

Closing off coal would result in self-inflicted wounds

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What a brilliant illustration by Eric Lobbecke and an equally good article by John Williams ("We fiddle, our coal burns across the world", 24/10). In years to come, historians will write about the 2010-20 decade as the time when Australia closed its coal-fired power stations, said no to nuclear power and started its rapid decline to become an economic basket case.

All the while, Asian nations took Australian coal and became industrial powerhouses. Our children and grandchildren will never live the lifestyle we have enjoyed. It is time for a strong government to bite the bullet and start building coal and nuclear power stations.

Chas Barter, Lower Mitcham, SA

John Williams makes a strong case for coal. There is no rational reason not to burn some coal here.

His facts cannot be disputed, but sadly they can be ignored, as they have been for years, by the ABC, much of academia, the Greens, most of the Labor Party, some Liberals and vast numbers of well-meaning but ignorant citizens.

Facts no longer count in what is now a political situation. The challenge for Williams is to make the facts count. An article in The Australian is useful, but a factual documentary on who burns our coal across the world would be a prize.

Doug Hurst, Chapman, ACT

John Williams's revelation regarding respective carbon dioxide emissions from coal is something every commentator should be armed with when interviewing climate alarmists.

Just how does our 128 million tonnes of CO₂ affect global climate compared with 5500 million tonnes from Indian and China alone? Is it, as Williams says, a belief that there is a tent over Australia that prevents us from global emissions? Commentators never raise this type of sensible information when Labor, Greens or an independent such as Kerry Phelps is interviewed.

Phil Radnidge, Turramurra, NSW

You report that the Morrison government will set a price benchmark for power bills from next July. This is on the advice of Chief Scientist Alan Finkel that the government should do more on climate change because it is an issue of concern to "everyday voters", despite Finkel's acknowledgment that our reduction in emissions is having no effect on the climate.

Perhaps Morrison's decision also reflects the view of the Wentworth winner, Kerry Phelps, that the government has lurched "too far to the right". Instead,

the Morrison government will take its first step towards a socialist economy under which governments controls electricity prices.

Des Moore, South Yarra, Vic

The Prime Minister says nuclear power had to demonstrate it is economically viable before he would be convinced to back legislation to lift the prohibition of its use.

Without lifting of the legislation, it is doubtful that large energy companies would be interested in examining its possibilities when they know it is banned. It is well and truly time to lift this ban and allow serious discussion about its inclusion in our energy mix.

Nick Watling, Smithfield, Qld

In the debate The Australian calls for over nuclear power, the economics may be hard to pin down. Nobody seems to know what the premiums would be for adequate liability cover on the open market because all governments indemnify the operator or offer cheap rates.

Supporters of nuclear power make decommissioning costs disappear by applying the same discount rate as for expected earnings. That is an accounting solecism. The sinking fund to cover decommissioning would have to be invested at low risk.

Derek Bolton, Birchgrove, NSW

The problem is that the global temperature record is wombat-stew science with all manner of unfit for purpose data thrown in the pot. It contains biases due to heat islands, device sensitivity, location uncertainty and is unfit for the purpose of revealing a trend in temperature.

That business entities can see how to make a buck out of climate disruption is hardly a compelling reason to believe the thesis. Who says science or business cannot be corrupted?

As for the rest of the alarmism, it serves its purpose for those invested in the cause. And like any narrative, all that is required is suspension of disbelief.

That's how marketing works.

M. Seward, Launceston, Tas