



The Bullroarer - Monday 4th August 2008

Posted by [Phil Hart](#) on August 3, 2008 - 9:25pm in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

The Australian: [NSW power saga reads like corporate Russian roulette](#)

MOST of Australia's public assets are managed by six state governments, their voters acting as proxy shareholders. Every three or four years voters hold a general meeting to vote on the performance of the existing management team. The Iemma Government in NSW is living proof the majority of shareholders are willing to tolerate chronic underperformance, indecision and even the whiff of corruption, provided they see their state growing in value. And they will turn in brutal and unrepentant fury when it does not.

Electricity reform has been the exception that proves this rule, where the most lucrative decisions have been unceremoniously punished by voters and inaction and prevarication has been endorsed.

NZ Herald: [AA trying to sabotage electric-rail project, says ARC chief](#)

Auckland Regional Council chairman Mike Lee is accusing the Automobile Association of trying to sabotage the \$1 billion rail electrification drive. A furious Mr Lee says that is the intent of a letter the AA has written to him - and copied to Transport Minister Annette King - challenging council preparations for a regional fuel tax. The row has erupted at a sensitive time for the project, which Mr Lee wants to start immediately so Auckland's rail network can be electrified between Eden Park and Otahuhu in time for the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

Courier Mail: [Pensioners left high and dry as petrol soars](#)

THE State's pensioners are becoming isolated because they can't afford petrol and they can't wait until next year for a boost in payments. While opinion is divided over whether Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Treasurer Wayne Swan are serious about providing the relief that pensioners need, seniors groups agree that single pensioners and those on the disability support pension are doing it the toughest of all.

The Age: [Rivals emerge in BG's Origin play](#)

BRITISH Gas' \$13.8 billion hostile bid for Origin Energy could be undermined by the intervention of two of its biggest global rivals also in pursuit of the Australian power producer's highly prized coal seam gas assets. According to reports from Britain, where BG is based, oil giants Shell and BP have lodged their interests in forming a joint venture with Origin to develop its CSG reserves in Queensland.

LiveNews: [Truckies take fuel frustration to Industrial Relations Commission](#)

Truck drivers have taken their anger over retailer pay rates to the Industrial Relations Commission.

The Transport Workers Union wants five to seven per cent more from retailers like Woolworths and Coles, depending on the size of each rig.

Herald Sun: [Four main candidates snub Petrol Commissioner job](#)

Smart people don't want a dumb job.

THE job of Petrol Commissioner has become a poisoned chalice, with at least four eligible contenders for the job declaring they have no interest in taking it on. Pat Walker, the first Petrol Commissioner, resigned late last week for personal reasons, but it appears there are no takers for his high-profile job because the watchdog has no teeth.

Herald Sun: [Prices follow price spikes not dips](#)

EVER think petrol prices jump following spikes in world oil prices but are slow to fall when world oil prices drop? Well, now there is growing proof that you're right. A review of the weekly prices report produced and released every Monday by the Australian Institute of Petroleum, the oil industry voice, shows that world oil price spikes get reflected very quickly in retail prices.

Canberra Times: [Ethanol-blend petrol proves more popular](#)

Australian motorists are changing their petrol-buying habits, with cheaper and more environmentally friendly ethanol-blended fuel growing in popularity. APAC Biofuel Consultants issued its annual report yesterday, showing that the biofuel sector is contributing about 3000 barrels a day to the Australian transport fuel supply. This is just over 50 per cent of the way to meeting the 350 million litres a year target by 2010, set by the previous federal government.

Herald Sun: [Petrol prices drive commuters to board buses](#)

PEOPLE are jumping on buses as petrol prices hit record highs and more bus services become available. The increase in patronage is biggest at weekends, just months after

the State Government further reduced daily weekend fares. Across Melbourne there has been a 44 per cent growth in passengers travelling on Sundays in the past year. On weekdays the increase has been 6 per cent.

Herald Sun: [Families dump cars for public transport](#)

CASH-strapped families could save thousands of dollars a year if they dropped the second car and used public transport. The Public Transport Users' Association has used RACV figures to show that switching from a car to a bus, train or tram would save \$4000-\$10,000 a year.

ABC: [Public transport fares rise in Qld's south-east](#)

Public transport fares across south-east Queensland increase from today. Ticket prices for buses, trains and ferries have gone up by 3.9 per cent, rounded up to the nearest 10 cents. Premier Anna Bligh says new discounts of between 20 and 35 per cent for Go Card users come into effect from today and are a better system than discounted bus tickets that are being phased out.

Courier Mail: [Fuel cells rain supreme](#)

RAINCOAT material may play a crucial role in powering cars of the future. As petrol prices hit record levels, car manufacturers are turning to alternative fuels, such as hydrogen fuel cells which use expensive and rare platinum.

Now scientists at Melbourne's Monash University have found a way to use water-resistant Goretex instead of platinum as the catalyst for hydrogen to combine with oxygen to produce electricity.

Daily Telegraph: [Reserve Bank ignores petrol price in inflation measures](#)

The right answer for the wrong reason. Raising interest rates will not do anything to bring down oil prices, but fudging the figures to pretend that prices are low (except for all the things that are going up) doesn't help much either.

SPIRALLING petrol prices have not been included in inflation measurements used by the Reserve Bank board in 18 of the last 21 quarters - a period when interest rates were put up eight times. The Reserve Bank's tool for assessing inflation trends, the so-called "trimmed mean" Consumer Price Index measure, has frequently removed petrol out of the measures because of its volatility, the Daily Telegraph has learned.

The Age: [It's time for Melbourne to take a breather in the race for growth](#)

PREMIER John Brumby's admission that Melbourne is growing too fast is striking,

given his previous insatiable appetite for more people. While welcome, his new stance will not deal with the challenges the present rate of growth is generating. The problems afflicting Melbourne are not so much due to the size of the city, but rather its rate of population growth.

ABC: [Miner plans to extend oil shale pit](#)

A five year mineral development licence has been issued by the State Government for part of an oil shale deposit in north Queensland.

The licence will allow Queensland Energy Resources (QER) to apply to the state to extend the size of its sample pit in the Macfarlane deposit for further testing near the Bruce Highway south of Proserpine.

ABC: [Canberrans making the GreenPower switch](#)

The ACT Government says the number of Canberra households switching to alternative green energy has increased by 150 per cent over the past two years.

Since GreenPower was introduced in 2006, over 10,000 Canberrans have now made the switch, a total of 8 per cent of all energy customers.

Stuff.co.nz: [Fuel price drives thrifty concept](#)

X-Rides director James Hammond knew he was riding a winner with motorised skateboards as soon as he bought one. When he or his sons took it for a spin, people of all ages would stop them on the street to ask about it. "If we'd been on a motorbike they would have been waving their fists at us."

Stuff.co.nz: [Fuel price pain bites deep](#)

Rising fuel costs are causing west Aucklanders to tighten the purse strings and the automotive industry is starting to feel the impact. Abnesh Chand, station manager at Vehicle Testing New Zealand in Henderson, says business is quieter than this time last year. "It is slower," he says. "We have seen a decrease in the number of people coming in for warrants because of the petrol and economic crisis."

Gisborne Herald: [Boom in sales of the frugal scooter](#)

The weather is keeping most people in their cars, but this will be the summer of the scooter if inquiries are anything to go by, dealers here say. "I think it will really take off just before Christmas. Although we are not selling many right now, we're getting four or five inquiries a day, says Derek Mead at Gisborne Honda."



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