



Castlecrag Conservation Society Inc

PO Box 42 Castlecrag 2068, <http://castlecragconservationsociety.org/>

Newsletter No 103

CONSERVATION UP- DATE

Next Meeting

Tuesday 11th October 2016

6.30pm

Glenaeon School Hall, Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag (between Charles and Edith Streets and opposite The Parapet)

Refugee Talk and Film Evening A film and discussion night exploring the issue of Australia's refugee intake.

Amir Javan from *People Like Us* will give a presentation and three 5 minute films will be shown.

Do you support "Let Them Stay"? Your opinion will be appreciated. Supper will follow.



The 'People Like Us' organisation will hold a rally and walk from The Edinburgh Rd 'Pinnacle' bus stop to the Quadrangle Shopping Centre. CCS members are invited to join the march.

If you are concerned about the way refugees are treated by the Australian Government please come along. Bring your banners, dress colourfully and gather at the terminus.

This will be held on the 15th October 10am for a 10:30am start.

Membership: Many thanks to those who have renewed their subs for this year. If you have not done so you can pay at the meeting or send a cheque to our treasurer, Diana Jones - PO Box 4230, Castlecrag 2068 OR Internet banking:

BSB: 062 215 Acc. No: 1013 13, \$10 per person, \$5 for pensioners/students SEE RENEWAL FORM ON THE BACK PAGE

PS At our AGM a motion to raise our membership fee to \$15 per person from our AGM in 2017 was passed unanimously.

INSIDE Quotes & Sayings, CCS Meeting, p2: CCS President's Report, p3: Nuclear accidents etc pp 4-5: Climate Change issues pp 6-11; The Baird Coalition Government must go, Tasmanian Tigers, CCS Membership Form, p 12.

Quotes & Sayings

Genocide

'Man's inhumanity to man makes countless millions mourn'.
Anon. Found in my father's note book in 1932. Ed.

The Ultimate Mystery

'Science cannot solve the ultimate Mystery of Nature. And that is because in the last analysis we ourselves are part of the mystery we are trying to solve' - Max Planck. Quote from Robyn Williams' *Unintelligent Design*. An outstanding man. Darwin has immeasurably enhanced our perception of nature. So has the understanding, through evolutionary ideas, of how we must cherish and look after the biodiversity still surviving.

Global problems

'The Australian uranium trade already contributes to the global problems of nuclear waste, radioactive contamination and nuclear weapons by exporting this deadly substance to Japan and other countries including nuclear weapons states' -

Alexander Brown '*Three years since Fukushima disaster*', Green Left Weekly, 19 March 2016 During his impeachment proceedings, Richard Nixon boasted, 'I can go into my office and pick up the telephone and in 25 minutes 70 million people will be dead.' In her incisive new book Scarry demonstrates the power of one leader to obliterate millions of people with a nuclear weapon - a possibility that remains very real even in the wake of the Cold War.

Elaone Scarry Thernuclear Anarchy: Choosing between Democracy and Doom

Society needs to rapidly change!

Human society urgently needs to rapidly reduce its energy consumption and waste, end the burning of fossil fuels, switch to renewable energy sources, and localise energy production and distribution to the maximum extent possible. This is an inconvenient message for fossil fuel advocates and other climate deniers. It's best left unspoken. Indeed, media analysis of the broader lessons of the crisis (Wild storms around the world) has been scant.

Roger Dennis 'North American ice storm shows extreme weather dangers'.
Green Left Weekly 22 January 2014.

Climate change threat

The Pentagon, the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuel on Earth, has identified climate change as a threat to national security. Chevron shares the same concern. Grassroots confrontations with state and corporate power, like Occupy Wall Street, prefigure the larger struggles to come on a global scale as humans fight for clean air and the right to a future free of extreme weather.

The rich party while the planet burns, Green Left Weekly 5 Feb 2016

CCS Executive & Committee 2016

President	Mark Crew
Vice President	Chris Hopwood
Secretary	Terese Heyward
Treasurer	Diana Jones
Committee	Richard Blacklock, Gay Spies, Harold Spies

CCS Meeting 31 August 2016

Endorsed the website renewal for one year and to upgrade it.

- Endorsed decision to invite Fabia Claridge's Refugee Asylum Group to contribute their awareness to our members.
It was noted that:
a meeting on 14th September – Gay Spies to attend re Biodiversity Laws and SEPP 19 – Friday 16th September Gladys Berejiklian morning tea at North Sydney Leagues Club 10.30-11am RSVP required. Mark Crew to attend.
- Proposed Biodiversity Legislation NSW StatGovernment – Letters to Gladys Berejiklian, Mark Speakman, Biodiversity Have Your Say
- Responses from EDO and NCC – noted that the lobbying is now reaching a wider audience in the community through online campaigns and calls to action.
- New Federal Minister for Environment and Energy Josh Frydenberg. It was felt that the combined Portfolio will continue to highlight mining.
- Feedback from community fundraising meeting for the Haven will include *The Carnival*, a Circus Opera, at the Concourse.
- Conservation issues in Willoughby for CCS – 2017 will include Street Trees, Native Planting in Parks, Climate
- Proposal for a Photo Competition for Castlecrag Youth and Adults that could be exhibited in the Village retail areas to raise awareness for CCS and Conservation efforts and the beauty of the Crag. The Castlecrag Fair is next year.
- Report from AABR Conference – It was attended by 300 People and excellent. At the 50th Anniversary Dinner Gay Spies, Harold Spies and Richard Blacklock were awarded lifetime membership to AABR, which is a great recognition for the decades of conservation work.
- CCS decided to have 3 short films and a talk on refugees at our September General Meeting.

Court finds against NSW government on council mergers

September 24, 2016

The NSW Land and Environment Court found government-appointed delegates who recommended mergers for Mosman and North Sydney with Willoughby City Council and Burwood and Canada Bay with Strathfield Council had not followed the Local Government Act. The court found there was "no proper statutory foundation" for either of the proposed amalgamations, given the flaws in the delegates' recommendations, and set the mergers aside.

However four other councils were unsuccessful in their appeals. The court dismissed the cases of Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, Kuring-gai and Shellharbour, finding their complaints about the amalgamation process were unfounded.

Green Left Weekly 27 September 2016

Open Day Sunday 23 October 2016 10am – 1pm organised by The Griffin Reserve Advisory Group. Free Sausage Sizzle, Coffee & biscuits. Guided Walk & Music.

CCS Presidents Report 2016.

Mark Crew, President

Welcome everyone and thanks for your attendance. We are early this year with our AGM, as our last one was held on the 24th June 2015. I would like to thank all committee members and supporters for their time and contributions (don't forget the Treasurer).

A quick overview of the last year commences with, once again, our volunteer team who made their presence known at the Castlecrag Fair. Many thanks to those who contributed time, efforts and produce to that event.

This last year saw the WCC release their Revised Plan of Management for the Griffin Reserves, compiled by Jan Felton, which she presented at the last AGM. I'm advised it has had trouble being available on the WCC web site due to its size, but it has been adopted and released.

Our second general meeting in September saw the screening of the film, 'Chasing Ice' by Jeff Orlowski.

Interestingly I had an enquiry from Ms Clair Ross of WCC in October as to our existence and fortunately I had a recent copy of our fabulous newsletter to forward to her and advised her of our next meeting. In that same month we were represented at the annual NCC Conference. Then subsequently in November a number of us attended the Climate Rally, sporting the CCS banner.

Our Domain name has been renewed and we are moving toward a more prominent on-line presence. We have also continued our insurance cover through the NCC.

We and other communities suffered under the disaster of the '10/50 Legislation' which saw the removal of many mature trees in our municipality using spurious assessments of them being within 'fire zone' risk areas. There were many letters to our local member opposing this legislation and there was a mysterious delivery of logs from a felled tree to her office highlighting the mismanagement of this same legislation. Even our Council was engaged in removal of trees that could be argued as unnecessary.

The continuation of the review into Crown Land Management saw proposals for lessening of government controls over their use and the activities within them.

We sent a letter of opposition, via the delegate Mr Reynolds, to the NSW State Government, referring specifically to our concerns regarding the environmental policies and commitments that our current Council engages in that then may be threatened by any merger proposals.

Council has attempted on several occasions to reduce the number of Community Committees and the Griffin Reserves Advisory Committee, on which I sit, has had its status reduced to a 'Group' and we subsequently report to the 'Natural Heritage and Bushland Advisory Committee' just so we can stay in existence. This is despite the fact that, if you visit the Council web site, 'we still exist'.

The Haven Amphitheatre debacle continues to see this fabulous facility closed and its future doubtful. Council has committed funding into the 2016-17 financial year budget, but

without Council's future clear due to the current amalgamation proposals I feel there is no certainty.

The environmental future of the planet does not look good. The Australian and other world governments seem blind to the obvious signs of environmental degradation. At home this is most evidenced by the recent coral bleaching events. I'm sorry to call on you 'the committed' to campaign even harder, but I can see no other course of action.

Thanks again to all committee members for their contributions throughout the year and thanks to all who are prepared to stand again.

Granted, Malcolm Turnbull is no Tony Abbott. But Turnbull is Polluting the body politic

Bill McKibben The Saturday Paper, 30 April 2016

Australia's political system is not quite at this level of farce, but it's becoming more and more American with each new donation. Until recently you had a prime minister who, between mouthfuls of onion, told the world that coal was good for humanity.

Also friendly with the fossil fuel industry. Just this week in Perth, he attended a dinner with the CEOs of Shell, Chevron and Woodside. Blocked by radical conservatives and wined and dined by the fossil fuel industry, Australia is now left adrift with a laughable climate strategy.

As the planet burns, Australia continues to dig up more fossil fuels. But it's no surprise when you look at the amount.

Wilderness lost: A 10th wiped out in 20 years

Chelsea Harvey SMH 10-11 Sept 2016

Wilderness areas on Earth have experienced alarming losses in the past two decades, a new study suggests. By comparing global maps from the present day and the early 1990s, researchers have concluded that a 10th of all the world's wilderness has been lost in just 20 years.



Most of the remaining wilderness is concentrated in areas including Australia. Photo: Tourism and Events Queensland. Nuclear Accidents, Nuclear waste, Atomic bombs, nuclear power accidents

Nuclear Power Plants Accidents

Globally, there have been at least 99 (civilian and military) recorded nuclear power plant accidents from 1952 to 2009 (defined as incidents that either resulted in the loss of human life or more than US\$50,000 of property damage, the amount the US federal government uses to define nuclear energy accidents that must be reported), totalling US\$20.5 billion in property damages. Property damage costs include destruction of property, emergency response, environmental remediation, evacuation, lost product, fines, and court claims.^[6] Because nuclear power plants are large and complex, accidents on site tend to be relatively expensive.^[7]

The 1979 **Three Mile Island accident** in **Pennsylvania** was caused by a series of failures in secondary systems at the reactor, which allowed radioactive steam to escape and resulted in the partial core meltdown of one of two reactors at the site, making it the most significant accident in U.S. history.^[8]

The world's worst nuclear accident has been the 1986 **Chernobyl disaster** in the **Ukraine**, one of two accidents that has been rated as a level 7 (the highest) event on the **International Nuclear Event Scale**.^[9] Note that the **Chernobyl disaster** may have scored an 8 or 9, if the scale continued. The accident occurred at the **Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant** after an unsafe systems test led to a rupture of the reactor vessel and a series of steam explosions that destroyed reactor number four. The radioactivity plume spread to the surrounding city of **Pripyat** and covered extensive portions of Europe with traces of radioactivity, leaving reindeer in **Northern Europe** and sheep in portions of **England** unfit for human consumption. A 30 kilometres (19 mi) "**Zone of alienation**" has been formed around the reactor.^[10]

At least 57 accidents have occurred since the Chernobyl disaster, and over 56 nuclear accidents have occurred in the USA. Relatively few accidents have involved fatalities.

Wikipedia

Fukushima commemoration: no nuclear waste dumps



"Remembering Fukushima: Resisting nuclear waste dumps!" was the title of a public forum held in Redfern on March 3. About 40 people heard a panel of speakers mark five years since the Fukushima tsunami and nuclear disaster in March 2011 and outline the growing opposition movement to federal government plans for a nuclear waste dump in rural Australia.

"The nuclear industry has no place in a safe and sustainable future. Five years since the Fukushima disaster, it is time to break the nuclear chain," forum publicity stated. The forum was organised by Uranium Free NSW.

Jim McIlroy Green Left Weekly. March 15 2016

Aboriginal people vow to stop nuclear waste dumps



29 Apr 2016,

Adnyamathanha elder Regina McKenzie is fighting a nuclear waste dump.

In the plans of governments in Adelaide and Canberra, South Australia is to become the country's "nuclear waste dump state".

Most South Australians remain sceptical. And among the state's Aboriginal population — on whose ancestral lands the dumps would be located — opposition to the scheme is rock-solid.

"It's very simple and easy to understand," Aboriginal activist Regina McKenzie told *Green Left Weekly* on May 24.

"No means no!"

McKenzie is an elder of the Adnyamathanha people, on whose lands near the Flinders Ranges the federal government plans to site a repository for low and intermediate radioactive waste created by Australia's nuclear industry.

Other spokespeople for the Adnyamathanha are equally forthright. This is our land, we have been here forever and we will always be here and we are totally opposed to this dump.

Severely abridged from *ABC News*

Nuclear waste dump case unravels

July 8, 2016 Renfrey Clarke



The South Australian Labor Premier is pushing ahead with a nuclear waste dump despite First Nations' opposition.

Armed with the findings of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission, South Australian Labor Premier Jay Weatherill is pressing ahead with plans to import as much as a third of the world's high-level nuclear reactor waste and store it in the state's outback.

There are compelling reasons to reject it. The project, it now emerges, could go ahead only over resistance from Indigenous traditional landowners, some of whom took part in the Lizard Bites Back convergence in early July.

There are serious environmental dangers in unloading the wastes, maintaining them above ground for decades while they cool and transporting them for final burial. Tens of thousands of people would be at risk.

Several devastating critiques have also shown that the economic case for the scheme is largely guesswork. Conceivably, the project would run at a loss — while burdening South Australians with the costs and dangers of tending to the world's greatest single radiation hazard, effectively forever.

Indigenous opposition

Yankunytjatjara Native Title Aboriginal Corporation chairperson Karina Lester told a packed venue at a June 16 meeting: "The overwhelming majority of traditional owners ... continue to speak out against establishing an international waste dump."

Initially, the materials transported would be large quantities of low and intermediate-level waste, also planned for importation and burial. But after several decades, transport of high-level wastes would begin and would continue for another 70 years

Severely abridged from Green Left Weekly, 12 July 2016

IT IS 3 MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT

Doomsday Clock_black_3mins_

"Unchecked climate change, global nuclear weapons modernizations, and outsized nuclear weapons arsenals pose extraordinary and undeniable threats to the continued existence of humanity, and world leaders have failed to act with the speed or on the scale required to protect citizens from potential catastrophe. These failures of political leadership endanger every person on Earth." Despite some modestly positive developments in the climate change arena, current efforts are entirely insufficient to prevent a catastrophic warming of Earth. Meanwhile, the United States and Russia have embarked on massive programs to modernise their nuclear triads - thereby undermining existing nuclear weapons treaties. "The clock ticks now at just three minutes to midnight because international leaders are failing to perform their most important duty—ensuring and preserving the health and vitality of human civilisation."

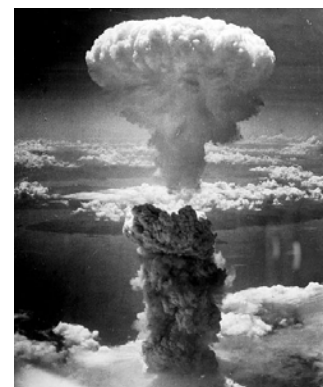
America has 7000 **nuclear weapons**—a disastrous accident is just a matter of time.

Bulletin of Atomic Scientists

TRUMP'S Terrifying view on nuclear weapons

Several months ago, a foreign policy expert on the international level went to advise Donald Trump. And three times [Trump] asked about the use of nuclear weapons. Three times he asked at one point if we had them why can't we use them,"

The Guardian August 2016



mushroom cloud of the atomic bombing of the Japanese city of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 rose some 11 miles (18 km) above the bomb's hypocenter.

Doctors call for end to brown coal power plants

Tom Arup *The AGE* APRIL 5 2016

More than 300 doctors have signed an open letter demanding the state government develop a plan to shut down the Latrobe Valley's brown coal power plants because of the health damage they cause the local community.

The letter, organised by Doctors for the Environment, argues a transition away from brown coal-fired power — responsible for 85% of Victoria's electricity generation — is necessary because its pollution is responsible for local disease, and even death, and poses a broader health threat through its contribution to climate change.

The letter points to research linking coal-fired electricity to cardiovascular, respiratory and neurological diseases, as well as lung cancers, through their generation of local air pollutants.

Underground coal gasification banned in Queensland

Linc Energy's Chinchilla site in Queensland.

Queensland Natural Resources and Mines minister Anthony Lynham announced on April 18 that the government has banned underground coal gasification (UCG) in the state, arguing the environmental risks outweigh the economic benefits.

He said the ban, which would apply immediately as government policy, would be legislated by the end of the year.

Underground coal gasification involves converting coal to a synthesised gas by burning it underground. The syngas is processed on the surface to create products such as aviation fuels and synthetic diesel.

There have been three UCG pilot projects in Queensland: Carbon Energy near Dalby, Cougar Energy near Kingaroy and Linc Energy at Chinchilla. Cougar Energy's trial was shut down in 2010 after benzene was detected in nearby water bores. Carbon Energy is currently decommissioning and rehabilitating its site.

Kerry Smith, April 22, 2016, *The Guardian*

Students demand AGL closes Camden CSG wells now

Kathy Fairfax April 22, 2016 *Green Left Weekly*

Activists from Stop CSG Sydney and the Australian Student Environment Network toured the AGL Camden CSG gasfields on April 17 to see for themselves how close gas wells are to homes. AGL has promised to end gas mining in Camden by 2023. Residents want them shut down now.

The NSW government has said that gas wells cannot be drilled within two kilometres of homes, but it is happy for Landcom, the government's own developer, to sell house and land packages within a few hundred metres of major gasfields.

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Fracking chemicals unknown

Dr Marion Carey, from Doctors for the Environment Australia, told the committee that some chemical exposures can be tested for, but others are more difficult. "As we know, there are numerous problems with chemicals. There are different chemicals used in different places, in different wells and at different times.

"One of the big problems is transparency around the chemicals. If we do not even have any information about what chemicals are used in a particular well, it is very difficult for a doctor to order appropriate testing, even if that testing is available, without knowing what people have been exposed to.

Greg Foyster, *New Economy*, 9 May 2016

continued next page

She said a major concern was the lack of information on which chemicals are used in unconventional gas mining. A risk assessment can only be carried out when you know what the hazard is. The vast majority of chemicals that the industry uses have not been assessed for safety and health practitioners do not even know what they are because they are commercial in confidence.

The adverse impact of the unconventional gas mining industry on agriculture led to the Australian Dairy Industry Council and the Australian Wine Industry expressing some concern about co-existence. The use of and contamination of water was another major concern for submitters. Apart from the large volumes of water the industry uses, the safe disposal of the water brought up from the well has been problematic. Submitters and witnesses in Dalby in Queensland said they were concerned over the amount of water being used in CSG mining in their area and the affect it may have on their ability to maintain their agricultural operations.

“Many said their bores have been depleted and that the remaining water had been contaminated, after noting that their water had changed colour and developed an unusual taste and smell. As a result, many landholders advised the committee that they no longer used the groundwater for fear of toxins and dangerous chemicals.

”Anne Kennedy, a farmer who appeared at the public hearing in Narrabri in New South Wales, summed up the views of most of those who want the industry shut down when she said: “Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth, and we have one incredible resource: our Great Artesian Basin. The governments can forget about gold, uranium, coal or gas. The single greatest resource we have is our groundwater.

“This is not just a fight to save our water and our farms and our communities; this is actually about the future of agriculture and the future of Australia. I am not exaggerating one iota when I say that. We will not be able to live out here without water, and this coal seam gas industry will destroy our water.” Pip Hinman, *GreenLeft Weekly*, May 10, 2016. [Pip Hinman is the president of Stop CSG Sydney, formed in 2010 to stop a test drill in St Peters.]

Protesters halt WestConnex clearing of rare Wolli Creek bushland

Peter Hannam SMH 7Sept.



Requiem for a forest: Protesters at the Wolli Creek site Photo: Peter Rae

Protesters brought a temporary halt to clearing of rare ironbark woodland earmarked for the WestConnex project in Sydney's south.

Workers began destroying vegetation on Wednesday at the 1.87 hectare of remnant forest that serves as a wedge between the Canterbury Golf Club and the M5 motorway.

NT Traditional Owners walk out on fracked gas pipeline deal

July 28, 2016



Northern Territory Traditional Owners whose land is being targeted for the proposed new gas pipeline between Tennant Creek and Mt Isa have yesterday afternoon walked out of a joint Central and Northern Land Council meeting, pushing against a planned access route deal for Jemena's Northern Gas Pipeline, due to concerns about the impacts of fracking gasfields.

A presentation by pipeline hopeful Jemena, jointly owned by the Singapore and Chinese government, claimed no fracked gas would be needed to underpin the pipeline's economic viability. This was challenged by Traditional Owners and prompted a walk out by members of the Wakaya Land Trust. They pointed to existing media statements in which Jemena and the NT Government had acknowledged the pipeline would 'drive the development of onshore gas in the Territory'.

Betty Rankine, senior Traditional Owner of the Wakaya people from Soudan Station explained the group's objections, "The company is not telling us the proper story about this pipeline. We know it will mean fracking for gas to fill it, which will damage our country and we're not happy about it.

"We want our country to be clean and healthy for our children and cattle. This gas is only going to go overseas, Aboriginal people will not benefit but our lands will be damaged beyond repair," she said.

Abridged from *Lock The Gate Alliance*

CSG panel faces serious conflict of interest

Members of an expert committee established by the Federal Government to assess controversial mining projects have financial links to the mining and gas industry.

Matthew Carney, ABC Broadcast: 01/08/2016

Mining threatens future of priceless Tarwyn Park

August 5, 2016 Kerry Smith



Peter Andrews, pioneer of Natural Sequence Farming.

About 400 people attended a public open-day at the iconic Tarwyn Park property in the beautiful Bylong Valley in the Upper Hunter on July 31. It was the day that Peter Andrews, the 76 year-old founder and expert in Natural Sequence Farming (NSF), relinquished ownership of the property.

Korean state-owned mining company KEPCO assumed ownership of the property at midnight on August 1. But Andrews has vowed to stay on to fight for the land's protection.

Abridged from *Green Left Weekly*

Northern Territory fracking debate 'life or death', says cattle farmer

Daniel Tapp, a cattle farmer, says he is very concerned about over-allocations of water for mining activity in the NT. "We can't live without water," he said in Darwin on Tuesday after a hearing held by the Senate select committee on unconventional gas mining.

The Guardian 14 April, 2016

Victoria takes the lead in banning unconventional gas

Updated 30 Aug 2016

Communities across Victoria have won a permanent ban on unconventional gas mining and fracking. It is the first state to do so and sets a precedent for other states and territories to follow.

On August 30, the Labor state government announced it was banning unconventional gas and extending the moratorium on mining conventional gas until 2020.

Abridged from ABC News

Women stand together to save Aboriginal sacred site



March 2016

On International Women's Day, three women locked themselves to habitat trees in the critically endangered Leard State Forest in north west NSW. Gomeroi women gathered on Leard Forest Road to show support and solidarity for the action.

Gomeroi elders are once again requesting environment minister Greg Hunt grant protection under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protection Act* for Lawlers Well, the last remaining sacred site in Leard Forest, which is scheduled for destruction by Whitehaven Coal.

Gomeroi traditional custodian Dolly Talbot said: "It is so hard seeing the destruction of our country. The elders have been waiting too long for answers. We are asking Greg Hunt to do his job right and protect our Lawler's Well."

Action on Coal (Media release)

Queensland University of Technology to divest from fossil fuel investments

Nick Kilvert 5 Sep 2016,

After a two-year campaign by students and staff, the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Vice Chancellor Peter Coaldrake has committed to divest the university's \$300 million endowment fund of its shares in coal, oil and gas companies.

ABC News

People power wins against Metgasco in Northern Rivers

Pip Hinman November 7, 2015



A rally in Lismore last year protesting against gas mining in the northern NSW region. Photo: Gasfield Free Northern Rivers

Gas miner Metgasco's surprise announcement on November 2 that it was recommending its shareholders accept a \$25 million payout for its three remaining exploration licences in NSW's Northern Rivers, near Lismore, was celebrated right across the state. Anti-fracking campaigners, who have for more than three years, been educating, organising and mobilising communities against the industry, are very relieved.

"It's a good decision," regional coordinator for Gasfield Free Northern Rivers, Dean Draper, told Green Left Weekly. Metgasco could never have set up shop here given the community-wide opposition to the industry."

As Green Left Weekly has reported, 87% of Northern Rivers' residents opposed CSG mining at the 2012 council elections, and since then the opposition has grown to closer to 97%.

However, Metgasco was holding out on its petroleum exploration licences (PELs) 16, 13 and 426 — the first being the site of a mass community blockade last year. It was only when it became apparent in May last year that not even the NSW police were prepared to break the Bentley blockade that energy minister Anthony Roberts ordered the suspension of Metgasco's licence.

Infuriated, Metgasco, backed by the industry body, the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA), challenged that suspension in the NSW Supreme Court and, in April, won the case. Since then, Metgasco had been holding out against the NSW government's offer to buy the remaining licences.

On September 1, it announced it was taking the government to court for damages over Bentley. It also said it was resuming its work in the Northern Rivers, and expected the NSW police to provide it with security. It appeared the government's buy-out wasn't working.

So, when Metgasco announced to the Australian Securities Exchange that its board had unanimously accepted the NSW government's offer to buy back the three licences for \$25 million (including compensation) and that it will urge shareholders to accept the deal at its AGM on November 30, community activists were relieved.

But it was not the total sum, or some clever negotiating tactic, that won the day.

As Draper told a celebratory gathering in Lismore on November 2: "The true heroes of this win are the communities — the farmers, the Knitting Nannas and everyone else. People power forced the government to listen. The power base of National Party MP Thomas George and other Nationals MPs were threatened. That was the reason the government listened."

Ross Joseph, a landholder who lives in the area of one of the licences said: "We're grateful to the government for finally acting to cancel these licences, and for stopping the drilling at Bentley last year.

"More than that, we're just proud of our community for coming together to turn away unsafe and unwelcome industrialisation of our beautiful region."

Draper told GLW: "We would have preferred the three licences had been cancelled because we want long-term permanent protection" and there is no law guaranteeing that.

He was also concerned about the enormous amount of public money being handed to Metgasco. Metgasco recorded a \$3.8 million loss in 2014–15 and its total equity is \$8 million. Managing director Peter Henderson takes a salary of \$612,000, down from \$705,000 the previous year.

Under the NSW government's Gas Plan, other PELs have been bought back for around \$212,000 and, in this case, PEL 426 had already expired.

Under the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 a petroleum title may be cancelled — without compensation — on a number of grounds including contravention of conditions and failure to use the title area in good faith for the purpose for which it was granted.

Reprinted from *Green Left Weekly* Nov 10, 2015

Prominent Australians call for emergency climate action

Stephanie Smail 23 Jun 2016

More people are demanding real action on climate change.

More than 20 prominent Australians have called for emergency-scale action on climate change in an open letter to the new parliament, published in *The Age* on June 23. Signatories include business leaders, scientists, a former Australian of the Year and a Nobel Laureate.



The [open letter](#) and associated website and petition are part of a growing campaign by a coalition of more than 20 grassroots climate action groups to pressure political leaders to step up and do what is needed to address the climate crisis.

ABC News

World is hot and getting hotter

August 12, 2016, Pip Hinman

A new climate report released on August 3 by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) confirms the world is hot and getting hotter.

The *State of the Climate* report said that last year was the second consecutive hottest year on record, surpassing 2014 as the previous warmest year.

The report is the work of more than 450 scientists from 62 countries. It provides detail on global climate indicators, notable weather events and data collected by environmental monitoring stations and instruments located on land, water, ice and in space.

While some of the warming is due to a strong El Nino event, the report notes that most of the warming reflected trends consistent with a warming planet: land and ocean temperature rises and sea levels and greenhouse gas rises.

The report made some significant findings:

- Greenhouse gases last year were the highest on record. In Hawaii, the annual average atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration was 400.8 parts per million, which surpassed 400 ppm for the first time. Last year's average global CO2 concentration was not far below, 399.4 ppm, an increase of 2.2 ppm compared with 2014.
- Global surface temperatures are the highest on record, aided by a strong El Nino. Across land surfaces, record to near-record warming was reported across every inhabited continent.
Sea surface temperatures are the highest on record. The highest temperature changes from average were in parts of the north-east Pacific. Global upper ocean heat content is the highest on record because oceans absorb more than 90% of excess heat.

- Global average sea levels are the highest on record and rose to around 70 millimetres higher than the 1993 average. Over the past two decades, sea levels have risen at an average rate of 3.3 mm a year, with the highest rates of increase taking place in the western Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Abridged from *Green Left Weekly*

Turnbull government orders CSIRO U-turn towards climate science

Nicole Hasham SMH 4 August 2016

New Science Minister Greg Hunt has ordered a major U-turn in the direction of the CSIRO, reviving climate research as a bedrock function just months after the national science agency slashed climate staff and programs.

Mr Hunt, the former environment minister, told Fairfax Media he has instructed CSIRO's executives and board to "put the focus back on climate science", adding: "This is not an optional component, it's critical".

But CSIRO staff slam govt 'repair job' on climate science

August 13, 2016 Jim McIlroy

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Staff Association says the Turnbull government's backflip on climate science research does not go far enough to repair the damage done by the deep and ongoing cuts to Australia's leading public research body.

CSIRO management is continuing with plans to slash 296 jobs across the organisation, including more than 60 experienced climate and marine scientists. About 40% of the jobs are expected to be cut through forced redundancies. The ongoing loss of experienced climate science staff stands in

stark contrast to new science minister Greg Hunt's announcement that the government would fund an additional 15 positions.

The CSIRO Staff Association, a section of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), has written to CSIRO management demanding its program of job cuts be immediately suspended in the wake of Hunt's announcement.

CSIRO Staff Association secretary Sam Popovski said on August 4 that the Turnbull government needs to do far more to maintain and rebuild CSIRO's climate science capability.

from *Green Left Weekly* 16 August

Adani coalmine's next legal hurdle

Adani wants to bulldoze the best remaining habitat for the black-throated finch.

Margaret Gleeson GLW 27 Sept, abridged



The Environmental Defenders Office Queensland (EDO), on behalf of the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), lodged an appeal on September 19 against the Federal Court's finding in August that then-environment minister Greg Hunt's approval of Adani's Carmichael coalmine was lawful.

The appeal challenges the lawfulness of the court's finding that the minister was entitled to find the impact on global warming and the Great Barrier Reef from the Carmichael mine's 4.6 billion tonnes of carbon emissions was "speculative".

CEO of EDO, Jo Bragg said: "This is a critical moment in the history of protecting Australia's environment. Law is a sharp tool and, if we win this case, together we will set an historic precedent. The Federal government will no longer be able to ignore the damage to our climate caused by destructive dirty coal mines."

The president of the ACF Geoff Cousins said: "We don't accept that our federal environment minister has the right to ignore the impact 4.6 billion tonnes of climate pollution will have on our Great Barrier Reef, just because it's too hard to measure."

Energy ministers give green light to expand gas industry



August 27, 2016 Pip Hinman

APPEA chairperson Bruce Lake has admitted that the gas industry has 'never been so aggressively challenged'.

Asking the peak oil and gas industry body to prepare a report on Australia's future energy needs for federal and state energy ministers was always going to have a predictable outcome.

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) was tasked to report to the Council of Australian Government (COAG) energy ministers meeting on August 18 and 19. Unsurprisingly, it recommended urgently producing and supplying more gas — and fast — before Australia runs out.

The meeting accepted the discredited line that gas is a “transition fuel”, and that the more gas supplied, the lower the price for the consumer.

The **final communique** reveals that energy ministers, with the possible exception of Victoria, are in lock step with APPEA's push to expand unconventional gas. And APPEA was pleased with the result.

Over the last 5 years the Stop CSG movement, spearheaded by farmers and regions communities, has forced concessions from pro-gas governments including imposing some (although not enough) regulations on the industry, moratoriums on new licences, and cancellations and buy-backs of old licences (including one which covered the whole Sydney Basin), along with raising community consciousness about the polluting dangers associated with fracking.

Doctors for the Environment spokesperson Graeme McLeay said on August 23 that the big winners from the COAG energy summit were “gas interests rather than ordinary Australians many of whom don't know the misinformation and lies that are being presented as ‘evidence’.”

McLeay criticised the federal Environment and Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg as “reckless” for repeating the lie that gas will help with a transition to renewables and that it is a cleaner form of fossil fuel.

“The Minister has clearly ignored the question of 'fugitive emissions' or releases of gas, mostly methane, during the mining, processing and delivery phases,” McLeay said.

“What we need is the political will that puts people's wellbeing above corporate greed,” he concluded

Abridged from GLW 30August 2016

Help tell AGL to stop fracking for CSG in Camden and to close down its coal miners in the Hunter Valley
350 Australia, Getup, stop CSG SYDNEY

Another coal mine hits the dust

September 7, 2016

A mining company has withdrawn its application for environmental approval for a controversial coal project in WA's remote Kimberley region.

The Duchess Paradise project has been withdrawn from the Environmental Protection Authority's assessment process and conservationists hope that will be the end of attempts to open the area up to coal mines.

Rey Resources recently informed the EPA of the withdrawal of its project, which would have been the first coal mine in the area.

“The EPA hereby terminates the environmental impact

assessment of the proposal to develop the Duchess Paradise mine and transport operation, which was being assessed at the level of public environmental review,” EPA chairman Tom Hatton said in his response letter.

Australian Associated Press

BP Great Australian Bight oil spill would affect whole southern coast of Australia

September 24, 2016

Just-released modelling from BP has revealed that an oil spill from an uncontained blowout on its proposed Stromlo-1 well is guaranteed to impact the South Australian coast. It is possible that anywhere across the southern Australian coast could be impacted, from Western Australia across to Tasmania and NSW.

In light of this, the Wilderness Society has called on Australia's offshore oil and gas authority, National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA), to reject BP's application to drill for oil in the Great Australian Bight.

“The time has come for the regulator NOPSEMA to draw a line under this project once and for all.

It is also time for BP to recognise that this project presents many risks, including to its own company's long-term future and walks away.

“The Bight's pristine waters are home to 36 species of whales and dolphins, including the world's most important southern right whale nursery, as well as many humpback, sperm, blue and beak whales.

“The Bight also supports sea lions, seals, great white sharks, orcas, giant cuttlefish, some of Australia's most important fisheries and migratory seabirds such as the albatross and the white-bellied sea eagle.

Abridged from *The Wilderness Society* Media release

The Baird Liberal Government must go.

Because of:

- 1. Undemocratic, autocratic forced amalgamation of councils
- 2. Climate change policy, if any, follows the inadequate Federal Coalition policy

3. Backtracks on Biodiversity protection

- 4. Overrules Land & Environment Court protests by Bulga residents by approving the Warkworth coalmine

5. Supports coal mines in NSW

- 6. Protest Law crackdown, an attack on democracy
- 7. Proposed removal of Heritage Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta

8. Proposed laws which will allow greatly increased land clearing

Premier Mike Baird celebrated Threatened Species Day by ordering in the bulldozers to destroy about 2ha of endangered woodland in Sydney for a temporary carpark. This is just a taste of what's to come under Mr Baird's new biodiversity laws, due in parliament this month.

Destruction of endangered woodland for Westconnex is a taste of what's to come under Baird's new biodiversity laws



While everyone's eyes were focused on the federal budget, the NSW government released a very controversial piece of draft legislation that will remove restrictions on land clearance and, despite their claims, threaten biodiversity.

The new reforms implement the recommendations made in the NSW Biodiversity Legislation Review, but the economic assumptions underlying both documents are neither accurate nor acceptable.

Tasmanian Devils evolving resistance to facial cancer

New research suggests that Tasmanian Devils are evolving resistance to Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD), which has seen Devil populations decline by between 80% and 90%.

Following the extinction of the thylacine in the 1930s, devils have become the top marsupial predator, keeping numbers of feral cats at bay.

With the decline of the devils, feral cats have grown in numbers and small mammals on which cats prey have declined. Scientists have identified significant changes in DNA samples of devils from regions with DFTD.

Genes related to cancer or immune function in other mammals have mutated, suggesting that devils are evolving resistance to DFTD. Evolution is often thought of as a slow process, but these changes have occurred in only 4–8 generations.

Green Left Weekly, 6 Sept 2016

Join the Castlecrag Conservation Society

Annual subscriptions are due for our financial year beginning 1 May 2016

I wish to renew/apply for membership of the Castlecrag Conservation Society and enclose payment for:

() \$5 Fixed Income (Pensioner, Student, Unemployed)

() \$10 Per person

() Donation

Name(s)

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Signature

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Dress

.....
Phone

.....
email (Only if you haven't done so before)

.....
**Treasurer: Diana Jones, c/- PO Box 4230, Castlecrag 2068
OR Internet banking: BSB: 062 215 Acc. No: 1013
1325**

Appeal for donations

Your support of the Society is deeply appreciated. It enables us to further promote environmental awareness, not only here in Castlecrag but also in the wider community. Our actions, along with those of other people planet-wide, in the next decade, will decide our future as a responsible species. Your contribution will be of considerable help in our efforts to protect our environment.

Mark Crew, President