



CROW Newsletter

Making a noise about climate change

September, 2021

[Quote of the week – and a thought provoking article](#)

(From Peter Kalmus, climate scientist, in the Guardian)

The world has by and large adopted “net zero by 2050” as its de facto climate goal, but two fatal flaws hide in plain sight within those 16 characters. One is “net zero.” The other is “by 2050”.

These two flaws provide cover for big oil and politicians who wish to preserve the status quo. Together they comprise a deadly prescription for inaction and catastrophically high levels of irreversible climate and ecological breakdown.

First, consider “**by 2050**”. This deadline feels comfortably far away, encouraging further climate procrastination. Who feels urgency over a deadline in 2050? ...

Pathways for achieving **net zero** by 2050 are designed to [give roughly even odds for keeping global heating below 1.5C](#). But it’s now apparent that even the [current 1.1C of global heating](#) is not a “safe” level. Climate catastrophes are arriving with a frequency and ferocity that have [shocked climate scientists](#).

Good news of the week

(From Assaad Razzouk on Twitter)

- 1 [New York bans petrol cars from 2035](#)
- 2 [Harvard divests from fossil fuels](#)
- 3 [Direct air capture plant starts absorbing CO2](#)
- 4 [LA goes 100% clean energy by 2035](#)
- 5 [Korea mandates net zero by 2050](#)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

[“Electrify everything” – simple, cheap and effective](#)

(H/T Grant Adams)

Sydney-born inventor, entrepreneur and adviser to US presidential campaigns, Dr Saul Griffith is one of the most prominent global advocates for an approach best summed up as “electrify everything”.

The general idea is to replace technologies that still run on combustion with alternatives that run on renewable electricity: swap petrol cars for electric vehicles (EVs) and gas heaters with reverse-cycle air conditioners.

By electrifying everything that can be electrified, Australia could cut its emissions by 80 per cent by 2035, according to credible estimates.

And it wouldn't need to invent any new technology to do this.

"It is an easy slam dunk," Dr Griffith said. "It's not even particularly invasive to our quality of life. For every other country, including America, it's much harder and the economics are not as good."

The Middle East is at the sharp end of global heating

This summer, several picturesque countries in the Middle East became tinderboxes. As extreme temperatures and severe droughts ravaged the region, forests burned, and cities became islands of unbearable heat. In June, Kuwait recorded a temperature of 53.2 degrees Celsius, while Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia all recorded over 50 degrees. A month later, temperatures in Iraq spiked to 51.5 degrees and Iran recorded a close 51 degrees.

Worst of all, this is just the start of a trend. The Middle East is warming at [twice the global average](#) and by 2050 will be 4 degrees Celsius warmer as compared with the 1.5 degree mark that scientists have prescribed to save humanity. The World Bank says extreme climatic conditions will become routine and the region could face [four months](#) of scorching sun every year. According to Germany's Max Planck Institute, many cities in the Middle East may literally become [uninhabitable](#) before the end of the century. And the region, ravaged by war and mired in sectarianism, may be singularly ill-prepared to face the challenges that threaten its collective existence.

Had to happen – electric tractors



Being 100% electrical, the Monarch Tractor has zero tailpipe emissions -- unlike many of its predecessors. With extra storage, the e-tractor can act as a sort of ATV and work as an ad hoc power generator in the field.

That's three functions for the price of one.

Besides, it's also very powerful. The tractor's electric drivetrain is capable of pumping out 40HP (30KW) of continuous power and short duration peak power up to 70HP (55KW) in a small footprint for multi-purpose usage.

Another interesting feature of the tractor is its ability to operate [completely autonomously](#). By integrating the latest advances in autonomous technology and software, the tractor can be programmed to perform a series of tasks on demand.

POLITICS AND POLICIES

Beware the Coal Keeper Tax

Angus Taylor's proposed "CoalKeeper" tax on electricity bills could significantly outstrip the impact of the Gillard government's carbon price, forcing up household electricity prices by at least 14%.

The tax, which would pay to subsidise the Coalition's fossil fuel donors to keep uncommercial coal and gas-fired power plants operating even if the electricity they produce is unused, has been estimated by [the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis](#) to cost between \$2.9-6.9 billion. That would mean an increase in ordinary household electricity bills of between \$182-430 a year.

An additional \$182 a year would mean a 13.6% increase in electricity bills in south-east Queensland, based on bill data from the [Australian Energy Market Commission](#) (AEMC). It would mean a 14% rise in NSW; 9.3% in the ACT, 16% in Victoria, 9.7% in South Australia and 9.4% in Tasmania. An increase of \$400 a year would mean bill increases of more than double those figures.

A faint ray of hope – Taylor and the Australian Government are getting isolated

Australia is still not focusing on the need for a rapid decarbonisation of the economy. Instead, the Federal government is bizarrely trying to provide new capacity payment subsidies to extend the life of antiquated coal plants, is providing subsidies in the tens of millions for new

gas exploration when companies themselves are reluctant to invest, is approving new coal and gas developments, and is overturning bi-partisan support for an ongoing ban on nuclear power.

When Australian politicians continually fail to lead, it is however reassuring to know that countries around the world are responding to the overwhelmingly obvious signs that extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more extreme with deleterious effects on economies and communities, by pledging to decarbonise.

Global corporate and financial institutions are likewise responding by curtailing finance to new fossil fuel projects, with Australian institutions following suit, given Australia is a very trade-exposed economy and its financial system is exceptionally linked to international markets.

And it is reassuring to know that while the Federal government continues its decade-long energy policy chaos, Australian consumers are also taking energy security into their own hands.

Notwithstanding federal political intransigence in refusing to accept the climate science or in seizing growing opportunities for investment, employment and exports, Australia still stands to become a [renewable energy superpower](#) as predicted by famed economist Ross Garnaut. Not a week passes without a global energy giant announcing plans for world-leading zero emissions industry development in Australia, be that by BP in [wind, solar and green hydrogen](#) or Rio Tinto's majority-held [Tomago Aluminium's](#) ambition to switch to a predominantly renewable power supply by 2029.

[We all want more action](#)

Voters in every federal seat in Australia support increased action on climate change and the adoption of renewable technology over the government's plan for a gas-led recovery, according to the largest poll ever conducted on climate change and politics in the country. The survey of 15,000 Australians conducted by YouGov on behalf of the Australian Conservation Foundation found 67 per cent of voters believed the government should be doing more to address climate change, including a majority in all 151 national seats

For the Riverina electorate:

- 73%** believe greater climate action will help nature and wildlife survive extreme weather
- 61%** do NOT believe that new coal or gas power stations should be a priority for the federal government.
- 57%** believe the federal government need to be doing more to address climate change.
- 58%** say Labor and Coalition plans for climate action will influence their vote.

[Click here for full details of the ACF survey](#)

[Honest government ads – Climate Capture and Storage](#)

Juice media have produced yet another very accurate and disturbing video. This time about Climate Capture and Storage.

Click on the heading above to watch it.

But, beware – **strong language warning.**



[Big news – court orders NSW government to address climate change](#)

In a landmark ruling, a NSW court has ordered the state's environmental watchdog to take action to address climate change.

In [a judgment on Thursday](#), Chief Judge of the Land & Environment Court Brian Preston ordered the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) “to develop environmental quality objectives, guidelines and policies to ensure environment protection from climate change”.

The judgment hinged on the interpretation of the duties imposed on the agency, particularly section 9(1)(a) of the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991. The EPA, which regulates a range of sectors from forestry to pollution controls, had accepted climate change was a global problem but argued no local action by the agency alone could address the problem.

[... and in even bigger news, instead of challenging the law, NSW government says “OK”](#)

EDO’s case on behalf of client Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action argued that the EPA has a duty to develop policies, objectives and guidelines to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and protect NSW communities from the impacts of climate change.

Today, Mr Kean told ABC Radio National that the government would accept the decision of the court and do “everything necessary to give it full effect.”

MONEY

[How much public money is given to the fossil fuel industry](#)

The estimated amount of subsidies given to the fossil fuel industry by the Australian Federal Government – Since the 2019 bushfires

\$21,820,542,892

Actually, it is much more. This was the figure for the end of August. It is much more now.

If you want to see the figure right now, or how much they got today, or since the last budget, click on the link in the heading.

[Innovative battery to be manufactured in Sydney’s west.](#)

Key points:

- The 'Gelion' battery stores energy captured from renewable sources like wind and solar
- Using a specially designed gel, it removes the need for expensive cooling and fire suppression systems
- A manufacturing pilot will soon get underway at the Battery Energy site in Fairfield

The ‘Gelion’ battery, which uses a specialised zinc-bromide gel technology, is designed to overcome the limitations of traditional lithium ion and lead acid batteries.

Its inventor, Professor Thomas Maschmeyer, says, “The zinc-bromide battery chemistry differs from conventional ones by being able to charge to 100 per cent and discharge to zero over a long duration,” he said.

“We are able to run at a high temperature — 50 degrees not a problem without cooling, and never catch fire. In fact, the inside of the batteries help to put fires out.”