology, clean transport, clean energy – not projects like Adani.” ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/no-adani-ban-on-my-watch-chris-bowen/news-story/48bb7df7d794675d9d4379c729c91b30>

No Adani ban on my watch: Chris Bowen

David Uren, The Australian, 05/02/2019

A Labor government would allow the Adani coalmine in Queensland to proceed, Treasury spokesman Chris Bowen says because a decision to block it would raise concerns of sovereign risk.

Mr Bowen told an audience of Labor supporters at the Chifley Oration on Monday night that while he understood the “passion” of the argument about the project, it was no longer the environmental threat of the original proposal. “Adani was to have been the largest coalmine in Australia but it is

now far from that,” he said, with several mines in its vicinity considerably larger.

“I believe in protection against sovereign risk, and of all the things I’ve prioritised spending money on in my first budget as Labor treasurer, if it proceeds, providing compensation for Adani for a breach of contract and breach of law is not one of them.

“I don’t want to give a dollar to Adani.” ...

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/national/antifracker-kirby-a-concern-canavan/news-story/1b52269284891cc083f0114aeda8db1e?csp=fd12d7f8a7b42de3bc14480dbdd40d09>

Antifracker Kirby a concern: Canavan

Hayley Sorensen, NT News, 06/02/2019

Appointing a one-time antifracker as mining minister sends the wrong message to industry, according to federal Resources Minister Matt Canavan.

The appointment of former ETU organiser Paul Kirby as Territory mining minister last week raised eyebrows across the sector given his history as a strong opponent of fracking.

Senator Canavan said he was concerned by the “messaging” of the appointment.

“It comes back to the general principle that the general message coming out of this government is more regulation, more taxes, appointing ministers that don’t seem ... to have a passion for the industry from day one,” he said. ...

However he said he would give Mr Kirby the “courtesy of being able to prove he’s put that past behind him.”

“Everyone deserves a second chance in life, even people who’ve voted for the Greens,” Senator Canavan said. ...

Mr Kirby said was disappointed Mr Canavan hadn’t raised his concerns with him in person when the pair met this week.

“What I would have said to him is that I am a passionate Territorian. I have lived here for more than 20 years and raised my family here, and my focus is on supporting the resources sector to create safe, local jobs,” he said. ...

“I am getting on with the job of creating jobs in the resources sector, while not putting jobs in the fishing, farming and tourism industries at risk – jobs that rely on a healthy environment.

“We welcome any support the Commonwealth provides to create and protect these jobs, but we won’t be taking policy advice from FIFO LNP Ministers.”

News this week ... from previous page

<https://www.theage.com.au/business/companies/agl-profits-continue-to-ride-high-power-prices-20190207-p50w78.html>

AGL flags new power stations as profits ride high electricity prices

Cole Latimer, The Age, 7/02/2019

Energy giant AGL has flagged it will invest almost \$1 billion into new power generation assets even as it warned the government's "big stick" energy policy was creating new risks and uncertainty for the sector and would not ease pressure on power bills. ... It is spending \$25 million on upgrading its Loy Yang A coal-fired power station's turbine by around 15 megawatts and investigating similar initiatives across its entire coal fleet. ...

https://reneweconomy.com.au/agl-has-a-plan-milk-coal-assets-while-preparing-for-energy-transition-24620/?utm_source=RE+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=9c9743bb25-EMAIL_CAM-PAIGN_2019_02_07_12_27&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-9c9743bb25-40461137

AGL has a plan: Milk coal assets while preparing for energy transition

Giles Parkinson, Renew Economy, 07/02/2019

AGL's new CEO Brett Redman has a clear plan, and it should not come as a surprise to anyone: Milk the company's huge coal assets for everything they are worth, while preparing for the more tricky part of preparing for the inevitable energy transition. ...

Anyone thinking that banks have a monopoly on greed should check out the energy industry. ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/sands-are-shifting-nsw-agriculture-minister-to-push-climate-cause-20190207-p50wa9.html>

'Sands are shifting': NSW agriculture minister to push climate cause

Peter Hannam, SMH, 08/02/2019

A senior Nationals minister says the impact of climate change on farming is now undeniable, conceding his views differ from "many of my colleagues".

NSW Primary Industries Minister Niall Blair said the "sands were shifting" on the climate change debate as he prepared for a Council of Australian Governments meeting of agriculture ministers in Adelaide on Friday. ...

Mr Blair made his comments as his department began rescuing 20 giant Murray cod from the lower Darling River near Menindee, transferring them to Narrandera nearly 600 kilometres away. The deaths of the fish have become emblematic of the degradation of the Murray-Darling basin as temperatures soar.

They also come ahead of a judgment on Friday in NSW's Land and Environment Court that could have far-reaching impacts on new coal mines in NSW.

The Environmental Defenders Office NSW has joined a case against the proposed Rocky Hill coal mine near Gloucester on the mid-north coast, arguing the project's resulting greenhouse gas emissions and its global warming impact must be considered in the approval process. A judgment in favour by Land and Environment Court Chief Judge Brian Preston could have an effect on new mines, domestically and globally.

Latest Bureau of Meteorology updates show 99.8 per cent of NSW remains in drought, including 36 per cent in "intense drought".

The state smashed all previous records for monthly heat in January, with the average of day and night temperatures coming at almost six degrees above normal. ...

BREAKING NEWS

https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/we-won-landmark-climate-ruling-as-nsw-court-rejects-coal-mine-20190207-p50wer.html?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3yLQGTU2cKwX4JpcyXSaQpiEpXQvH2w4JrxVpzhylWuhSK_EGoEZemK4

'We won': Landmark climate ruling as NSW court rejects coal mine

Peter Hannam, SMH, 08/02/2019

Environmental groups are cheering a decision in NSW's Land and Environment Court that found the emissions of greenhouse gases and resulting climate change from a proposed [Rocky Hill] coal mine was among the reasons to reject the project.

Brian Preston SC, chief judge of the court, handed down his judgement in a case between Gloucester Resources Ltd and the NSW Planning Minister in Sydney on Friday. ...

The EDO dubbed it a "once in a generation case" as it was the first time an Australian court had heard expert evidence about the urgent need to stay within a global carbon budget in the context of a proposed new coal mine.

"The construction and operation of the mine, and the transportation and combustion of the coal from the mine, will result in the emission of greenhouse gases, which will contribute to climate change," Justice Preston said in his judgement. ...

Will Steffen, an adjunct professor at the Australian National University who gave evidence in court about the climate impacts of coal [said], "This landmark decision sends a clear message to the fossil fuel industry that it cannot continue to expand if we are serious about tackling climate change."

Such a judgement "will be generally applicable to any coal mine in Australia", Mr Morris from the EDO said. ...

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