



## Why Won't Australia's Ruling Elite Acknowledge The Benefits Of Coal?

### **Publish Date:**

February 2019

---

The hypocrisy of Australia's anti-coal contingent was exemplified this week by Richard Marles, who is the federal Labor Party's spokesman for Defence.

Mr Marles said "the global market for thermal coal has collapsed, and wonderful — that's a good thing."

This statement is, of course, untrue.

There is a desire among many in the higher echelons of Australia's political, corporate, and legal system who want to see coal finished once and for all.

There are currently 2240 coal-fired power stations in operation around the world. Last year there was a record amount of coal-fired power generated and coal is Australia's biggest export. The business has hardly collapsed.

---



But the deeper problem with Mr Marles' statement, though, is the wishful thinking it reflects.

This is demonstrated by a recent decision by Glencore, Australia's largest coal miner, to cap its global coal output at current levels apparently in response to pressure from climate activist shareholders.

It is also demonstrated by a decision handed down earlier this month by the Land and Environment Court to refuse the implementation of a new coal mine near Gloucester on the NSW mid-north coast. The court said the mine should not proceed because it would increase greenhouse gas emissions.

Most dramatically, though, it is demonstrated by the struggles that the Adani Carmichael coal mine and infrastructure project has faced.

The project, located in the Galilee Basin in central Queensland, is exactly the kind of project this country needs. It is set to create 1500 jobs directly and support a further 5000 jobs through flow-on effects in other industries.

But it has been held up in the regulatory approvals process for eight years, faced 10 legal challenges, and prepared a 22,000-page environmental impact statement.

Indigenous landowners that stand to be affected by the mine and associated infrastructure even recently voted 294 out 295 in favour of the project going ahead.

But this won't stop anti-coal activists who are against the development of Australia's natural resources. Geoff Cousins, former president of the Australian Conservation Foundation, gave the game away when he said in 2015 that "we have no desire or intention to simply delay the Adani Carmichael mine. We want to stop it in its tracks".

This is not just a concern for the Maroons up north, or even just for Australians. The anti-coal activism could deprive the world's poorest of access to cheap and reliable electricity.

A 2015 report by the Institute of Public Affairs conservatively estimated that Australian coal could help about 82 million Indians access electricity.

Many Indians who would no longer be able to access Australian coal will not magically shift to wind and solar energy.

Instead they will burn wood, crop waste, and animal dung, sometimes in open furnaces in their homes. Not only is this bad for their environment, it is bad for the people as four million people each year are estimated to die from illnesses such as pneumonia, stroke, and lung diseases as a result of the pollution.

Is that wonderful, Mr Marles?



It is curious that many on the left are happy to send \$4.2 billion a year in foreign aid to lesser developed nations, but want to stop those same nations getting access to Australian coal. Perhaps they don't really care about the world's poorest and are instead more interested in lining their pockets with government rebates and subsidies for wind and solar energy.

What all of this also reveals is how hypocritical and out of touch the ruling elites of Australia are.

They tell us that high electricity prices and supply disruption are the "price of progress".

Following power blackouts affecting 160,000 homes in Victoria in January this year, for example, Greens senator Richard Di Natale said Australians were being unreasonable if they complained about the inconveniences of not having power.

Tell that to the truckie who is up at 4am to drive 14 hours up the Pacific Motorway.

Tell that to millions directly or indirectly employed in energy-intensive heavy industry.

Tell that to the family-run cafe on the street corner that can't afford to pay the bills.

Australia now has the fourth highest electricity prices in the world.

Yet many in the ruling class are blissfully unaware of the pain that is being afflicted. Or maybe they are aware of the pain.

And maybe imposing pain on the unwashed masses is precisely the punishment the elites think they deserve for "complaining" about not having power.

What would be wonderful is instead of our leaders bemoaning coal, they were instead proud of our nation, our resources sector, and for the role coal has played in making Australia a prosperous nation that has played an integral role in alleviating global poverty.

Maybe they could even put their hand on their hearts when they sing "Our land abounds in nature's gifts."

**Original Link:**

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/why-wont-australias-ruling-elite-acknowledge-the-benefits-of-coal/news-story/e7a6e8931dc248fd861c524c1da3793c>

**Originally published in:**

The Daily Telegraph