



28 May 2020

Submission to COVID-19 Senate Select Committee

Investigations into the NCCC's appointees, purpose and deep ties to extractive, exploitative and toxic industries suggest it is an unaccountable vehicle to advance profit hungry, ecocidal (which ultimately means genocidal) business interests at the expense of nearly all Australians.

In relation to the NCCC, it appears that there are no straightforward answers to basic questions about democratic processes and accountability.

Why were commissioners with obvious conflicts of interest deemed appropriate to steer Australia out of economic ruin?

What makes this apparent resource grab even more craven is that it has been orchestrated under cover of the COVID-19 global pandemic following Australia's horrific 'Black Summer' of unprecedented fires that devastated more than [18.6 million hectares](#), an untold number of ancient, [sacred Aboriginal sites](#)¹ and burnt [more than 1.25 billion animals](#) to death,² as well as destroying the natural habitats of survivors.

Further to this, it's reasonable to question whether Australia's Summer of 2019-20 would have been so catastrophic had our nation's hard-won Clean Energy package (including a suite of 18 world leading environment protection bills) not been killed by the Coalition. Who would want to rescind laws that were driving Australia's emissions down significantly and quickly while creating tens of thousands of new more sustainable jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment in the clean energy sectors of local economies?

Major scientific and technological advances in sustainable closed loop production systems have effectively enabled us to deliver basic needs (food, water, energy, shelter, health care, knowledge) and a reasonable life to all local communities, including on a global scale. Locally for instance, esteemed economics Professor Ross Garnaut, among many other globally recognised sustainable technology experts, argues that our nation has the capacity to become ["the superpower of the post-carbon world"](#).³ Australia could be a hub for smart sustainable solutions.

Many global leaders are strongly pushing for a Green Recovery including the head of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, who said: "We are about to deploy a massive fiscal stimulus which can help us address both [economic and climate] crises at the same time. If this recovery is to be sustainable – if our world is to become more resilient – we must do everything in our power to promote a green recovery. In other words, taking measures now to fight the climate crisis is not just a 'nice-to-have'. It is a 'must-have' if we are to leave a better world for our children."⁴ And in the words of Faith Birol, Chief Executive of the International Energy Agency, governments should: "Make smart policy decisions that can put emissions into structural decline this decade."⁵

Meanwhile, representing more than 60,000 businesses, the Australian Industry Group has called for a COVID-19 economic recovery that rebuilds 'stronger and cleaner'.⁶ And The Investor Agenda—a global group of institutional investors and managers with members responsible for more than \$55tn worth of assets—is calling for long term renewal packages that accelerate the transition to more resilient, inclusive and zero emission economies that work in harmony with nature.⁷

In his aptly titled piece, 'Gas lobby seizes Covid moment and declares war on Australia's future', Giles Parkinson articulated our dilemma perfectly:

"Australia finds itself at a critical juncture. It benefits from the stunning cost reductions in solar, wind and battery storage, and key institutions have [mapped out a path to a high renewable energy grid](#). Experts are shining the light [on a future of green manufacturing](#) and ["green energy exports"](#) that could enhance the position of the country as a significant energy superpower. But the fossil fuel industry and its backers, with their focus almost entirely on short-term profits and ideological claptrap, have other ideas. They have decided to throw a live grenade into Australia's own economic bunker, and its environment, and put the future of the current and emerging generation at risk."⁸

So, we ask, why are key Federal government decision makers betraying Australians by taking extraordinary, demonstrably anti-democratic measures aimed at ensuring our economy remains heavily polluting, vulnerable and backwards while further dangerously degrading the natural systems we all depend on?

With our thanks and appreciation to the COVID-19 Senate Select Committee for undergoing this vital scrutiny at this sensitive, critically important time –

Yours faithfully,

Endorsed by,

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¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/feb/02/grave-fears-held-for-thousands-of-rock-art-sites-after-bushfires-lay-bare-irrevocable-damage>, Lorena, Allam, 'Grave fears held for thousands of rock art sites after bushfires lay bare irrevocable damage', *The Guardian*, 2 February 2020

² <https://thenewdaily.com.au/life/science/2020/01/08/bushfires-australia-billion-wildlife-killed/>, Isabelle Lane, 'A monstrous event: Bushfires have killed 1.25 billion animals', *The New Daily*, updated 9 January 2020

³ <https://www.smh.com.au/federal-election-2019/australia-can-be-superpower-of-post-carbon-world-says-ross-garnaut-20190515-p51nsb.html>, Peter Hartcher, 'Australia can be 'superpower of post carbon world', says Ross Garnaut', *SMH*, 15 May 2019

⁴ https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/may/14/seizing-the-moment-how-australia-can-build-a-green-economy-from-the-covid-19-wreckage?mc_cid=4f0b35e22d&mc_eid=c540ceecb1, Adam Morton, 'Seizing the moment: how Australia can build a green economy from the COVID-19 wreckage', *The Guardian*, 14 May 2020

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/05/australian-businesses-call-for-climate-crisis-and-virus-economic-recovery-to-be-tackled-together>, Adam Morton, 'Australian businesses call for climate crisis and virus economic recovery to be tackled together', *The Guardian*, 5 May 2020

⁷ <https://theinvestoragenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/040520-Media-Release-Investor-Agenda-Sustainable-Recovery.pdf> The Investor Agenda Media Release, 'The Investor Agenda Founding Partners Call for a Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19' 4 May 2020

⁸ <https://reneweconomy.com.au/gas-lobby-seizes-covid-moment-and-declares-war-on-australias-future-60077/>, Giles Parkinson, 'Gas lobby seizes Covid moment and declares war on Australia's future', *Renew Economy*, 22 May 2020