



Fossil Fool Bulletin

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

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

FFB 2:16 • 29 MARCH 2019

Qld govt goes after Linc Energy boss

Community and legal groups have welcomed moves by the Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES) to pursue further legal action against the former head of Linc Energy over the environmental damage caused at the company's underground coal gasification (UCG) site on Queensland's Western Downs.

The company's founder Peter Bond was required to rehabilitate dams and other land at the site, and provide a \$5.5 million bank guarantee in line with an Environment Protection Order (EPO) issued by DES in 2016. The EPO was issued under the state's Chain of Responsibility legislation.

Bond wilfully contravened order

However, according to information obtained recently by EDO Queensland from the Queensland Public Register, the department believes Bond has wilfully contravened the EPO, and on December 12 last year, filed a complaint and summons for two offences contrary to s361 (1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1994.

The penalty for an offence under s361 (1) is a maximum of 6,250 penalty units (\$815,937.50) or five years imprisonment.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Carmel Flint said the revelations were yet more evidence that the Linc Energy UCG venture near Chinchilla had been a disaster for local landholders.

"This sorry saga is continuing nearly a year after Linc Energy was fined a record \$4.5 million at the Western Downs site," she said.

District Court judge Michael Shanahan noted at the time the fines against



Now in the hands of the Queensland Government, the Linc Energy site contaminated thousands of hectares of agricultural land when underground coal gasification went out of control. Taxpayers have a multi-million dollar clean-up bill. Some of the damage is irreparable. Photo: Linc Energy

Bond's former company were unlikely to get paid.

"It seems unlikely that the Queensland Government will recover any funds from Linc Energy either to pay that hefty fine or rehabilitate the site, after they went into liquidation and disclaimed ownership.

Taxpayers likely to foot the bill

"That's why this proceeding against Mr Bond is so significant – because the Queensland taxpayer is facing ever diminishing opportunities to ensure they do not end up footing the bill for this environment catastrophe."

Linc Energy, which was once valued at \$1.1 billion, went into liquidation in May 2016 with debts of \$320 million.

Founder, Peter Bond, was valued at \$450 million in the 2013 BRW Rich List, but is now selling assets and

vowing never to invest in Queensland again.

"What's disturbing is that the South Australian Government is now allowing a UCG venture at Leigh Creek, indicating they have not learned anything from the Linc Energy debacle," Flint said.

Chain of responsibility laws used

EDO Qld CEO and solicitor Jo-Anne Bragg said: "We congratulate the Queensland Government for using these enforcement tools to try to reclaim the millions in tax-payer dollars that Peter Bond and Linc Energy have cost the State."

"The Chain of Responsibility laws are a crucial pathway to ensuring those responsible for environmental damage cannot dodge their obligations and

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Govt chases Bond over environment order

• Continued from p1

pass the costs of their actions onto the taxpayer.”

“The Queensland Government has always used these laws sparingly. Until now it hasn’t been clear the state would bring the full force of the law to bear on those who have breached it.”

“This move gives us confidence that the laws will be used as they were intended – to hold the right people responsible for environmental damage caused by the projects they are involved in.”

Time for Bond to pay up

“In this case, the cost to the State in proving the environmental harm in this case and prosecuting Linc Energy over its actions has been enormous. It’s time for Peter Bond to pay up.”

At the conclusion of Linc Energy’s prosecution last year, Bond told *The Australian* that the case was “meaningless ... bullshit.”

It appears unlikely Bond will take the ‘pay up’ call seriously.



Peter Bond



Santos execs closely linked to Bill Shorten

A recent story by the AFR’s Joe Aston shows how well-connected energy giant Santos is to Bill Shorten’s Labor luminaries.

“[Santos] media manager is Daniela Ritorto, who in her spare time is the better half of Labor’s energy spokesman Mark Butler. How’s that for simpatico?” Aston wrote.

“Better still, the upstream gas giant’s head of sustainability is Alicia Genet, whose hubby Ryan Liddell is handily Bill Shorten’s chief of staff – so will be familiarising himself with Lampe’s old office before the summer solstice is upon us.

“Rounding out the trifecta is Santos’ head of government affairs Tracey Winters who, for her sins, keeps former Trade Minister (and Whyalla Wipeout lyricist) Craig Emerson on a short leash. Dr Emerson ... toils for market darling Afterpay.”

Voters in Santos’ proposed Narrabri gasfields dumped their pro-gas National candidate last week, in favour of an anti-gas Shooters Fishers and Farmers man Roy Butler.

Local woman Rowena Macrae wrote to the *SMH* after the NSW election, saying: “The willingness of the National Party to dismiss overwhelming community opposition to a project that exposes us to unacceptable risk highlights its contempt. It was a display of astounding arrogance from a government whose members will never have to breath toxic compounds from CSG emissions or drink from our taps, nor explain to their children why they can’t swim in contaminated rivers and creeks.”

Bill Shorten and the Labor machine should take heed that western NSW voters will not accept pro-gas policies from any party in the Federal election.



ACF praises Greens’ climate policy

The climate change policies the Greens will take to the looming federal election reflect the scientific realities of global warming and our country’s pollution problem, the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) said.

The climate platform announced by the Greens on March 28 includes policies to:

- Establish a new public authority to oversee the transition to 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030.
- Cut climate pollution by 63-82 per cent by 2030 and to negative zero emissions by 2040.
- Immediately ban new fossil fuel mines, including Adani, and replace thermal coal with a renewable hydrogen export industry by 2030.
- Restore a price on carbon and extend the Renewable Energy Target.
- Create a new generation of environment laws overseen by a new national Environmental Protection Agency.

“The world’s top climate scientists have warned we must act swiftly to prevent global warming of more than 1.5 degrees and avoid dramatically worsening heatwaves, bushfires, flooding and other extreme weather events,”

said ACF’s Climate Change Program Manager, Gavan McFadzean.

“The policies the Greens are taking to the election reflect the urgency scientific bodies like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have said is needed to halt global warming and the kind of transformation developed countries like Australia must make.

“This transformation must encompass not only the energy sector, but also heavy industry, transport, agriculture and more – and it must happen in a way that doesn’t leave affected communities behind.

“These policies also reflect Australians’ desire for our elected representatives to do more to stop climate pollution.

“In the latest Essential poll a majority of voters said they thought Australia was not doing enough to address climate change. And in a recent Reach-Tel poll one in four respondents said global warming and the environment would be the issue most influential in determining their vote.

“This is the climate election. ACF urges all parties and candidates to offer Australians climate change policies that reflect the science and the gravity of the challenge.”



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Coal power investment slows, except in China

For the third year in a row, the number of coal-fired power plants under development worldwide dropped steeply in 2018, according to a new report released March 28 by Global Energy Monitor, Greenpeace India, and the Sierra Club.

The report, *Boom and Bust 2019: Tracking the Global Coal Plant Pipeline*, is the fifth annual survey of the coal plant pipeline. Its findings include a 20% drop in newly completed coal plants (53% in the past three years), a 39% drop in new construction starts (84% in the past three years), and a 24% drop in plants in pre-construction activity (69% over the past three years) year-on-year.

Coal plant retirements continued at a record pace. The US accounted for over half (17,614 megawatts, or 45 units) of global retirements, the second highest US retirement level on record, despite efforts by the Trump administration to prevent the closure of aging plants.

The decline in most coal power growth indicators reflected an increasingly constrained political and economic climate for coal plant developers, including financial restrictions by over 100 institutions and coal phase-out plans in 31 countries.

However, state-owned financial agencies in China, Japan, and South Korea have emerged as the largest sources of funding for coal plants outside their borders, respectively.

China restarts suspended projects

A glaring exception to the global decline in coal plant development was China, where satellite photos show developers have quietly restarted construction on dozens of suspended projects.

A new report by the China Electricity Council, which represents the country's power utilities, proposes setting the country's coal capacity cap at 1,300 gigawatts, a level that would allow 290 gigawatts of new capacity to be added – more than the entire coal fleet of the U.S. (259 gigawatts).

The *Boom and Bust 2019* report warns that global climate goals cannot be met without a full halt in new coal plants and a rapid retirement of operating coal plants.

“Since 2015, the amount of coal-fired capacity under development has fallen



Boom and Bust web graphic: Pic Danial Müller, Greenpeace

by sixty percent,” said Christine Shearer, researcher and analyst for Global Energy Monitor. “But just currently operating coal plants alone are incompatible with keeping global warming to well below two degrees. We need to radically phase down coal plant use over the next decade to keep on track for Paris climate goals.”

Coal will soon be a thing of the past

“As the cost of clean, renewable energy solutions like wind and solar continue to outpace outdated fossil fuels, it’s only a matter of time before coal is a thing of the past worldwide,” said Neha Mathew-Shah, environmental justice representative for the Sierra Club’s International Program.

“The US is on track to completely phase out coal and transition to a 100 percent clean energy economy by 2030, and we are at a critical stage where grassroots movements, especially in the Global South, fighting to move beyond coal and for just transition to clean energy need to be elevated and supported.”

“As the Chinese government starts to design energy targets for the next decade, power generators are pushing for hundreds of additional coal-fired power plants. While this would not necessarily breach China’s pledges under the Paris Agreement, another coal power construction spree would be near impossible to reconcile with emission reductions needed to avoid the worst impacts of global warming.

China’s energy targets have a greater bearing on global emissions than any other national policy decision,” said Lauri Myllyvirta, lead analyst at Greenpeace Global Air Pollution Unit.

Jan Erik Saugestad, CEO of Storebrand Asset Management (over US\$80bn AuM) said “The appetite for building new coal plants is waning around the world, including across the US which is undergoing a coal crash.”

“But these trends must be accelerated and huge climate risks remain, so wherever they can, fund managers should commit to a full phase out of coal, and be clear that coal has no future if we want to limit global warming. This must include limiting investments in companies involved in current and new coal fired power plants.”

Emissions too high to limit warming

The report is clear: emissions from currently operating coal plants, utilized at an average rate and lifetime are too high to hold global warming to 1.5°C or 2°C.

This needs to be a wake-up call – investors should plan for their exit, while increasing their investments in solutions.

• *The report can be downloaded here:*

<https://www.greenpeace.org.au/research/boom-and-bust-2019/>

NSW voters give Nationals the message: Prioritise water and environment over mining and big cotton irrigators

The massive swing away from The Nationals in the NSW seat of Barwon has shown the majority of residents in north-west NSW oppose the proposed Narrabri gasfield as they voted overwhelmingly for candidates that promised to stop it.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Georgina Woods said Premier Gladys Berejiklian and National Party leader John Barilaro should heed voters' calls and reject the destructive coal seam gas (CSG) proposal.

Fighting CSG for more than a decade

"Communities in north-west NSW have been fighting against CSG for more than a decade. The NSW Government should use this election result as a clear mandate to stop it," she said.

"The National Party candidate was the only serious contender in Barwon that did not oppose the Narrabri gas project.

"The successful Shooters, Fishers and Farmers candidate, Roy Butler, was one of many candidates who promised to stop the Narrabri gasfield, and that platform has now been overwhelmingly endorsed by voters.

"Huge National Party losses in polling booths like Coonamble and Coonabarabran where there is strong opposition to CSG highlights the impact the issue had.

"We call on the leader of the NSW Nationals, John Barilaro, to stand up and stop Santos' Narrabri gas project and protect the water resources of North West NSW from CSG."

Ms Woods said the threat the Narrabri CSG Project posed to water resources, including to a vital recharge area of the Great Artesian Basin, was completely unacceptable.

The Barwon election result is the latest evidence of widespread opposition to CSG including:

More than 100 communities across three million hectares in north-west NSW have surveyed their populations door to door and declared themselves gasfield free.

More than 23,000 submissions were made opposing the Narrabri gas project and extensive door-knocking

in Narrabri itself has revealed majority opposition to it.

After the election, CSG activist Rowena Macrae, who is fighting a gas pipeline to be routed through the family farm, said: "Countless attempts of organised bodies, groups and community members to get the Premier's government to listen to us in the years leading up to the election.

"We asked and pleaded to be heard on issues like water management and security, policing, health and the threat of CSG mining - and it fell on deaf ears."

North coasters reject Nats pork barreling

Traditional National voters in the NSW Northern Rivers also rejected the Nationals, who campaigned with fat pork-barrel promises to lavish money on the area.

Greens MP Tamara Smith, in the Ballina electorate (which includes Byron Bay) increased her majority, having won the seat when Nationals MP Don Page retired in the previous election.

Smith's Nationals opponent, Ben Franklin, had a campaign upset when visiting Premier Gladys Berejiklian's security personnel roughed up a well-known local journalist. He was trying to ask her a question about koalas.

Although the threat of CSG has receded on the Northern Rivers, over-development and habitat destruction loom large.

The neighbouring Lismore electorate fell to Labor's Janelle Saffin in a tight three-way contest with the Nationals and the Greens. Despite a strong campaign from the Greens' Sue Higginson, and lavish spending from the Nationals, Saffin had the advantage of previously being a popular Federal Labor MP in the area, which got her over the line.

With climate policy a top concern, the Coalition win in NSW may not be replicated in the May Federal election.

Nationals candidates are likely to be out of favour as rural voters run with the 'Anyone But Nats' campaign.

Adani's water plan: Discrepancies exposed

An independent review has uncovered severe limitations with Adani's latest groundwater management plan for its Carmichael Mine, including the company's inability to determine the source of 180 ancient Great Artesian Basin spring wetlands (the Doongmabulla Springs).

The research, conducted by Dr Matthew Currell of RMIT, also shows Adani's proposed monitoring network will have limited ability to detect drainage in the Springs until it is potentially too late to make any changes that could prevent such drawdown.

The review follows the release of the Federal Government's Galilee Basin Bioregional Assessment, which highlighted that the likely drawdown on the springs may exceed Adani's estimates and that there is a 5% chance that 120 springs in this complex will experience >2m drawdown due to the cumulative impacts of mining.

The Bioregional Assessment noted there were still data discrepancies with regard to the source aquifer of the Springs and still key data and knowledge gaps in relation to the impacts of mining on Galilee Basin water resources.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Carmel Flint said the Federal Government must now make a decision on the Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems Management Plan.

"Much of the public pressure from Adani has been on the Qld Government, and yet Adani cannot start construction until the water management plan is approved by both the state and the federal governments," she said.

"Dr Currell's review and the Federal Government's own Bioregional Assessment data released late last year, indicate that the science on the risks to the springs is still so uncertain that the plan should not be approved.

"This is now Adani's tenth attempt at its water management plan and each draft has been a dismal failure. This company cannot be trusted with Queensland's water."

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



Inside the news

Protests against **Adani** continued as **Mackay Conservation Group**, comprising ten people and a dog named Wolf, lined up outside Resource Industry Network conference at the attended by Adani CEO **Lucas Dow** (p7). Meanwhile, religious leaders protested in Melbourne. *The Australian* ran a puff-piece on Dow and a sympathetic article about the Carmichael project being 'a study in frustration'.

Leight Creek Energy shares have been rocketing since the company announced the amount of **gas reserves** associated with its dodgy underground coal gasification project (p12). Critics are suspicious LCE is more of a **stock market cowboy** than a competent energy company, especially taking account of its links to the diabolical **Linc Energy**.

A **Market Forces** report singled out "coal cowboys" **Whitehaven** and **New Hope**, along with oil and gas companies **Woodside**, **Santos** and **Oil Search** (p12), for continuing to ramp up fossil fuel production that will trash the Paris Agreement on climate change.

A *Guardian* report (p13) revealed how mining and resources companies were given an **extraordinary level of access** to the highest rungs of the New South Wales government in the past four years, securing roughly 188 meetings with ministers in 235 weeks. The **NSW Minerals Council** was prominent on the list.

Giles Parkinson takes a good look at the **Coalition's** list of energy projects being considered for government support, including a possible upgrade for coal baron and party donor **Trevor St Baker's Vales Point** coal power station (p14).

The **Coalition** also tried to placate **Barnaby Joyce** with \$10m for a feasibility study that will examine whether it is desirable to **revive the decommissioned coal plant** at Collinsville, south of Townsville.

Last word to Giles Parkinson: "We should hardly need to discuss it were it not for the insistence of a group of Queensland LNP politicians, supported by the likes of Barnaby Joyce, that keep on making headlines over the issue." (p15)

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Cloudcatcher Media's feature-length film: battle to save the Pilliga
<https://vimeo.com/257444267>



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

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In the news this week

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THE ADANI SAGA

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/carmichael-project-is-a-study-in-frustration/news-story/067082906aa4d4c1a9b8e2d38efc8c9b>

Carmichael project is a study in frustration

Jared Owens, *The Australian*, 22/03/2019

Not since the Franklin Dam blockade of the early 1980s has Australia's environmental debate been so dominated by a single project as it is by Adani's proposed Carmichael coalmine.

Launched in 2010 as Australia's biggest new coal project, the original \$16.5 billion plan conceived a 60-million-tonne "mega mine" connected to a port by a 189km private railway, creating about 10,000 jobs.

But as Adani's political backers fell away, along with hopes of a taxpayer-subsidised loan, the Indian conglomerate has scaled back its ambitions to a less remarkable 10 million to 28 million-tonne per year mine employing as few as 1000 people. ...

Activists have also attempted to stop Adani through legal action, exploiting every avenue in their search for a silver bullet. Even if they don't succeed, there are hopes that such legal "lawfare" could burden Adani with so many court cases and regulation that the company simply surrenders. ...

"Queensland cannot expect to be talking about protecting the reef in its future and at the same time opening up massive coal basins. They are not compatible anymore," says Lissa Schindler of the Australian Marine Conservation Society. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/the-deal-magazine/lucas-dow-ceo-adani/news-story/0b15f8e7b309d6c3b4d7b160c6dc9de3>

Lucas Dow, CEO, Adani

Rosanne Barrett, *The Australian*, 22/03/2019

There is no project shaking up Queensland politics, industry and society quite like Adani's Carmichael mine, and Lucas Dow is the man determined to make it happen.

Adani Mining Australia's chief executive officer wants to kickstart the \$2 billion project and do it now. It will initially dig up 10 million tonnes of thermal coal a year from central



Anti-Adani protesters give Wagners, who hope to build an airport for the mine, a message. Photo: Galilee Blockade

Queensland's Galilee Basin, transport it via a new rail line to the Port of Abbot Point and export it to India and southeast Asia. ...

A graduate in mining engineering from the University of Queensland, Dow has long seen Brisbane as a mining town at heart. ...

"It's just such a great place to live. We have everything that the country's other capital cities have to offer, only with better weather and without the ego."

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/traditional-owners-at-war-over-their-land/news-story/1b4025a7b63f26e97975154d35d64410>

Traditional owners at war over their land

Jared Owens, *The Australian*, 22/03/2019

Almost 15 years after the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples claimed native title over their ancestral lands in central Queensland, another brawl has erupted over Adani's proposed Carmichael coalmine.

The Carmichael project's indigenous land-use agreement – endorsed by clan members, 294 to 1, in a 2016 ballot – promises \$250 million of economic opportunities, education and training packages, and a guarantee that 7.5 per cent of jobs would go to W&J traditional owners.

But a minority faction, backed by environmental activists, has launched a Federal Court challenge, claiming the vote was hijacked by fake clan members while opponents of the project neglected to turn out. ...

The minority faction had previously spearheaded a push against the agreement on the grounds that it was not carried unanimously as required by the Native Title Act.

This prompted federal parliament to enshrine majority-rule when traditional owners are considering land-use agreements, in legislation derided by activists as "the Adani amendment".

<https://www.dailymercury.com.au/news/protesters-out-to-make-a-splash-for-water-day/3679438/?cspi=155347183714419e143de6ce0cc93cf808ef3c662bd>

Protesters out to make a splash for water day

Zizi Averill, Mackay Daily Mercury, 22/03/2019

Ten protesters, and a very enthusiastic dog named Wolf led an environmental protest against the mining conglomerate Adani yesterday.

As part of World Water Day protests, Mackay Conservation Group staged the protest outside a Resource Industry Network conference at the MECC attended by Adani CEO Lucas Dow.

Community organiser Michael Kane said the mining giant was one of the greatest threats to the region's freshwater supplies. ...

However, one person at the RIN conference said the protesters were "hypocrites".

"They live in houses powered by coal. In a country run on coal," he said.

<https://www.afr.com/business/infrastructure/wagners-battles-stock-slump-as-anti-adani-activists-plan-new-attacks-20190324-p5170e>

Wagners battles stock slump as anti-Adani activists plan new attacks

Jenny Wiggins, AFR, 24/03/2019

Wagners is coming under renewed attack from activists who don't want the Queensland construction group to make money from building infrastructure for Adani's Carmichael coal mine after its share price plunged amid fears the company will lose a key cement contract. ...

<https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/adani-fined-for-releasing-contaminated-water-from-abbot-point-terminal-in-february/news-story/52fb1d6d556fa36279451f7eeba5c58a>

Adani fined for releasing contaminated water from Abbot Point terminal in February

Madura McCormack, Townsville Bulletin, 25/03/2019

Adani has been fined \$13,000 for breaching its environmental licence at the Abbot Point coal terminal during the February flood catastrophe.

The mining giant revealed the Department of Environment and science had issued a fine of \$13,055 on Monday after Adani released water containing nearly double the amount of contaminants allowed from Abbot Point into the Caley Valley Wetlands. ... Adani is expected to make a decision on whether it will fight the charge or cop the fine in coming days.



Adani released this graphic as it denied dirty water discharged from Abbot Point coal terminal had caused any harm. Graphic: Adani

The company has said there was "no environmental harm" to the Caley Valley Wetlands, that no floodwater entered the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and that elevation of contaminant levels was a "fraction of the levels usually found in flood events".

This is the second time Adani has been fined for breaching its environmental licence.

It is still fighting a prosecution by the DES in relation to its 2017 release of contaminated water from Abbot Point during Cyclone Debbie. ...

<https://www.theage.com.au/business/companies/adani-plays-down-knee-jerk-reaction-to-chinese-coal-threats-20190325-p517ev.html>

Adani plays down 'knee-jerk' reaction to Chinese coal threats

Matthew Dunckley, The Age, 26/03/2019

Concerns about China's appetite for Australian coal may have startled the sector's investors but will not disrupt Adani's plans for its mine project in Queensland, insists the company's chief executive. ...

Adani Australia mining chief executive Lucas Dow told the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age on Monday that it was not clear precisely what was behind the issues with Australian coal in China. ...

"It is probably a near-term situation and long-term fundamentals are still strong in terms of demand," Mr Dow said. "It is a knee-jerk reaction [from investors]."

He said the predicted growth in demand from countries like Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines would underpin the development of ... Adani's Carmichael project in Queensland's Galilee Basin. ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2019-03-26/adani-ready-to-go-claims-ceo/10930126>

Adani ready to go at Carmichael mine, claims governments are dragging the chain

Amy McCosker, ABC, 27/03/2019

Standing beside a five-metre wide strip of cleared scrub, Adani Mining CEO Lucas Dow said he would start digging for coal today, if he was allowed.

The company claims it is ready to begin work at the Carmichael mine, but the ongoing approval process is hindering progress.

"There'll be mining pit where those folks are standing," Mr Dow said, as he gestured to a group of men in high-vis shirts standing by a grader just metres away.

"There'll be an outer pit dump for the waste material over here and an industrial area too, so that will be workshops, offices and those sorts of things."

If some imagination is needed for the pit area, the same cannot be said for the mine camp down the road which is well and truly built, albeit on a smaller scale than it will be when, or if, the mine gets into full production.

The site, 160 kilometres north-west of Clermont, is currently a ghost town with rows and rows of empty workers accommodation, gyms and a dining room. ...

<https://www.eternews.com.au/australia/religious-leaders-stage-funeral-for-coal/>

Religious leaders stage 'funeral for coal'

Rebecca Abbott, Eternity News, 27/03/2019

Religious leaders are banding together today to hold "Funeral for Coal" vigils outside the offices of Labor leader Bill

Shorten in Melbourne and Shadow Environment Minister Tony Burke in Sydney.

Between 10am and midday, the vigils are being staged by interfaith organisation, the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC). It aims to persuade Labor to block the Adani coal mine planned for Carmichael in the Galilee Basin in central Queensland. ...

A smaller Funeral for Coal was held yesterday outside the office of Shadow Treasurer Chris Bowen in western Sydney, attended by around 18 people, who prayed and meditated during the vigil. ...

“Civil society has much less power than it should have. And so, we’re trying to tap into the witnessing power of us joining together with Muslims and Buddhists, and transcending our differences and our tribes to actually work together to save humanity. I think there’s power in that.” [Organiser, The Ormerod]

COAL ROCKS ON

https://reneweconomy.com.au/hunter-valley-group-plans-to-re-open-australias-dirtiest-coal-generator-46960/?utm_source=RE+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=cd4d-40ba3b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_03_22_12_12&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-cd4d-40ba3b-40461137

Hunter Valley group plans to re-open Australia’s “dirtiest” coal generator

Giles Parkinson, Renew Economy, 22/03/2019

The new owners of a mothballed coal generator near Singleton in the Hunter Valley plan to restart operations at the 150MW facility, in what would be the first reversal of a coal closure in Australia amid a widening political divide over climate and energy.

The Redbank coal facility near Singleton was closed in 2014 after being put into administration following the failure of Babcock & Brown. ...

At the time of its closure, it was considered to be the dirtiest power station in Australia.

Now Hunter Energy – headed by James Myatt, a former head of the Australian offshoot of US solar company Sungevity, and a co-founder (with ARENA boss Darren Miller) of upstart retailer Mojo Power – wants to re-open the plant and hopes to do so in early 2020.

Hunter Energy is believed to have also put in a proposal to the federal government’s underwriting scheme for new generation ...

News reports last year suggested

that “blockchain” technology could also be added to simplify “behind the meter” transactions, but according to one of the company’s backers, Richard Poole, that idea has been ditched.

Poole became a centre of attention in the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption Operation Jasper inquiry, which found he and others acted corruptly by concealing the Obeid family’s interest in a Hunter coal area. ...

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/central-coast/wallarah-2-court-challenge-denied-as-wyong-votes/news-story/df824cc5d73739ff074c7b18fb6231b77c-spt=1553471686jlabfd5de27212c14a6d901f4f3de1809e>

Wallarah 2 court challenge denied as Wyong votes

Fiona Killman, Central Coast Gosford Express Advocate, 23/03/2019

Wyong Labor MP David Harris campaigned hard on a commitment to scrap the controversial Wallarah 2 mine but a court decision on Friday will bolster the mine’s chances of forging ahead.

The Australian Coal Alliance’s legal campaign to stop the contentious mine was thrown out of the Land and Environment Court late yesterday afternoon.

Mr Harris, whose opposition to the mine puts him at loggerheads with the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union, confirmed to the Express Advocate that an appeal would now be lodged. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/hazelwood-shutdown-pumped-agl-energy-profit/news-story/12ca3f661904dfd1122e649efdb9291a>

Hazelwood shutdown pumped AGL Energy profit

Perry Williams, The Australian, 25/03/2019

AGL Energy grabbed an extra \$832 million or 60 per cent jump in gross profits from its wholesale electricity business after the closure of the Hazelwood brown coal-fired power plant in Victoria in 2017, according to analysis by the Victoria Energy Policy Centre. ...

Coal generators earned an extra \$3.47 billion from the spot market in the year after Hazelwood closed, with the bulk of costs subsequently passed through to consumers.

“Prices in the wholesale electricity market since the closure of Hazelwood reflect the exercise of market power in those periods in which coal-fired generators set prices in each region of the market,” Victoria Energy Policy Centre

authors Bruce Mountain and Steven Percy said. ...

Concerns about market concentration and the operation of the market remain significant issues, the Victoria Energy report says. The big three “gentailers” – AGL, EnergyAustralia and Origin Energy – hold large retail market shares in many states and control more than 60 per cent of capacity in NSW, Victoria and South Australia, raising concern over their influence on both supply and pricing. ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-25/energy-companies-gouge-customers-hazelwood-electricity-bill/10910948>

Australian energy giant AGL ‘gouged’ customers after Hazelwood closure, new research shows

Liz Hobday, Chris Gillett & Danny Tran, ABC, 25/03/2019

Some of the nation’s biggest energy companies have allegedly used the closure of Australia’s dirtiest coal-fired power station to price gouge customers and make an extra \$3 billion in wholesale profits, according to a new report.

AGL’s competitors Energy Australia and Origin say they have not price gouged customers

The Victoria University research, obtained exclusively by 7.30, reveals that price rises filled the coffers of Australia’s energy giants with an extra \$3 billion in revenue after the shuttering of the Hazelwood power plant in Victoria.

When the closure of Hazelwood was announced just a few months earlier, AGL increased the price of much of the coal-fired power on offer from the Bayswater and Liddell plants in NSW. ...

[Researcher] Dr Bruce Mountain said Australian households were “paying amongst the highest prices for electricity of any country in the world”.

“What we’ve found raises very profound questions for the design and operation and oversight of the market,” he said.

“I think the failure is so significant that it justifies a serious rethink, a no-holds-barred serious, independent rethink of this electricity market.” ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/consumer-affairs/agl-s-use-of-huge-market-clout-costs-consumers-3b-a-year-report-20190325-p517a5.html>

AGL's use of 'huge' market clout costs consumers \$3b a year: report

Peter Hannam, SMH, 25/03/2019

AGL's dominance of the electricity sector after it bought up two former NSW government coal-fired power plants allowed it to lift market-wide wholesale prices to the tune of \$3 billion a year when another rival producer closed. ...

Federal Energy Minister Angus Taylor seized on the report on Monday, saying it revealed "price gouging of a massive scale" and added weight to demands by the Morrison government for Labor to back its "big stick" legislation aimed at curtailing the pricing power of big energy companies.

The report by Bruce Mountain and Steven Percy found residential consumers have had to pay \$200 more a year on average in the wake of Hazelwood's closure. It said the "main factor" was "AGL's exercise of market power at its Bayswater and Liddell power stations". ...

<https://thewest.com.au/business/energy/wa-power-stations-off-boil-as-renewables-slash-use-of-coal-ng-b881131719z>

WA power stations off boil as renewables slash use of coal

Daniel Mercer, West Australian, 23/03/2019

Coal-fired power plants operated by State-owned power provider Synergy are running at as little as one-third of their capacity amid the onslaught of renewable energy flooding WA's main electricity grid.

In a sign of the financial pain being inflicted on its traditional thermal generation business, Synergy said the 340MW Collie power station ran at just 34 per cent of its capacity in January.

Figures show none of the utility's three coal-fired generators of Collie, Muja C and Muja D ran anywhere near its capacity in the three months to February 28, despite demand for power typically peaking in summer. ...

The data show the extent to which Synergy's business is being buffeted by surging levels of green power in the South West interconnected system, led by rooftop solar, of which about 1000MW has been installed. ...



Newspaper, *The Age*, published this photo of the Hazelwood Mine fire in 2014.

Photo: *The Age*

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-22/hazelwood-coal-fire-worker-seeks-compensation/10925464>

Hazelwood coal fire worker seeks compensation for terminal lung condition

Jarrod Whittaker, ABC, 22/03/2019

A contractor who developed a debilitating lung condition after working to extinguish the Hazelwood mine fire in 2014 is seeking compensation in the Victorian Magistrates Court.

David Briggs, 59, worked for 12 weeks in the Hazelwood mine to help extinguish the mine fire which blanketed the town of Morwell in Victoria's east with smoke for 45 days.

He has since been diagnosed with a fibroid pulmonary disease and now has a lung capacity of about 40 per cent and requires an oxygen bottle to breathe. ...

His WorkCover claim was rejected by the company's insurer and he is now taking his employer to court seeking to have the decision overturned. ...

He said he was given a medical before beginning work which showed his lungs were in top condition. ...

"A person's height, weight, smoker or non-smoker, they have like an average for each individual person and my measure was nearly 150 per cent," Mr Briggs said.

'It's been really difficult'

Voices of the Valley president Wendy Farmer, whose group was set up to advocate for people affected by the mine fire, described his case as a precedent.

Ms Farmer sat in court with Mr Briggs and said she believed he was "one of many".

"We already know of many that have come forward and said they've got health impacts already," she said.

"I think this might even awaken those that realise that they're not feeling well, that they're not getting better and start to question (if) has this fire impacted on their health."

<https://www.afr.com/business/mining/peabody-re-writes-the-rulebook-after-wildfire-at-north-goonyella-20190327-p51853>

Peabody rewrites the rulebook after wildfire at North Goonyella

Matthew Stevens, AFR, 28/03/2019

Peabody Energy will pursue broad-based reform of the way it manages its pan-Pacific coal mining fleet following the explosive collision of failings that resulted in an underground wildfire at its most profitable single operation, the North Goonyella coking coal project in Queensland's Bowen Basin.

The St Louis-based miner, which bills itself as the world's biggest listed pure coal play, this week delivered the Queensland Mines Inspectorate with the results of an internal review of the causes of, and responses to, an underground fire that has seen North Goonyella shut down since last September. ...

Peabody has accepted the proposition that North Goonyella management did not fully understand what was happening beneath their feet, that they then fuelled the primary problem rather than defuse it, and that its hazard management and crisis response efforts were challenged by the "differing viewpoints" of site management and the external experts and mine regula-

tors that were necessarily invited to help with crisis management. ...

Ahead of that fire starting The Australian Financial Review was gifted news from the coal face that North Goonyella had gas and super-heating issues, that a fire was imminent, that the mine risked losing its longwall equipment, which was mid-move, and that management seemed not to be on top of its response. ...

Peabody's will not be the last word on the events that locked it out of North Goonyella. As is necessary routine in events this serious, the QMI is running its own investigation. Many in the Queensland coal sector see that appraisal as a litmus of the health of the inspectorate and its capacity to effectively oversee the state of coal mining safety in Queensland.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/dangerous-mercury-has-skyrocketed-since-coal-plants-built-20190328-p518iw.html>

'Dangerous' mercury has skyrocketed since coal plants built

Nicole Hasham, SMH, 28/03/2019

Experts say mercury levels near coal-fired power stations in Victoria and NSW have skyrocketed since the facilities opened despite assurances from their operators, and have urged the federal government to curb emissions of the lethal substance.

The 20 university researchers say Australia should follow the example of 107 countries including China, the United States and those in the European Union that have ratified a global agreement to limit mercury pollution. ...

"Despite statements by some power station operators that the amount of mercury released by their plants is not of concern, our work in the Latrobe Valley in Victoria shows that mercury in the environment has increased by six times since places like Hazelwood, Yallourn and Lay Yang began operations," she said.

The researchers took core samples of sediment in lakes to determine both historical and current mercury levels. In earlier similar research around the Liddell and Bayswater coal plants in the NSW Hunter Valley it found mercury had increased four-fold since 1957, before the plants were built. ...



After many delays, Shell shipped the first cargo of condensate from its Prelude floating LNG plant, in the tanker Advantage Atom.

Photo: Derrick Johnson, MarineTraffic.com

OIL & GAS LEAKS

<https://thewest.com.au/business/energy/at-last-shells-lng-giant-prelude-ships-first-cargo-ng-b881145579z>

At last, Shell's LNG giant Prelude ships first cargo

Peter Milne, West Australian, 25/03/2019

Shell's Prelude floating LNG vessel shipped a cargo of condensate over the weekend, its first product offtake since arriving off the Kimberley coast almost two years ago. ...

The 250m-long Advantage Atom tanker arrived at Prelude from Singapore on Wednesday to pick up the condensate, and left on Saturday, according to vessel tracking website MarineTraffic. Shell had planned for the Prelude to first produce cash flow last year.

It was reported a tanker charter arranged to load condensate in February was cancelled because of technical problems on the Prelude. ...

<https://thewest.com.au/business/energy/future-emissions-shock-for-was-major-lng-players-ng-b881143493z>

Future emissions shock for WA's major LNG players

Peter Milne, West Australian, 22/03/2019

The LNG players that pushed back against new large projects having to offset all their greenhouse gases produce a dominant and growing share of the State's carbon emissions from industry and power generation.

WestBusiness has analysed carbon emission figures released last week by the Clean Energy Regulator from industrial plants during the 12 months to June 2018 together with power stations emissions released in February. ...

In the 2018 financial year, 83 WA facilities emitted more than the 100,000 tonnes a year of CO₂ benchmark beyond which the EPA wanted to apply its guidance to new projects.

Production of LNG, and to a lesser extent gas for domestic use, produced 37 per cent of the 62 million tonnes of carbon emissions from the WA facilities, and that share is poised to rise.

The Gorgon LNG plant that had all its three trains in production for just a third of the year emitted nine million tonnes to be the State's biggest carbon polluter. ...

<https://www.afr.com/news/policy/climate/coalition-wins-offers-hope-on-narrabri-gas-but-near-term-price-a-worry-20190325-p51797>

Coalition win offers hope on Narrabri gas

Angela Macdonald-Smith, AFR, 25/03/2019

East coast manufacturers have voiced relief at the Coalition's win in the NSW state election, saying it will clear the way for an independent approval process for Santos' \$3 billion Narrabri project but are calling for federal government action in the nearer term to bring down gas prices to more affordable levels.

Industrial gas buyers including basic plastics maker Qenos and Weston Aluminium had joined Santos and the Australian Workers' Union in criticising NSW opposition leader Michael Daley's pledge to block the controversial coal seam gas project because of potential risks to water and land. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/giants-origin-agl-face-pressure-on-carbon-plans/news-story/0a99c9dbd1ed-064247495fe61a4a31587csp1553728363ja017e88c8d-dc093c68190becb4ee7326>

Energy giants Origin, AGL face pressure on carbon plans

Perry Williams, The Australian, 28/03/2019

Origin Energy and AGL Energy will be asked to quit coal by 2030 and the big four banks and Macquarie to shutter any outstanding loans to OECD thermal coal mines by 2030 under proposed resolutions drafted by environmental activists Market Forces. ...

Market Forces is considering issuing more shareholder notices to some of Australia's most prominent companies in a bid to hold companies in line with the Paris agreement to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels. ...

ANZ Bank, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, NAB, Westpac and Macquarie will also be asked to include targets for future levels of exposure to carbon-related assets including cutting thermal coal exposure in the OECD by no later than 2030.

The group has also demanded to know how BHP and Origin will manage near-term fossil fuel infrastructure write-downs and declare how their capital spending decisions will align to the goals of the Paris accord. ...

IMPORT INSANITY

<https://www.afr.com/opinion/andrew-forrests-squadron-still-plans-to-land-kembla-gas-project-20190324-h1cqjy>

Andrew Forrest's Squadron still plans to land Kembla gas project

Matthew Stevens, AFR, 24/05/2019

Stuart Johnston is the affable former Shell man who id chief executive of Andrew Forrest's quixotic energy diversion, Squadron Energy.

And Johnston is the guy who introduced Forrest to the potential that liquid natural gas imports might be a profitable answer to the gas drought on the Australian east coast.

Squadron is the biggest owner of Australian Industrial Energy, which is closing in on NSW government approval for a project that would see Pork Kembla host the \$200 million kit that would enable imported LNG to be re-gasified, stored and then pumped to the state's energy-challenged industrial and commercial customers. ...

"From our point of view, we think [regulatory] consent is imminent" [he said].

The Johnston view is that commercial certainty can only arrive after regulatory sign-off. The build and service contracts are "ready to award" and AIE remains convinced it can get to first gas just 12 months from a final investment decision. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/27/woodside-petroleum-sought-australian-taxpayer-funds-for-african-oil-and-gas-field>

Woodside Petroleum sought Australian taxpayer funds for African oil and gas field

Lisa Martin, The Guardian, 27/03/2019

The resources giant Woodside Petroleum has sought Australian taxpayer funds to build an oil and gas field off the coast of Senegal in west Africa.

The Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (Efic) is considering backing the project, with Woodside hoping to start drilling by mid-2020.

Woodside believes it could produce 75,000 to 125,000 barrels of oil a day, and predicts production could last about 20 years. ...

The progressive thinktank the Australia Institute is concerned ... Efic changes will open the door to more fossil fuel investments overseas undermining action on climate change.

"Contrary to such best practice, Efic has repeatedly refused to provide any information about how it considers climate change," the Australia Institute said. "Indeed, Efic has argued that the Paris agreement does not apply to its lending, because it is not a government." ...

Efic has a chequered history of overseas investments. Its largest-ever loan of \$500m to ExxonMobil, OilSearch, Santos and the Papua New Guinea government in 2009 failed to deliver a promised economic boom to the country and has sparked tribal violence.

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/energy-market-operator-calls-for-lng-imports-to-avoid-gas-shortages-20190327-p5185z.html?cspt=1553727956193324d-66d71a500e6d2438edf5babc96>

Energy market operator calls for LNG imports to avoid gas shortages

Cole Latimer, SMH, 28/03/2019

The energy market operator has issued fresh warnings of potential gas shortages on the east coast unless new pipelines and import terminals are built.

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) says Victoria and NSW could face a gas shortfall of 20 petajoules unless more sources of gas are found. One petajoule of gas could power a city the size of Newcastle or Wollongong for a year. ...

One petajoule of gas could power a city the size of Newcastle or Wollongong for a year. ...

AEMO recommended building LNG import terminals to help alleviate the potential gas supply shortages but said it would likely not reduce high gas prices. ...

AEMO also called on NSW and Victoria to develop existing gas reserves and recommended increasing gas pipeline capacity from Queensland to reduce potential shortages. Queensland is the nation's largest exporter of gas.

The report blamed the potential shortages on NSW and Victoria's ban on gas exploration, and declining Victorian offshore gas fields production. ...

<https://www.afr.com/news/aemo-warns-east-coast-gas-to-face-shortfalls-from-winter-2024-20190327-h1cv4y>

AEMO warns east coast gas to face shortfalls from winter 2024

Ben Potter, AFR, 28/03/2019

The east coast gas market faces tight supply from 2021 and shortfalls from winter 2024 if more is not done to replace rapidly declining output from Bass Strait, the Australian Energy Market Operator says.

AEMO says in its Gas Statement of Opportunities (GSOO) and Victorian Gas Planning (VPGR) reports that recent efforts by industry and government to ease gas supply constraints that emerged in 2017 have ensured adequate supply in south eastern Australia until 2023.

But the market body says supply will be tight from 2021 to 2023 and cold weather or the increasingly frequent failures from ageing coal generators may exacerbate the situation by ramping up the electricity market's demand for gas. ...

The problem is that not enough is being done to develop alternative production. The number of exploration, appraisal and development wells drilled in south eastern Australia has collapsed in the last decade, pipeline capacity into the area limits imports of gas from northern Australia, and proposals to import liquefied natural gas floated by AGL Energy and others are still just that. ...

Within the next five years, domestic gas demand, particularly in the southern states, will be difficult to meet in its entirety without either exploration and development of new southern

resources, LNG imports, or major pipeline expansions to bring Queensland and Northern Territory gas south.

Further storage facilities may help meet peak demand but only after more gas is made available, the reports say.

LINC STINK

<https://www.afr.com/business/energy/peter-bond-faces-more-charges-20190327-p5180j>

Peter Bond faces more charges

Mark Ludlow, AFR, 27/03/2019

Former Rich Lister Peter Bond is facing more charges over the environmental damage caused by his former company Linc Energy at its controversial underground coal gasification plant in south-west Queensland.

But it is taxpayers who will most likely pick up the bill for remediation of the site.

With Mr Bond and several other former Linc Energy executives facing criminal charges over toxic gas contaminating soil and groundwater on the UGC trial site at Chinchilla between 2007 and 2013, the Department of Environment and Science has confirmed it has charged Mr Bond with two new offences in relation to allegedly breaching his Environmental Protection Order. ...

Last year, Linc Energy was hit with a \$4.5 million fine for serious environmental damage, but District Court judge Michael Shanahan noted at the time the fines against Mr Bond's former company were unlikely to get paid.

Linc Energy, which was once valued at \$1.1 billion, went into liquidation in May 2016 with debts of \$320 million.

Liquidator PPB Advisory was successful in the courts in arguing the now defunct company should not be required to pay the fines. ...

LEIGH CK STINK

<https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/business/jobs/leigh-creek-energy-shares-jump-as-the-company-claims-to-have-the-biggest-gas-deposit-in-south-australia/news-story/6c66f69bcb2f2bae8168da5fcdcf33d>

Leigh Creek Energy shares jump as the company claims to have the biggest gas deposit in South Australia

Cameron England, Advertiser, 27/03/2019

Leigh Creek Energy shares have jumped more than 20 per cent after the company said it had defined a gas resource "larger than reserves currently located within the Cooper Basin".

The company's shares were trading 7.5c, or 23.8 per cent, higher at 39c in early trade.

LCK recently completed a trial of a pilot plant at its underground coal gasification project at Leigh Creek.

The company said analysis of the results of the trial showed it had 1153 petajoules of proved and probable synthetic gas at the project.

LCK said its gas reserve was contained entirely within one of the three coal seams located within the Telford Basin, "meaning there is additional opportunity for reserve and resource upgrades in the future from the other seams".

"The size of the reserve and scope for more certifications at the former Leigh Creek coal mine site means LCK has capacity to enter both the pipeline gas and fertiliser production markets."

The in-situ process being used by LCK involves igniting coal seams underground and capturing the partially combusted gases as they escape.

Managing director Phil Staveley said the company's gas reserve was large enough to support operating 20 or more chambers in commercial applications for over 20 years. ...

HYDROGEN HYPE

https://thedriven.io/2019/03/24/hydrogen-for-light-road-transport-renewables-key-to-emission-cuts/?utm_source=RE+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=2ab-5c1ce01-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_03_25_02_31&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-2ab-5c1ce01-40461137

Hydrogen for light road transport: Renewables key to emission cuts

Bede Doherty, Renew Economy, 24/03/2019

Emissions from passenger and light commercial road vehicles make up 10 per cent of Australia's total CO2 emissions, so reducing these emissions can make a significant contribution to reducing Australia's CO2 emissions. ...

This series of two articles examines hydrogen to see how it stacks up against these criteria, viz, lower emissions and lower cost. ...

The energy costs of switching the Australian fleet to Hydrogen have been calculated at around 150 TWh – over 60% of all electricity currently generated by today's Australian grid.

Since the grid has not got a spare 60% of capacity available – especially in summer – that means a massive expansion of power stations (generation) and the electricity transmission grid (poles & wires) would be required.

This approach would also be a substantial threat to grid stability.

Such a grid expansion would therefore be extremely expensive.

In contrast, one might ask what the effect a switch to Lithium Battery Vehicles might have on the grid instead of a switch to Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles.

The effect is quite small, requiring just 15% of the current production of electricity. Some electricity would potentially be used more at night (due to lower prices for electricity at night and because many people will plug in when they go home at night) in order to top-up a vehicle daily. ...

• *Bede Doherty is an independent consultant in climate change mitigation, specialising in transport including fuels/powertrains, fuelling infrastructure and emissions.*

CLIMATE CRISIS

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/25/out-of-line-top-australian-companies-accused-of-undermining-paris-deal>

'Out of line': top Australian companies accused of undermining Paris deal

Ben Smee, The Guardian, 25/03/2019

New analysis shows 22 of Australia's largest companies are actively working to undermine the Paris agreement targets, betting shareholders' money on strategies that assume global climate change action fails.

Investor action group Market Forces says those companies – worth a combined \$121bn and representing 7% of the ASX300 – are "out of line and out of time" and has called on shareholders to divest their holdings. ...

"A handful of Australian companies are undermining efforts to limit global warming by pursuing new fossil fuel projects, or basing their business plans on energy projection scenarios that would doom the Paris agreement to failure," the report says. ...

Three companies – AGL, Origin and BHP – earned a reprieve from the list of the worst offenders, despite acting in a similar manner, because Market Forces said they had shown some progress towards aligning their goals with Paris. ...

The Market Forces report singled out "coal cowboys" Whitehaven and New Hope, which it said had plans to establish new coalmines, or expand existing ones, based on forecasts that assume the failure of Paris.

Oil and gas companies Woodside, Santos and Oil Search had each "faced

increased investor engagement over climate change in recent years, but this has done nothing to dissuade their plans to increase fossil fuel production”, the report said. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/mar/25/coal-more-expensive-wind-solar-us-energy-study>

‘Coal is on the way out’: study finds fossil fuel now pricier than solar or wind

Oliver Milman, The Guardian, 25/03/2019

Around three-quarters of US coal production is now more expensive than solar and wind energy in providing electricity to American households, according to a new study.

“Even without major policy shift we will continue to see coal retire pretty rapidly,” said Mike O’Boyle, the co-author of the report for Energy Innovation, a renewables analysis firm. “Our analysis shows that we can move a lot faster to replace coal with wind and solar. The fact that so much coal could be retired right now shows we are off the pace.” ...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-26/global-carbon-emissions-hit-record-high-in-2018-according-to-iaa/10941378>

Global carbon emissions hit record high in 2018, International Energy Agency says

Sue Lannin, ABC, 26/03/2019

Greater demand for energy and more extreme temperatures saw global carbon emissions reach a record high in 2018 partly because of higher coal use, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Carbon emissions rose by 1.7 per cent in 2018 to a record 33.1 billion tonnes, with coal making up one third of the total increase, according to the IEA’s Global Energy and CO2 Status Report.

That is despite energy generation from wind and solar farms growing at a double-digit pace.

Most of the electricity generated by coal came from new power plants in Asia. ...

The IEA said in its annual assessment of global energy consumption that demand increased last year by 2.3 per cent, with fossil fuels accounting for 70 per cent of the rise in energy use.

The agency said one fifth of the rise in energy demand came from the need for more heating and cooling because of cold snaps and hotter summer temperatures. ...

NUKE MADNESS

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-28/will-australia-finally-get-a-national-nuclear-waste-facility/10903498>

Will Australia finally get a national nuclear waste facility?

Anelique Donnellan, ABC, 28/03/2019

For 40 years Australia has sought to centralise its nuclear waste, but the question of where to put it remains unanswered because of bitter division.

Key points: The Federal Government wants to store the nation’s nuclear waste in South Australia: Three sites have been shortlisted, two in Kimba and one in Hawker; The proposal has divided both communities.

FOSSIL POLITICS

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/labor-mp-michael-danby-charged-taxpayers-10-000-to-inspect-gas-plant-with-his-wife-20190321-p5167v.html>

Labor MP Michael Danby charged taxpayers \$10,000 to inspect gas plant with his wife

Michael Koziol & Nigel Gladstone, SMH, 22/03/2019

Outgoing Labor MP Michael Danby charged taxpayers more than \$10,000 to spend a week in northern Australia with his wife following a parliamentary junket to inspect a gas plant.

Mr Danby, who has been forced to pay back previous travel claims, was part of a delegation of eight Labor MPs who spent in excess of \$27,000 in public funds to tour a LNG project owned by Japanese oil giant INPEX.

The whirlwind tour to Broome and Darwin in late October included Labor’s three federal parliamentarians from the Northern Territory, two from Perth and three from the east coast: Matt Thistlethwaite, Julian Hill and Mr Danby.

According to attendees, Mr Danby was the only MP who brought his spouse, and records show he was the only one who charged taxpayers for family reunion travel related to the trip. ...

The Ithycas LNG venture combines three mega projects, including the longest subsea gas export pipeline in the southern hemisphere. It is also the largest Japanese investment in Australian history and the largest overseas investment by any Japanese company. ...

Australian Electoral Commission records show Labor received \$40,000 from INPEX between 2009-10 and 2014-15, listed as “other receipts”, which can include services, seats at dinners and other contributions. ...

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/22/mining-sector-met-nsw-ministers-almost-every-week-over-four-years?fbclid=IwAR0mkEDdYq35oX1CWGr5JT_w6m4Kib1pkH5fRLspg1gUs6cA_zogWCG0

Mining sector met NSW ministers almost every week over four years

Nick Evershed & Christopher Knaus, The Guardian, 22/03/2019

Mining and resources companies were given an extraordinary level of access to the highest rungs of the New South Wales government in the past four years, securing roughly 188 meetings with ministers in 235 weeks.

An analysis of four and a half years of the state’s ministerial diaries shows the NSW Minerals Council has obtained regular access to resources, planning and finance ministers, and the offices of premiers and deputy premiers.

The council was given 61 meetings with NSW ministers, more than anyone except the NSW Farmers Association and Penrith city council.

Further meetings were granted to multinational resource and energy companies such as Shenhua, Whitehaven, Glencore, AGL, Rio Tinto, BHP, Origin Energy, Santos, Anglo American and Centennial Coal. ...

Environment groups were given much less access, the data shows. The group with the most ministerial access among these was the Lock the Gate Alliance, which campaigns against coal and gas developments.

It had just 19 meetings with NSW ministers. ...

<https://www.smh.com.au/nsw-election-2019/premier-cried-for-help-and-you-didn-t-listen-20190325-p517d6.html>

Premier – we cried for help and you didn’t listen

Rowena Macrae, SMH, 26/03/2019

The once-safe National Party seat of Barwon has fallen in the NSW election. Barwon encompasses approximately 44 per cent of the state and has been held by the party for more than 65 years.

Watching the news on Sunday night, I heard returning Premier Gladys Berejiklian say that losing Barwon was “in some ways a cry for help from Western NSW”.

I disagree. Our cry for help was the countless attempts of organised bodies, groups and community members to get the Premier’s government to listen to us in the years leading up to the election. We asked and pleaded to

be heard on issues like water management and security, policing, health and the threat of CSG mining - and it fell on deaf ears. ...

Communities across the northwest are facing crippling drought, but far more sinister is the threat of Coal Seam Gas Mining in the Pilliga State Forest, which threatens to depressurise and contaminate the Great Artesian Basin, our only reliable water supply. It is our only lifeline when surface water is unavailable – like right now, during a relentless drought.

The willingness of the National Party to dismiss overwhelming community opposition to a project that exposes us to unacceptable risk highlights its contempt. It was a display of astounding arrogance from a government whose members will never have to breathe toxic compounds from CSG emissions or drink from our taps, nor explain to their children why they can't swim in contaminated rivers and creeks. It is an issue of basic human rights and one that the people of Barwon took with them to the polling booths. ...

• **Rowena Macrae is a farmer from Coonamble. A CSG pipeline is slated to be built on her land.**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-26/queensland-overlooked-on-coal/10941576>

New Queensland coal-fired power station fails to gain Government support, despite push from Nationals

Kath Sullivan, ABC, 26/03/2019

Federal Nationals MPs have failed to convince the Government to underwrite a new coal-fired power station.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has unveiled a shortlist of ventures the Government will consider underwriting in a bid to meet Australia's energy demand.

No Queensland coal projects made the list. ...

The 12 projects, selected from 66 proposals, included the upgrade of an existing NSW coal-fired power station linked to Coalition donor Trevor St Baker at Lake Macquarie.

The Government will also consider underwriting five gas and six hydro projects across South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. ... As part of the announcement, the Government also committed \$10 million, over two years, to study the best way to meet the demand of energy-intensive industries in north and central Queensland.



Vales Point Power Station, owned by LNP donor Trevor St Baker, may get a government-underwritten upgrade ticked off by energy minister Angus Taylor.

Photo: Wikipedia

Mr Morrison said the feasibility study would consider a new high-efficiency low-emissions coal project at Collinsville, in the state's north, as well as upgrades to existing gas and hydro projects. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/26/one-very-small-coal-plant-scott-morrison-list-12-energy-projects>

One 'very small' coal plant on Scott Morrison's list of 12 energy projects

Katharine Murphy, The Guardian, 26/03/2019

Scott Morrison has attempted to mollify rebel Queenslanders by promising to examine whether a new coal plant is needed in north Queensland, and by signing off on a shortlist for new power generation that includes "one very small" coal project in New South Wales proposed by coal baron and LNP donor, Trevor St Baker.

Cabinet on Tuesday signed off on a shortlist of 12 generation projects that could attract taxpayer underwriting, and allocated \$10m for a feasibility study that will examine whether it is desirable to revive the decommissioned coal plant at Collinsville, south of Townsville. ...

Tuesday's development was initially endorsed by the former Nationals leader Barnaby Joyce, even though the government has not yet made a public binding commitment to any coal project.

Joyce later tempered his initial enthusiasm. He told journalists the feasibility study was welcome "but we have to take the next step, and the next step as quickly as possible". ...

Richie Merzian, the climate and energy program director at the Australia Institute, said the government's underwriting program had "no budget, no criteria, no transparency, and according to legal advice commissioned by the Australia Institute, no legal mandate to proceed without legislation". ...

https://reneweconomy.com.au/no-new-coal-in-coalition-generation-shortlist-just-an-upgrade-gas-and-storage-35111/?utm_source=RE+Daily+News-letter&utm_campaign=551e168fd-EMAIL_CAM-PAIGN_2019_03_25_11_49&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-551e168fd-40461137

No new coal in Coalition generation shortlist, just an upgrade, gas and storage

Giles Parkinson, Renew Economy, 26/03/2019

The Coalition government has unveiled its short-list of 12 new generation investment projects that could be eligible for taxpayer funds and government support, but despite prime minister Scott Morrison's stated support for coal investments, there is no new coal project in that list.

The list revealed by Morrison suggests only one coal upgrade has made the cut – for the Vales Point coal-fired power plant that is co-owned by prominent Liberal Party donor and coal advocate Trevor St Baker. Another five are gas plants, while a further six are storage projects, all associated with wind and solar generation. ...

However, the government has bowed to pressure from Queensland-based LNP members, and from former deputy prime minister Barnaby Joyce, and agreed to a "feasibility study" for a new coal generator in Queensland.

These include a possible coal plant around Gladstone, or possibly a revival of the old Collinsville coal fired generator near Townsville ...

The shortlisted projects include, unsurprisingly, UK billionaire Sanjeev Gupta's proposal to build more than 1GW of solar and storage – both battery storage and pumped hydro – to help power the Whyalla steelworks and other large energy users in the region. ...

The list also includes Rise Renewables' pumped hydro project in South Australia, another pumped hydro project proposed by St Baker's Delta Energy at Lincoln Gap, and a UPC pumped hydro project at Armidale in NSW, the Tasmania "battery of the nation" project, and another pumped hydro in Queensland at Crows Nest.

Interestingly, UPC is a company associated with Oliver Yates, the former head of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation who is running against former energy minister and current Treasurer and deputy Liberal leader Josh Frydenberg in the seat of Kooyong. ...

There is no detail about St Baker's proposed upgrade for Vales Point, which is the next coal generator in NSW due to close after Liddell in 2022. He bought the plant for \$1 million a few years ago, has made hundreds of millions from the investment and is now looking to keep it going beyond the planned closure date by 2029.

Quite why it needs more government funding in light of the windfall gains it has already made is not entirely clear, but St Baker is an influential voice in the conservative sector, and a noisy if misled opponent of wind and solar. ...

The Greens climate spokesman Adam Bandt said in a statement before the release.

"Spending taxpayer money on coal is like giving money from the health budget to a tobacco company. The government shouldn't be upgrading coal, it should be shutting it down.

The Australia Institutes climate expert Richie Merzian said the government had shown its "true climate action colours" with the selection of six fossil fuel projects in the shortlist.

"This program has no budget, no criteria, no transparency and according to our legal advice, no legal mandate to proceed without new legislation being passed.

https://reneweconomy.com.au/the-lies-being-told-by-coal-lobby-to-push-for-queensland-coal-plant-54496/?utm_source=RE+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=551e168fdF-EMAIL_CAM-PAIGN_2019_03_25_11_49&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46a1943223-551e168fdF-40461137

The lies being told by coal lobby to push for Queensland coal plant

Giles Parkinson, Renew Economy, 26/03/2019

The push for a new coal-fired power generator in Queensland goes back a few years, and has intensified in the last couple. Like most of the arguments in favour of coal fired generation and against climate policies, it is based on lies and misinformation.

We should hardly need to discuss it were it not for the insistence of a group of Queensland LNP politicians, supported by the likes of Barnaby Joyce, that keep on making headlines over the issue. ...

There have been a whole bunch of groups have been involved in promoting this idea of new coal generation in Queensland, as barmy as it sounds.

These include the Energy in Australia Facebook page and website, which has been removed since The Guardian revealed that coal company Glencore was funding it through "Project Caesar", the Australian Power Project website, and the Queensland politicians led by George Christensen and Resources Minister Matt Canavan.

The argument in support is based around two assumptions – both of them bogus. One is that there is an energy security issue in Queensland and that new coal generation is needed to ensure supply, and the other is that coal is a cheaper option than renewables.

To defend these assumptions, the coal lobby and their political representatives have been relying on out-dated reports and modelling. Deliberately so, because the most recent reports tell a completely different story. ...

<https://www.westernmagazine.com.au/story/5975045/not-just-rhetoric-sff-opposes-csg/>

New SFF Barwon MP Roy Butler ready to fight against CSG

Jamieson Murphy, Western Magazine, 26/03/2019

The new Shooters, Fishers and Farmers MP for Barwon has wasted no time turning rhetoric into action, offering to support a moratorium on all coal seam gas projects.

Roy Butler wrestled the seat from the Nationals at the weekend, and said any risks to groundwater from mining had to be thoroughly examined before

being permitted. His party is prepared to support a private member's bill by Labor's Adam Searle, which proposes to place a moratorium on all coal seam gas mining until scientific and environmental studies are complete. ...

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2019/03/27/coal-kills-study-pork-barrel-scott-morrison/?ins=em-VOR2ZTSVJWV215Y1p1RFaMW16dz09>

Coal is a killer and will poison Morrison's pork barrel

Bernard Keane, Crikey, 27/03/2019

The Morrison government's shortlist of new power projects is an unusual form of pork-barrelling. ...

The Turnbull/Morrison government saw in that a way to fund new coal-fired power stations to placate the fossil fuel fetishists within the Coalition. That was all fine and dandy until the Wentworth and Victoria showed supporting coal was now about as popular as the plague. ...

Morrison's shortlist is thus a political document, but one designed to placate contradictory political needs. There's gas, and pumped hydro, and one solitary coal-fired power station, which just happens — purely coincidentally of course — to be part-owned by prominent Coalition donor Trevor St Baker.

But in the manner of John Cleese's waiter assuring Terry Jones' Mr Creosote in *The Meaning of Life*, Morrison, who just a few short months ago was holding a lump of coal triumphantly aloft in parliament, insists the Vales Point upgrade is only a little tiny bit of coal, "one very small project which is a coal upgrade project".

Wafer thin, monsieur. ...

Coal-fired power stations are killers, inflicting death and illness on the communities around them from particulate pollution. A study of NSW's coal-fired power stations last year by a University of Newcastle academic found that, "air pollution from the five NSW power stations is estimated to lead to 279 deaths or 2,614 'years of life lost' every year for people aged 30 to 99. Each year, this pollution also causes 233 babies to be born weighing less than 2500 grams and causes 361 people who would not otherwise develop type 2 diabetes to develop this disease."

Vales Point was equal worst. ...

It's a peculiar kind of boondoggle — spending billions of dollars to build something that could sicken and kill large numbers of people in the sur-

News this week ... from previous page

rounding communities. That is what the Nationals want, and what Morrison is promising to consider.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/28/greens-set-2030-cut-off-for-coal-exports-and-coal-fired-power-stations>

Greens set 2030 cut-off for coal exports and coal-fired power stations

Katherine Murphy, The Guardian, 28/03/2019

The Greens will propose 2030 as the cut-off point for thermal coal exports, and the shutdown date for Australia's fleet of coal-fired power stations, in the party's new climate and energy policy heading into the federal election.

With Labor expected to unveil the remaining elements of its climate policy before next week's budget, the Greens will on Thursday open the bidding on ambition, laying down markers for the policy bartering that could play out after the federal election in the event Labor wins power and the Greens remain significant crossbench players.

The new Greens policy proposes the creation of a new public authority, Renew Australia, to lead the transition to low emissions, and a new government-owned energy retailer with a mandate to deliver cheaper power.

The party is proposing to phase out thermal coal exports by setting a yearly limit on coal exports from 2020, a set of procedures that would require resources companies to secure permits at auction in order to export product. ...

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/greens-coal-blueprint-a-challenge-for-labor/news-story/a1838eb61f7b11d478698a7d7525e0cc?cspt=15537287121d6e8946c602596269b2c3a74b8b8a18>

Greens push to ban \$25bn coal industry

Ben Packham & Richard Ferguson, The Australian, 28/03/2019

The Greens have promised to abolish Australia's coal industry as it takes an end to exports and an 100 per renewable energy target within the next 11 years to the next federal election. ...

It would kill off the \$25 billion-a-year export industry within a decade. ...

"This is a plan to take on coal. If you don't have a plan for coal, you're not serious about climate change," Mr Bandt said. ...

The Coal Council of Australia branded the Greens platform as "economic vandalism" that would threaten up

to 150,000 direct and indirect jobs, and hit the governments of NSW and Queensland with the loss of \$2.5bn in annual royalties. ...

A report by the International Energy Agency this week revealed that the world's growing thirst for energy had led to higher emissions from coal-fired power plants.

Energy demand around the world grew by 2.3 per cent over the past year, the most rapid increase in a decade.

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2019/03/28/climate-change-economics-report/?ins=aGFQd0h3b2hFaU5mU3NqdkZOR295Zz09>

New report on the economic impact of climate change policy is total garbage

Oliver Yates, Crikey, 28/03/2019

Why has Australia seen a lack of climate action over the last 20 years?

The power of the fossil fuel lobby, in concert with the Liberal National Party, and cheered on by sections of the press over logic. They've rolled prime ministers, maligned the renewable energy industry and bamboozled the public.

And it's got to stop.

Over the last week, we've seen just another example. Climate sceptic Brian Fisher, named as one of the "dirty dozen" by Clive Hamilton, released a report via his consulting firm BAEconomics called "Economic consequences of alternative Australian climate policy approaches". Even the title sounds like a Dorothy Dix question asked by a government backbencher during question time.

The report is garbage. It is based on ridiculous assumptions that have no resemblance to reality. The report compares the ALP and Liberal National policies, assumes that we limit renewables at 50%, that storage costs are

staggeringly expensive and imagines extraordinarily high carbon prices (of between \$100 and \$700 per tonne). By locking in renewables at 50%, it ensures that higher-cost carbon emissions reductions must be used, and hey presto, allows the authors to forecast economic Armageddon.

It was widely and un-sceptically reported in press, despite the fact that the assumptions are, on their face, ridiculous.

Fisher's report fails to consider the cost of not acting on climate change, as well as the economic benefits that would come from investing in renewable energy and new technologies that would end Australia dependence on imported fuels – and allow us to become a global leader in the export of renewable fuels. ...

The fossil fuel lobby, who in one way or another, paid for this report, provides the research and the talking points to the government, who are cheered on the press. It's killing our country. It's poisoning the debate and preventing action to keep us all safe. ...

• *Oliver Yates is the former head of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and will run as an independent candidate for the seat of Kooyong in Victoria.*

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