

**21 December 2024**

## **Dirty business: Coal mines, energy prices and the Coalition's net-zero politics**

Coal mine expansions, official energy-price findings and further angst within Coalition ranks about net-zero targets underline the fact Australians cannot afford the coal mining industry.

The Member for Mackellar, Dr Sophie Scamps, says events late this week reinforce the need for Australia to work with multinational companies to invest in cheaper and smarter renewable energy projects.

"Firstly, the Albanese Government has demonstrated yet again that it does not know what it stands for after once again backing more coal mining," Dr Scamps said.

"The decision to green light developments at Lake Vermont Meadowbank, Boggabri and Caval Ridge comes after Independent MPs, including myself, wrote to the Federal Government expressing our significant concerns about these projects."

Dr Scamps and other Independent MPs expressed serious concerns that these mines would jeopardise the Safeguard Mechanism's hard cap on greenhouse gas emissions, particularly in light of the Climate Change Authority's 2024 Annual Progress Report.

In other developments, The Australian Financial Review reports the Australian Energy Regulator has found consumers are paying more than they should for electricity because coal and gas generators dominate the market at peak times.

"These findings once again underline the no-brainer need for Australia to have more renewable energy and better storage facilities such as batteries," Dr Scamps said. "We need to work with the multinationals corporations who are already pouring money into Australia to make renewable energy more reliable and plentiful while also building an industry which will make Australia a clean energy superpower."

Finally, National Party MP Keith Pitt's decision to quit politics, and his departing comments, yet again shone a bright spotlight on the Coalition's ongoing internal turmoil about net-zero targets.

"Australians cannot run the risk of electing a Peter Dutton-led Government when Coalition members are still tying themselves in knots about net-zero targets," Dr Scamps said.

These latest developments underline the need for Australia to embrace renewable energy and set the Australian economy and natural environment up for a better and brighter future.

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