



The Bullroarer - Saturday 7th February 2009

Posted by [Big Gay](#) on February 7, 2009 - 7:43am in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

The Australian - [Crisis forces oil and gas contractor Clough to cut 75 staff](#)

IN a sign that even the petroleum sector is not immune to the vagaries of the global financial crisis, oil and gas contractor Clough is to sack 75 staff as part of a broader restructure.

Peak Energy - [Ausra's Prospects Dimming](#)

Cleantech.com reports that Ausra is refocusing and downsizing as financing large scale solar thermal power projects becomes more difficult - Ausra shaves staff as it chases immediate revenue. ... Not all news from the CSP sector is bleak, however - Cleantech.com reports on an Israeli startup that is concentrating on smaller scale, distributed solar thermal projects - Israeli startup grabs \$5M for distributed solar thermal.

SMH - [Six-star energy rating proposed for homes](#)

EW homes across the country may be required to have a "six-star" energy efficiency rating within two years. The premiers and the Prime Minister agreed to examine the proposal at their next meeting.

The proposal comes from a report by the leaders' working group on climate change and water, aimed at improving the energy efficiency of homes and commercial buildings following lobbying by environment groups. Improving energy efficiency in buildings is one way to cut greenhouse gas emissions and energy bills.

The Age - [Homes lose power in extreme conditions](#)

Power to Melbourne was under threat on Saturday night as bushfires raged out of control near the Loy Yang power station in the Latrobe Valley in Victoria's east.

The Age - [City swelters, records tumble in heat](#)

Melbourne's all-time weather record has been broken and the city is sweltering under the twin effects of high temperatures and hot north-west winds. The city hit 46.4 degrees at 3.04pm - the hottest day since the Bureau of Meteorology started keeping records 150 years ago.

Public Opinion - [heat wave](#)

In Adelaide the plain trees are already shedding their leaves, the bodies of dead possums litter the parklands, and the death toll of human beings is around 75. As in Melbourne, there have been crippling blackouts due to the failure of the \$780 million Basslink interconnector cable linking Victoria and Tasmania, which is unable to operate when temperatures in Launceston Tasmania pass 35C.

NEMMCO continues to talk in terms of the national electricity market having sufficient capacity to deliver reliable supply. Politicians explain the disconnect between assurance and reality by talking in terms of the heatwave being one-in-100-year event, rather than this being an indication of southern Australia's future. Yet there have been a series of rolling blackouts over the past years due to supply falling short of increasing demand --hence the frequent load shedding that causes the blackouts during a heatwave.

A warmed up world means hotter conditions in cities, towns and the regions since long hot, dry summers are becoming the norm. Shouldn't we see the blackouts as a timely warning about a rundown energy system with its old industrial technology utilizing fossil fuels? This is an electricity grid that has seen little new investment in the last decade.

SMH - [Branson launches V Australia fleet](#)

British billionaire and showman Richard Branson has declared war on Qantas and other rival airlines with the launch of his new fleet of V Australia passenger jets to fly the Australia-US route.

The Australian - [Coal fleet ships out as mining boom sinks](#)

IF you want to know what the end of a commodities boom looks like, you need only stand on the foreshore at Newcastle. Just 18 months ago, more than 70 giant coal ships lay anchored, the queue stretching to the horizon and almost 100km south. Yesterday, there were 17.

Peak Energy - [GetUp Survey: Increasing Funding For Renewable Energy Is Australia's Number One Priority](#)

GetUp recently did a survey of their members to determine what is important to them

and, to my surprise and gratification, climate change was the most important overall theme and increasing funding for renewable energy was the most important item (improving public transport was second and fixing the ETS third).

Hopefully the government will start to respond to the will of the electorate at some point...

Crikey - [Flip-flop Flannery is a climate change opportunist](#)

The effect of Flannery's frequent contradictory public interventions on climate change has been to confuse those who look to him for guidance. Which of his expressed opinions should they believe? What is his solution to greenhouse pollution -- solar energy, nuclear power, geothermal, "clean coal" or biochar?

The mish-mash of policy proposals also plays into the hands of the polluters because a Flannery statement can be found to support almost any position.

Stuff.co.nz - [Return of the electric car](#)

At the recent Detroit motor show, one word raised a buzz amid the current doom and gloom of the global car industry: "electrification".

Canberra Times - [Australian city planning hurtles towards crossroads](#)

The world's great cities are at a crucial tipping point in their development. London is finding it difficult to cope with the growth in demand for public transport, Beijing has serious air pollution and the infrastructure of US cities is collapsing. Australia's cities are rightly regarded as some of the finest urban environments in the world but they, too, are in trouble.

The Sydney city region is typical. Its traffic levels are among the highest in the world, its air pollution routinely breaches World Health Organisation standards, and its planning and metropolitan governance are not fit for the purpose. Brisbane, Perth and Melbourne have fuelled traffic growth with an excess of highly expensive new highways and a failure to recognise global trends in so-called demand management.

ABC - [Agforce welcomes climate change inquiry](#)

Rural lobby group Agforce says a Federal Government inquiry into how farmers can adapt to the challenges of climate change is a step in the right direction. A House of Representatives committee will investigate the role of the Government and research organisations in helping the agricultural industry cope with a changing climate.

Peak Energy - [A buoyant future in wave power](#)

Reuters has a report on Australian wave power company Carnegie Corp and the vast potential for wave power in southern Australia. ...

Several sites in Western Australia, including Albany in the south and Garden Island off Perth, looked promising. "There's significant interest in these sorts of projects, even in the current financial environment," he added. And a 50 MW plant was just a drop in the ocean. He pointed to a study commissioned by the company that said wave power had the potential to generate up to 500,000 MW of electricity along the southern half of Australia's coast at depths greater than 50 metres (165 feet). At shallower depths, the potential was 170,000 MW, or about four times Australia's installed power generation capacity.

Bloomberg - [Shell Partner Sees Australian Project Consolidation.](#)

Australia's emerging coal-seam gas industry is headed for consolidation as rivals seek the most profitable way of developing ventures that liquefy the fuel for export, Royal Dutch Shell Plc's local partner said. Shell and Arrow Energy Ltd. expect to announce this quarter or next how they intend to participate in the reorganization of rival projects planned by companies including BG Group Plc and ConocoPhillips, said Shaun Scott, chief executive officer of Brisbane-based Arrow's Australian unit.

Growth in non-conventional gas such as coal-seam methane and shale gas will help it overtake coal as the "dominant" fuel in the next few years, Schlumberger Ltd., the world's largest oilfield services provider, said in October. Shell last year agreed to buy 30 percent of the Australian permit areas of Arrow, which has an accord to sell fuel for a small LNG project planned by Liquefied Natural Gas Ltd.

The Australian - [Shell plans export gas plant at Gladstone](#)

OIL major Shell, a minor player in Queensland's burgeoning liquid natural gas industry, plans to build an export plant at Gladstone. Confirming speculation that the UK oil and gas giant was not content with a simple stake in coal seam gas (CSG) reserves, local partner Arrow Energy said bigger plans would be announced as soon as this quarter.

The Australian - [Beach Petroleum increases CSG reserves](#)

Beach Petroleum's proved, probable and possible coal seam gas reserves increased by a third in its fiscal first half. Beach , which owns 40 per cent of the Tipton West CSG tenements in Queensland, said its net 3P coal seam gas reserves increased 34 per cent to 1,115 petajoules in the six months to December 31.

Peak Energy - [Peak oil: a symptom, not a cause](#)

The question of why we strive for growth is an interesting one. My guess - until

everyone has reached a certain level of prosperity (ie. decent housing, transport, clothing, education, entertainment + recreation facilities etc) then society as a whole will strive to produce these things (pretty much regardless of what political system they are living under).

Where this doesn't occur, political instability (or repression) is the likely result - so the endless search by elites for stability means that growth becomes a way of maintaining the existing hierarchy. Population growth is an additional factor which further prompts the need for growth.

Now - assuming we can eventually supply everyone's material needs (preferably in a sustainable way - which means renewable energy sources and high levels of recycling via cradle-to-cradle manufacturing system) and stabilise the population (which is actually a function of achieving the first goal - prosperous societies where women have economic freedom and access to contraception and education strongly tend to low - or negative - population growth), then the need for growth slowly disappears.

If I'm correct about this, it doesn't really matter if we have a hierarchy in society or not - the driver for growth vanishes.

Peak Energy - [Time to toll the warning bells on oil production](#)

Peak Energy - [Antarctic Bases Converting to Solar and Wind Energy](#)

Peak Energy - [Will the Children of Today Be Living in a World Powered by Renewable Energy by 2050?](#)

Peak Energy - [China declares an emergency amid worst drought in 50 years](#)

Peak Energy - [The Clean Coal Debate](#)

Peak Energy - [Japan Air Lines The Latest To Test Fly Biofuels](#)

Peak Energy - [Smart Grids In Malta, Ontario And Beyond](#)

Peak Energy - [Crocodiles Invade Queensland Towns](#)



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