



The Bullroarer - Wednesday 13 February 2008

Posted by [Big Gav](#) on February 13, 2008 - 6:35am in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

ABC - [Electricity supplies under threat: union](#)

The Electrical Trades Union is considering state-wide industrial action claiming that supplies are being threatened by lack of maintenance and budget cuts. Assistant secretary Peter Simpson says the current storm season is the worst since 2003-2004 which triggered the damning Sommerville Inquiry into Queensland's power network and some areas are facing serious supply problems.

Mr Simpson says transformers at Dalby on the Darling Downs and Port Curtis in Gladstone are currently out of action and members are regularly working 12 hour shifts. "Yes, we are talking about an industrial campaign, our members are meeting starting on Friday across the state to consider what action they'll take to bring this to a head," he said. "They're as sick of it as the general public are, they want a quality supply and that's not what we've got at the moment."

Frogsblog - [Peak Oil And Food](#)

I've blogged on these topics many times before, and the relationship between the two. This week's Peak Oil Review, published by ASPO-USA, states the relationship so clearly I won't bother to do anything but quote it: ...

Our government is keeping it's head in the sand about peak oil while even members of the US government have conceded that the debate is over. Global food prices are skyrocketing, making our agricultural industries very happy, but meantime our working poor and beneficiaries are getting squeezed financially while the government turns a blind eye. As for biofuels, mandating biofuels up to 3.4 percent, as the current legislation would require, is easily achieved in New Zealand simply from our current waste stream. It remains to be seen whether the government will put teeth into the sustainability standards for biofuels that the Greens have negotiated.

The Australian - [China's coal demand soars](#)

CHINA is doing for coal what it once did for oil: helping push prices to new highs, adding more pressure to the creaking global economy. The east Asian giant has long been a huge supplier of coal to itself and the rest of the world. But in the first half of last year, it

imported more than it exported for the first time, setting off a near doubling of most coal prices around the world.

The surging prices were given a further boost late last month when a winter of punishing snowstorms and power shortages led Beijing to suspend coal exports for at least two months. Since then Asian prices have shot up a further 34 per cent. Last week, coal benchmarks hit all-time highs in the US, Europe and Asia.

"The velocity of the change has been remarkable," says Tom Hoffman, senior vice-president for external affairs for US-based coal supplier Consol Energy, which he says is considering holding off on some commitments to supply coal to see if prices rise even further.

The result is similar to what happened after China became a net importer of oil in 1993 but the Chinese factor is unfolding much faster with coal. It wasn't until China's industrial development shifted into overdrive this decade that the nation began to shake global petroleum markets. Oil's big price surge came after widespread brownouts in China in 2004 forced factories there to buy diesel fuel for backup generators, increasing the country's foreign oil demand.

The Age - [Farmers hope for great year](#)

AFTER years of drought that have destroyed crops and devastated farmers, "2008 could be a year to remember for Australian agriculture," a report says.

A cautiously optimistic report from rural bank Rabobank says that after the challenges of 2007, the recent emergence of a La Nina weather pattern that improved the chance of good rains, and high global commodity prices, give Australian farmers their best prospects in years. It nominates cereal, dairy, wool and sugar as some of the key agricultural segments well placed to capitalise on an improvement in fortunes.

The editor of Rabobank's Australian Agriculture in Focus report, Bill Cordingley, said that subject to rains, grain and crop farmers had the brightest outlook for 2008. "Global prices have more than doubled in the past 12 months. United States wheat prices that started last year at \$US5.15 (\$A5.70) per bushel reached \$US10.48 in yesterday's trade. And that's our key commodity," he said. "The outlook for prices is very favourable, and it's extremely likely that (grain and oilseed) farmers, should they have a crop to sell, will achieve prices well above long-term historical averages," he said.

The report is also upbeat about the prospects for the dairy industry this year, largely thanks to a boom in global demand for dairy products. It attributes the surging global demand to increasing urbanisation and westernisation in developing countries, and heavy promotion of dairy produce. ...

The president of the Victorian Farmers Federation, Simon Ramsay, said that strong global prices for agricultural commodities and the prospects of higher rainfall in 2008 were giving the farming sector some optimism. But he cautioned that farmers were also battling growing debt levels because of the drought, rising interest rates, high fuel and fertiliser costs and unpredictable movements in the value of the Australian dollar.

Energy Current - [Technip's Apache completes Kupe gas pipeline](#)

The Australian - [SA Premier Rann bans 'Cowboy' Uranium Mining Firm](#)

The Australian - [Marathon Resources Says 'Sorry'](#)

Energy Current - [AWE's Javanese wildcat shows hydrocarbon promise](#)

Upstream Online - [Pure Energy pushes on in Queensland coalbed methane plays](#)

Upstream Online - [Timor players eye brewing storm](#)

The Age - [More car industry workers lose jobs](#)

The West Australian - [Premier announces major inner-city projects for Perth](#)

RTT News - [New Zealand Farmers Seek More Assistance As Drought Worsen](#)

The West Australian - [Perth set to sizzle during record heatwave](#)

If you're waiting for relief from the hot weather, you're likely to be disappointed as Perth looks set to have its longest heatwave in 20 years. The Bureau of Meteorology says residents are set to swelter with nine days straight of temperatures in the mid to late 30s. A heatwave is when there is three consecutive days over 35C. ...

Power consumption hit record levels on Monday. Western Power spokeswoman Marisa Chapman said power use hit an all time high at 4.52pm as peak usage hit 3625MW. Ms Chapman said that it was the most electricity used in the network at any one point in time ever. New homes being constructed and higher airconditioner use was thought to be behind the soaring power use. On Sunday power consumption peaked at 2952MW at 6.04pm. Last summer's peak usage - 3574MW on March 17 - has been passed twice so far this summer, she said.

Stuff.co.nz - [Jack Johnson and global warming](#)

The Age - [Diminishing food supplies threaten king penguins](#)



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