



The Bullroarer - Monday 31 March 2008

Posted by [Big Gav](#) on March 31, 2008 - 7:25am in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

SMH - [Petrol helps fuel inflation](#)

Higher petrol and food prices have pushed Australia's annual inflation rate above 4% for the second consecutive month, putting it well above the Reserve Bank of Australia's target, a survey shows.

SMH - [Farmers' upbeat after rain, hiked prices](#)

Raser's Edge - [Back to the backyard: the answer to peak oil](#)

While many Sydneysiders escaped the big city over Easter, a national permaculture conference was held with people lining up to learn about innovative ways of farming and backyard gardening. A key speaker at the Australian Permaculture Convergence was the co-founder of permaculture, David Holmgren. David originally developed the concept during the oil crisis of the 1970's. Now with peak oil, he says permaculture is more relevant than ever.

SMH - [Humans creating 'new geological age'](#)

Humans are causing such unprecedented climatic change and mass extinctions it is creating a new geological age, according to a leading environmental scientist. The planet is already amid a "human-induced mass extinction event" which is defining a new geological age known as the Anthropocene, says Professor Will Steffen, director of the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at Canberra's Australian National University.

Stuff.co.nz - [Power retailers get smart](#)

New Zealand's largest electricity and gas supplier, Genesis Energy, will introduce smart meters to more than 600,000 customers in the next few years. Smart meters, also being introduced by other retailers, can be read remotely by power companies - usually via a cellphone network. They are set to usher in a new era of variable power pricing

where charges are set to reflect spikes and lulls in supply and demand. Genesis spokesman Richard Gordon says once about 20,000 or 30,000 meters are installed Genesis customers will be able to take advantage of different price rates for power.

National Business Review - [Planned Taupo geothermal plant moves forward](#)

A new \$450 million geothermal power station north east of Taupo has taken a major step forward. The Nga Awa Purua Joint Venture, a partnership between Tauhara North No.2 Trust and generator Mighty River Power, has signed a major engineering procurement contract with Japanese company Sumitomo Corporation. This paves the way for construction of a second 132MW geothermal power station at Rotokawa, lifting the total generation to 165MW.

WorldChanging - [How to run a Carbon Neutral Power Company - today.](#)

The company that generates the largest proportion of New Zealand's electricity has been certified carbon neutral for more than a year. Meridian Energy generates around a third of New Zealand's total energy demand (approx 12,000 GWh) exclusively from wind and hydro sources. The company has a history of advocating a carbon credit marketplace.

But not all New Zealand state-owned enterprises can boast the same carbon neutral certification. Solid Energy is the largest coal mining company in New Zealand, and also state owned. It's the company, I'm ashamed to say, that dig up and export New Zealand's coal to be burned in China - and the ones that intend to create a new open cast mine in Happy Valley. The Kyoto Protocol is blind to coal that is shipped overseas to be burned by other countries, a loophole that means New Zealand will not be judged on this activity when the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012. Certainly an improvement to make for the treaty's successor.

Both of these energy companies are owned by all citizens of New Zealand, but only one offers citizens a direct feedback system by paying custom. Meridian Energy can be encouraged by New Zealanders joining up and using all the guilt-free power they can afford. Solid Energy needs a constant flow of letters, political pressure, and more direct action like long protest walks or occupying intended mining sites.

SMH - [Woodside says North Rankin 2 approved](#)

Woodside Petroleum Ltd, the operator of the North West Shelf Venture, says the venture's participants have taken the final investment decision to develop the \$5 billion North Rankin 2 project off Australia's north-west coast. The project is expected to start in 2013.

BHP Billiton petroleum chief executive Michael Yeager said North Rankin 2 would deliver gas from the North West Shelf for another 25 years. "This extension of the North West Shelf project follows our approval of the fifth LNG (liquefied natural gas) train which significantly expanded the LNG facility as well as the Angel gas and condensate field which are under development," he said in a statement. The fifth train

will add a further 4.4 million tonnes of production capacity and increase total annual output to 16.3 million tonnes.

The Australian - [Ducking for cover on LNG operator](#)

The Australian - [Chinese giant ready to run Puffin field](#)

CHINESE giant Sinopec will become the first foreign government-owned operator of a producing Australian oilfield in a deal to be completed in Beijing tomorrow. A signing ceremony between AED Oil and China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec) will cement the sale of 60 per cent of the Puffin Oil venture in the Timor Sea.

The Australian - [Roc Oil hopes to unlock secrets](#)

SYDNEY-based Roc Oil believes it is about to find a new oilfield off Geraldton and finally unlock the secrets of the Perth Basin's complex geology. Chief executive John Doran is cautiously optimistic about the prospects of finding a new oil field off the West Australian coast. Coming from almost anyone else, that might sound like hype for a stock exchange announcement, but Dr Doran and his partners are very experienced. There are mounting expectations that the Dunsborough discovery could provide some clues to the complex offshore Perth Basin. Analysts are pointing to a discovery with the potential of 30 million barrels. The Dunsborough joint venturers won't commit to a figure -- available data is just not sufficient -- but the view is that this is possible from pre-drill estimates. ...

Cliff Head was once touted as containing more than 100 million barrels. It is actually substantially smaller -- about 16 million barrels recoverable -- but is still a commercial success, having paid back its capital cost in November. Doran describes the Cliff Head product as "oil that has to be cuddled" to produce at all. Even so, the field is a technical success and the partners proudly show it off to an increasing stream of international visitors as an example of how a small, technically difficult reservoir can be profitable. Dunsborough seems to be different, because of the light oil and the possible size of the structure. Doran says that on the information available, it is a better prospect than the joint venture's Frankland gas discovery last year, which they are still considering as a possible development.

The Australian - [Bracks plans to boost clean, green cars](#)

BUILDING environmentally friendly vehicles and supporting innovation for export are likely to be the focus of a discussion paper on the future of automotive tariffs, to be released today. The paper, from former Victorian premier Steve Bracks, comes just days after Finance Minister Lindsay Tanner, a key figure in the Rudd Government, argued that trade tariffs distort economies and harm consumers. Unions and the left wing of the Labor Party would like to see a freeze on the reduction of automotive tariffs - from 10 per cent to 5 per cent, scheduled for 2010.

Wall Street Journal - [Rice Hoarding in Asia Pressures Supply](#)

As rice prices hit new highs, farmers across Asia are hoarding their crops, raising the prospect of a shortage in Asia and Africa that could lead to widespread unrest. Rice prices in Asia have doubled since the beginning of the year, driven higher by rising demand, a steady depletion of government stockpiles and a pest outbreak in Vietnam, the world's second-largest exporter after Thailand.

SMH - [Metro will be too fast to get on](#)

The North West Metro will average at least 52kmh; the Kwun Tong Line average is 33kmh. It will be 39 per cent faster than the North East Line in Singapore, widely regarded as a world benchmark for the latest in metro rail. And it will be almost 50 per cent faster than Guangzhou's Line 1 metro, in China. One builder of metro rolling stock told the Herald the times between stations could not have included waiting times. Other experts called the times optimistic.

Green With A Gun - [Storing your carbon in a crock](#)

In the desperate casting about for ways to deal with the problem of climate change without actually changing in the slightest way our wasteful Western lifestyle, people sometimes speak of CCS, carbon capture and storage. The idea is that we'll still happily burn as much stuff, we'll just bury the CO₂ afterwards.

There are a few problems with this. The first is that the technology is far from trivial or without cost, and has not actually been shown to work; leaks could be kind of inconvenient, as the people around Lake Nyos learned. The second is that on the most recent complete figures from 2004, only 56.6% of the 49Gt CO₂ equivalent of emissions, or 27.7Gt CO₂, came from burning fossil fuels; so even if we captured and stored all the CO₂ from burning coal, natural gas and oil, we'd still have 22.3Gt of CO₂ equivalent from deforestation, livestock and rice farming, artificial fertiliser and animal manure runoff, cement-making and CFCs. And that's more than enough to give us catastrophic climate change.

Science Alert - [Facing up to the coming resources crunch](#)

The world is faced with a triple crisis: climate change, peak oil and global resource depletion.

Stuff.co.nz - [All power to the solar industry](#)

Nelson MP Nick Smith's view that Nelson could and should be a New Zealand, even international, leader in embracing solar water heating is hard to fault, the Nelson Mail said in an editorial on Monday. Reliably high sunshine levels and a long-established environmental whakapapa leave the region well placed to be at the forefront when it

comes to tapping the sun's energy. In addition, Nelson has an established solar energy clique: from d-i-y enthusiasts and passionate pioneers to traditional plumbing companies which have profitably embraced green principles. The country's only solar appliance testing facility is also located here.

SMH - [A courageous decision, minister](#)

Consider the warning Professor Ross Garnaut gave last week about the temptations the Government faces with the introduction of an emissions trading scheme. Various industries will be quite adversely affected by such a scheme and they'll all be mounting lobbying campaigns for special treatment. Were the Government to yield to such lobbying it would "invite back into the centre of Australian policy-making all of the rent-seeking interests that blighted our economic performance from the time of federation until the 1980s". "That approach would have government deciding which firms, and which activities, should be given permits to emit greenhouse gasses" as opposed to those firms having to bid for them at auction like everyone else. "If this course were to be followed, managers throughout the economy would find it more rewarding to put pressure on government to secure emissions rights than to find and apply low-emissions ways of going about their business," he said.

Just so. The Government's task is made all the more daunting by the fact that, though the electricity generators aren't deserving of special treatment, the exporters of emissions-intensive products, such as aluminium, probably are (until other countries are taxing their producers in the same way we are).

SMH - [Oil and aluminium change equation](#)

Analysts are not projecting the oil price will fall nearly so steeply, but it is looking increasingly likely that the aluminium half of that equation could hold true. Last week, Barclays said it expected the aluminium price to exceed \$US2 a pound next year, while UBS predicted an average price of \$US2 a pound in 2010. BHP has emphasised it earns margins of about 60 per cent from its petroleum production, compared to about 15 per cent for aluminium.

But in an interview with the Herald last week, Rio's chief executive, Tom Albanese, noted the potential for a large increase in aluminium margins in the coming years. "Those margins are all related to pricing," he said. He also emphasised the long-term nature of aluminium investments compared with petroleum investments, noting total value capture over time was just as important as margins in the resources business. "A big differentiator between the aluminium sector and oil and gas is the fact that once you have the Weipa bauxite resource, that has decades of life," Mr Albanese said. "You don't have to keep throwing every dollar you make back into the ground just to keep your pace."

ABN Amro noted last week BHP's oil production should grow 150 per cent in the next two years, against 50 per cent for Woodside.

Peak Energy - [Short Takes](#). Lots more links for those who can't get enough...



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