



EXPOSING

THE TIES

**between Australian
universities and
the fossil fuel industry**





Photo: Carla Gottgens/Bloomberg
Loy Yang A power plant owned and operated by AGL is currently the most polluting plant in the country emitting over 18 mil tonnes of CO₂ per year

#ExposeTheTies is a project of Fossil Free Unis – a network of Australian university divestment groups and 350.org Australia.

Contact: campus@350.org.au

Facebook: facebook.com/FossilFreeUnis

Website: gofossilfree.org/australianunis

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We acknowledge that we meet and work on land of many First Nations people. We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, and acknowledge the pivotal role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within the Australian community. There can be no climate justice without justice for First Nations people across the globe.

Over the last four years, students have led campaigns across 18 Australian campuses urging their universities to divest from fossil fuels. Currently, Australian universities invest millions of dollars through their endowments into fossil fuel companies that are putting our future at risk from the impacts of dangerous climate change.

***If it is morally wrong to pollute the climate,
then it is wrong to profit from that wreckage.***

We know from recent reports since the signing of the UN Paris Agreement that if we are to avoid the severe impacts of global warming most of the current reserves of coal, oil and gas need to stay in the ground¹. Burning these reserves would cause global warming well beyond safe limits, exposing us to more severe storms, rising sea levels, droughts and further coral bleaching events.

Many institutions are already leading the way by divesting their assets from coal, oil and gas showing that they want a clean, just future powered by renewable energy.

Some 749 institutions have now divested more than US\$5.53 trillion from fossil fuels globally² over the last five years, including a third of universities in the United Kingdom³.

Despite this global trend, most Australian universities have been resistant to divesting their assets from fossil fuel and related companies. This has led us to question the kinds of ties that exist between our universities and the fossil fuels industry.

What we have found is that many council members of leading universities either have ties to, or are non-executive directors of companies whose significant business is in fossil fuels.

Additionally, many universities have material ties to the industry, receiving funding for university projects from fossil fuel or related companies.

These ties could create a serious conflict of interest or bias when it comes to decisions around fossil fuel divestment, potentially jeopardising universities' own endowment investments by failing to accurately consider climate change

1 http://priceofoil.org/content/uploads/2016/09/OCI_the_skys_limit_2016_FINAL_2.pdf

2 <https://gofossilfree.org/commitments/>

3 <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/university-fossil-fuel-divestment-to-tal-tips-ps80-billion-globally#survey-answer>

and stranded asset risks⁴.

350.org Australia and Fossil Free student groups nationally believe it is immoral for those working for or with fossil fuel companies to make decisions that shape the future of young people at universities, while the companies they advise risk the future of young people by accelerating the climate crisis.

Additionally, many of the companies listed in this report with close ties to our universities are members of the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA), Australia's peak oil and gas industry lobby, and/or the Mineral Council of Australia (MCA). APPEA was found to have spent almost \$4 million over 2015 attempting to "obstruct" action on climate change⁵. The Minerals Council of Australia meanwhile have been at the centre of a number of attacks on organisations defending our climate against fossil fuel expansion⁶.

In 2016 as part of its "Pollution Free Politics campaign before the last federal election, 350.org released figures that showed that the fossil fuel industry donated \$3.7 million to political parties in the year before the election. Meanwhile, between 2015 and 2016, the fossil fuel industry received \$7.7 billion in subsidies. Clearly donations and political influence have a powerful impact on how we do, and don't, respond to climate change. Coordinated efforts to lobby for ongoing subsidies and support for the fossil fuel industry, including for new coal, oil and gas projects, are in evidence at all levels of government, in communities and in our universities.

More research and transparency is needed to determine whether universities' funding and research decisions are being affected by the links to the fossil fuels industry outlined in this report. Openly addressing potential conflicts of interest will be critical to ensuring universities are not part of Australia's failure to adequately address climate change and take urgent steps to speed up the transition from polluting coal, oil and gas to the clean energy solutions needed right now. Students around Australia deserve a safe climate future. Our universities need to ensure they are leading the charge to urgently address climate change, not be part of the problem.

To find out more visit <https://gofossilfree.org/australianunis/>

4 <http://www.pionline.com/article/20170605/ONLINE/170609953/investors-move-to-limit-impact-of-climate-change-on-their-portfolios>

5 <http://www.smh.com.au/national/australian-oil-and-gas-lobby-spent-millions-advocating-against-climate-action-report-20160412-go47ok.html>

6 <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/minerals-council-steps-up-coal-lobbying-as-agl-calls-for-end-to-political-gridlock-20170619-gwu60q.html>
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/05/mining-lobby-calls-for-some-green-groups-to-lose-tax-deductible-status>

What we can do together

If you are staff, alumni or a student you can ask your university to provide you with the meeting minutes of Council meetings. These are where decisions made in the meeting are found. In most cases these are documents that stakeholders at that university are able to freely access.

Councillors, in most cases, are meant to declare any potential conflicts of interest before starting a discussion about a topic. If you find something that you think looks like a conflict of interest – get in contact with us at campus@350.org.au.

Additionally, you can email your university today, share this paper with them and tell them why you want them to divest. Universities take their public image very seriously so a personal letter or email is one way you can make your voice heard.

We have 18 groups active nationally. You can get involved with a Fossil Free Uni campaign or start your own. Head over to <https://gofossilfree.org/australianunis/> to find out more.

Methodology

The information in this report is just a snapshot of the fossil fuel ties between the industry and our universities. The fossil fuel research funding data came from two sources. One was the Australian Coal Association Research Program (ACARP), which “is 100% owned and funded by all Australian black coal producers through a five cents per tonne levy paid on saleable coal”. ACARP uses this levy to fund research proposals put forward by universities and other research institutions or companies. A funded project will be connected to a fossil fuel company by assigning the project someone from the industry, or an “industry monitor”. The second is the Australian Research Council (ARC), which allocates Australian Government funding for research projects. One of the ARC’s functions is to broker partnerships between researchers and industry, government, community organisations and the international community. Using 2013 as the base year, the date range is any ACARP or ARC funding that already existed or was allocated between 2013 and the present, including projects that were funded for multiple years. 2013 is the year divestment campaigns on campuses first started.



University of Queensland

Photo: Cooper Basin is one of the main sites being drilled for oil and gas by Senex Energy.

Research Funding

Total - **\$33,874,164**

ACARP - **\$31,463,666**

Australian Research Council - **\$2,410,498**

Fossil fuel companies connected to ACARP or ARC research funding at UQ:

South32 Illawarra Coal

Glencore

QGC

Australia Pacific LNG

Santos

Arrow Energy

Centennial Coal

Anglo American

Rio Tinto

New Hope

Stanwell Corporation

Peabody

JB Mining

BMA

BHP Billiton

Wesfarmers

Yancoal

Vale International

Sojitz Minerva Mining

Australia Pacific LNG Pty Ltd

UQ Sustainable Minerals Institute

The Sustainable Minerals Institute is a research centre at UQ. It is one avenue for fossil fuel funds to be funnelled into the university. It is 51% funded by industry contributions¹. The advisory boards of the institute are made up of various fossil fuel industry representatives from organisations including Thiess, BMA, Anglo American, Rio Tinto, Glencore, the Minerals Council of Australia, BHP Billiton.

UQ Centre for Coal Seam Gas

"CCSG is funded through a membership model, where organisations and individuals can contribute a minimum of \$500,000 for five years"².

Current members include Shell, Arrow Energy, Santos or Australia Pacific LNG. This means at least \$2 million dollars from the fossil fuel industry is being funnelled into this centre.

People with ties to the Fossil fuels industry on the UQ Senate:

Timothy Crommelin	- Senex Energy ³ - Non-Executive director
Philip Hennessy	- Metro Mining Ltd ⁴ - Independent Non-Executive Director
Grant Murdoch	- Queensland Investment Corporation (100% owns Epic Energy and Lochard energy, which provide midstream services to the gas industry ⁵) - Non-Executive director
Charlie Sartain	- Former Queensland Resources Council Board Member, recipient of the Queensland Resources Council Medal ⁶ .

Fossil Free UQ

To hear more about the campus campaign to get UQ to move their investments out of fossil fuels contact Fossil Free UQ on their facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fossilfreeuq/>

1 <https://smi.uq.edu.au/files/7142/SMI-AR-2016.pdf>

2 <https://ccsg.centre.uq.edu.au/about-us/how-we-operate>

3 <http://www.senexenergy.com.au/>

4 <http://www.metromining.com.au/resources-projects-mines/coal-projects/>

5 <https://www.marketforces.org.au/investing-in-the-galilee-basin-on-the-agenda-of-the-qic/>

6 <https://www.northernstar.com.au/news/qrc-charlie-sartain-service-mining/2088902/>



University of Newcastle

Photo: BHP's fossil fuel projects such as the Mt Arthur Coal Mine pictured here are tearing apart communities in the Hunter Valley

Research Funding

Total - **\$15,690,324**

ACARP - **\$13,675,522**

Australian Research Council - **\$2,014,802**

Fossil fuel companies connected to ACARP or ARC research funding at UoN:

Centennial Coal
Glencore
Rio Tinto
Thiess
New Hope
Anglo American
BMA
Bengalla
Stanford Coal
Peabody
BHP
Vale International
Wesfarmers
South32
Whitehaven Coal
Somerset International
Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator Limited
Xstrata

UoN Hunter Research Foundation Centre

This diversified research institute has many fossil fuel related companies in its sponsors list. These include the Port of Newcastle (massive coal exporter), Port Waratah Coal Services, GHD (a major consultant for fossil fuel companies), Centennial Coal and Bengalla Mining Company. The current members of the advisory board have a history of work in the fossil fuel industry¹. One member, Professor Eileen Doyle, is a non-executive member of Oil Search Ltd.

People with ties to the Fossil fuels industry on the UoN Council

Chancellor Paul Jeans had a 40 year career at BHP, and was a director of the Newcastle Port Corporation², one of Australia's largest coal-exporting ports.

Michelle McPherson was previously a director of the Newcastle Port Corporation and spent 10 years in various roles at Caltex Australia³⁴.

Fossil Free UoN

To hear more about the campus campaign to get UoN to move their investments out of fossil fuels contact Fossil Free UoN on their facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/FossilFreeUoN/>

1 <http://www.hrf.com.au/about-us/advisory-board>

2 <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/about-uon/governance-and-leadership/governing-bodies/council-members/meet-the-chancellor>

3 <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/about-uon/governance-and-leadership/governing-bodies/council-members/meet-michelle-mcpherson>

4 <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michelle-mcpherson-28857a13/?ppe=1>



University of New South Wales

Photo: Nick Pitsas, CSIRO
Eraring Power Plant owned by Origin is amongst the dirtiest power plants in Australia emitting over 10 mil tonnes of CO₂ per year

Research Funding

Total - **\$6,650,200**

ACARP - **\$5,208,286**

Australian Research Council - **\$1,441,914**

Fossil fuel companies connected to ACARP or ARC research funding at UNSW:

New Hope Group
Centennial Coal
South32
Anglo American
Glencore
Centennial Coal
Peabody
BHP Billiton
Theiss
Jellinbah
Springvale Coal
XStrata Coal
Jenmar Australia
Illawarra Coal
RecyCoal
Narrabri Coal Operations
Wesfarmers
Rio Tinto

People with ties to the Fossil fuels industry on the UNSW Council:

Maxine Brenner - Origin Energy and Orica - Non-Executive Director

Fossil Free UNSW

To hear more about the campus campaign to get UNSW to move their investments out of fossil fuels contact Fossil Free UNSW on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FossilFreeUnsw/>

Photo: Melinda Millen, UNSW Save The Reef March



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It is ***immoral*** for those working for or with fossil fuel companies to make decisions that shape the future of young people at universities, while the companies they advise risk the future of young people by accelerating the climate crisis.



As we prepare for this report, Hurricane Irma, strongest recorded in the Atlantic in a decade, was ravaging the Carribeans and Florida causing at least 81 deaths and forcing millions to evacuate from their homes.

Photo: Gerben Van Es/Dutch Defense Ministry, via Associated Press

University of Wollongong

Research Funding

Total - **\$8,551,888**

ACARP - **\$7,531,888**

Australian Research Council - **\$1,020,000**

Fossil fuel companies connected to ACARP or ARC research funding at UoW:

Yancoal

South32 Illawarra Coal

Glencore

Centennial Coal

South32

Illawarra Coal

Rio Tinto

Anglo American

BHP Billiton

Vale International

Port Kembla Port Corporation

Coal Operators' Conference

This conference has been held annually at the University of Wollongong since 1998.

Fossil Free UoW:

To hear more about the campus campaign to get UoW to move their investments out of fossil fuels contact Fossil Free UoW on their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/fossilfreeuow/>

Monash University

Research Funding

Total - **\$3,139,270**

ACARP - **\$1,525,270**

Australian Research Council - **\$1,614,000**

Fossil fuel companies connected to ACARP or ARC research funding at Monash:

Woodside Petroleum

Coal Energy Australia

Industrea

Kestrel Coal

Centennial Coal

Glencore

Anglo American

The Peter Cook Centre for Carbon Capture and Storage Research at Monash

This is a research institute at Monash. Some of their partners include BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto¹. They are also partnered with CO₂CRC, a government funded research centre that is connected to fossil fuel companies such as Shell, Chevron, INPEX and COAL21.

Monash Council:

Megan Clark - Rio Tinto - Non-Executive Director²

John Simpson - worked for Shell for 19 years³

Fossil Free Monash:

To hear more about the campus campaign to get Monash University to move their investments out of fossil fuels contact Fossil Free Monash on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FossilFreeMonashUniversity/>

1 <http://petercook.unimelb.edu.au/about/partners>

2 <http://www.monash.edu/execserv/council/members>

3 <https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-simpson-66158b28/?ppe=1>

A System-wide Issue

University of Sydney

Chancellor Belinda Hutchinson - Non-Executive director for AGL.

Fossil Free USYD

To hear more about the campus campaign to get University of Sydney to move their investments out of fossil fuels contact Fossil Free USYD on their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/FossilFreeUSYD/>

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Deakin University

Chancellor John Stanthorpe - Non-Executive director of AGL

Fossil Free Deakin

To hear more about the campus campaign to get Deakin University to move their investments out of fossil fuels contact Fossil Free Deakin on their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Fossilfreedeakin/>

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University of Melbourne

Peter Cook Centre for Carbon Capture and Storage Research is partnered with Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton, and CO2CRC.

Fossil Free Uni Melbourne

To hear more about the campus campaign to get University of Melbourne to move their investments out of fossil fuels contact Fossil Free MU on their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/FossilFreeCampusMU/>

Curtin University

Resources and Chemistry Precinct

BHP Billiton committed \$5 million to help create Curtin's Resources and Chemistry Precinct in 2008.¹

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Murdoch University

Harry Butler Institute

Chevron have partnered with Murdoch University to launch this institute from environmental science.

"Harry Butler's decades of work on Barrow Island, home to the company's oil production facilities and the Chevron-operated Gorgon LNG Project and a Class A nature reserve, had created a significant and lasting legacy which is an inspiration for the next generation of environmental scientists."²

Fossil Free Murdoch

To hear more about the campus campaign to get Murdoch University to move their investments out of fossil fuels contact Fossil Free Murdoch on their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/FFMurdoch/>

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University of Western Australia

Chancellor - Dr Michael Chaney AO CitWA

Dr Chaney is Chairman of the National Australia Bank Limited, Woodside Petroleum Limited and Gresham Partners Holdings Limited.³

1 <http://news.curtin.edu.au/stories/bhp-billitons-reputation-will-help-define-new-curtin-precinct/>

2 <http://media.murdoch.edu.au/murdoch-and-chevron-launch-harry-butler-institute>

3 <http://www.web.uwa.edu.au/people/Michael.Chaney>

Conclusion

The resources sector in Australia has a disproportionate influence on the way decisions are made in government. Large investments by fossil fuel companies into university programs, and the fact that many university senators and councillors have ties to the resources sector, makes us concerned about how these institutions make decisions.

Do university councils declare their interests before making important decisions? Is the student body, the staff and the alumni aware of the scale of influence the resources sector may have in their university? And are decisions made in a transparent and accountable way?

These are relevant and important issues as we enter a period of substantial transformation globally.



Two thirds of the Great Barrier Reef has been affected by severe bleaching event as of April 2017.
Photo: XL Catlin Seaview Survey



#ExposeTheTies

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