



## The Bullroarer - Monday 21 April 2008

Posted by [Big Gav](#) on April 21, 2008 - 8:21am in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

Courier Mail - [Nod for new CQ coal terminal](#)

ONE of Australia's largest coal terminals has been approved for central Queensland. Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett has signed off on the environmental impact study for Wiggins Island Coal Terminal, an expansion of Gladstone port's coal terminal.

Premier Anna Bligh said the terminal would open in 2012-13, employing 500 people in construction and 130 in operation. Ms Bligh said the first \$1.3 billion stage of the expansion would boost Gladstone's coal exports by a third, or 25 million tonnes, and generate up to \$1.8 billion annually. "When I was in India and China during my recent overseas trade mission, one of the constant recurring themes was the rapidly escalating demand out of those two growing economies for Queensland coal," Ms Bligh told reporters in Brisbane today. "Critical to that is getting the coal out of the ports."

International Herald Tribune - [As Australia dries, a global shortage of rice](#)

The Deniliquin mill, the largest rice mill in the Southern Hemisphere, once processed enough grain to satisfy the daily needs of 20 million people. But six long years of drought have taken a toll, reducing Australia's rice crop by 98 percent and leading to the mothballing of the mill last December. Ten thousand miles separate the mill's hushed rows of oversized silos and sheds — beige, gray and now empty — from the riotous streets of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, but a widening global crisis unites them.

The collapse of Australia's rice production is one of several factors contributing to a doubling of rice prices in the last three months — increases that have led the world's largest exporters to restrict exports severely, spurred panicked hoarding in Hong Kong and the Philippines, and set off violent protests in countries including Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Italy, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, the Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

Peak Energy - [The Rice Panic](#)

I've seen a couple of reports that corn plantings have actually decreased by 8% in the US this year (somewhat offset by increased soy plantings) which surprised me -

especially considering how few reports mention this as a potential factor in further price rises going forward. Explanations for why this is so are scarce, though one commenter pointed the finger at rising fuel, fertiliser and pesticide prices, combined with the credit crunch possibly making farmers less able to afford to plant new crops. All in all it doesn't augur well for next year.

NZ Herald - [Radical change vital for global food crops](#)

How the world grows its food needs to change radically to cope with increasing population and climate change, while at the same time avoiding social breakdown and environmental collapse, says the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development.

Radio NZ - [Farmers produce energy from rapeseed and manure](#)

As fuel and power prices increase, more farmers are exploring ways of tapping into their own energy sources. South Island cropping farmers are now growing thousands of hectares of oilseed rape under contract to the biofuel company, Biodiesel New Zealand. But some are also growing the brassica to provide oil for their own diesel powered farm vehicles and machinery.

They include Earl and Vicki Dillon, who grow wheat, barley and other crops on their farm near Balfour in Southland. They have just won the region's top farm environment award for their farming practices, which include using minimum tillage methods such as direct drilling to protect the soil structure and reduce compaction. Earl Dillon says they are also growing rape to provide fuel for their grain drier. They have imported an extractor which produces squeezed oil. He says it will not be refined into biodiesel.

SMH - [Dispute over new coal-fired power stations](#)

A ban on new coal-fired power plants has been left out of recommendations by the 2020 summit despite widespread support among environment delegates. Federal Climate Change Minister Penny Wong cited a lack of consensus in not including a moratorium on building plants which did not capture and store carbon.

Stream participant Tanya Ritchie pushed for its inclusion in the final group session after it was left off the draft document. "I would like to propose ... making a statement that we build no new coal-fired power stations unless they have commercially proven carbon capture and sequestration," Ms Ritchie said to applause. WWF Australia chief executive Greg Bourne and Australian Conservation Foundation president Ian Lowe backed the move.

SMH - [Fossil fuel industry dominates](#)

But the flurry of big ideas began to look decidedly modest when filtered through a sieve

of committee process and translated into bureaucratese. The sub-group discussing climate change faced the task of setting a "man on the moon" challenge that fitted the Australian psyche, on a par with the Snowy Mountains hydroelectric scheme, which still provides most of the nation's renewable energy. But one single great idea did not shine through.

The sub-group was heavy with representatives of the fossil fuel industry. It had no one who could unequivocally be said to be from the environment movement. Even the relatively straightforward issue of cutting energy use, now accepted by many governments and businesses, met obstacles. Australia might need to emit much more carbon in the future, said Peter Coates, the chairman in Australia of the mining giant Xstrata, as climate change fuelled world food shortages and the nation increased production to fill the gap.

#### SMH - [Australia's huge new liquid asset](#)

A potential oil and gas bonanza could follow Australia extending its continental shelf under an agreement with the United Nations. "I am pleased to announce that Australia, the largest island in the world, has just been dramatically increased in size," Resources Minister Martin Ferguson told reporters in Canberra. "We have fully explored through the United Nations our entitlements to actually extend our continental shelf."

Mr Ferguson said Australia had explored its entitlements to extend the continental shelf. The UN had found that Australia's territory should be extended by 2.5 million square kilometres, he said. "That is an area five times the size of France, 10 times the size of New Zealand, and 20 times the size of the United Kingdom," Mr Ferguson said. Mr Ferguson could not put a figure on the potential oil and gas reserves contained in the areas. "The truth of the matter is that they have been hardly explored," he said. "There has been some exploration ... in terms of gas. This is potentially a bonanza. We have got unknown capacity up there."

#### NZ Herald - [Clarify grey spots in tax rules on making businesses green - expert](#)

Grey areas in taxation rules applying to the increased greening of New Zealand businesses need to be clarified, says a tax expert. KPMG tax partner Spencer Smith said Inland Revenue needed to move with the times, because of the strong focus in the past few years on sustainable business practices. ... Mr Smith said regulators had to consider the tax consequences of, for instance, local authorities raising the bar for businesses to operate in environmentally acceptable ways. He said there was increasing pressure to make businesses more energy efficient, including from consumers, shareholders and even employees who did not want to work for a company that had a poor environmental image.

#### Stuff.co.nz - [Hager challenged to release spy tapes](#)

Solid Energy boss Don Elder is challenging journalist Nicky Hager to release three hours of tapes at the centre of the latest twist in a spy scandal involving anti-mining groups. Mr Hager reported in the Sunday Star-Times that 12 months after the Government

ordered Solid Energy not to use paid informants Thompson and Clark Investigations (TCIL), an investigations company employed by Solid Energy, offered Christchurch activist Rob Gilchrist money. The offer was to report on the activities of anti-mining group Save Happy Valley Coalition and provide passwords for access to the group's communications.

#### The Australian - [ERA stands by forecast](#)

RIO Tinto's uranium subsidiary Energy Resources of Australia has reaffirmed its forecast for normal full-year production -- despite warning that output is set to dip in the second quarter as water in the pit blocks access to high grade ore. ... ERA earlier reported disappointing first-quarter production of 1327 tonnes at Ranger, down 15 per cent from the fourth quarter of 2007. But production was up 32 per cent from a year ago, when the mine was flooded by exceptionally heavy rains.

#### The Australian - [Copper to soar with shutdown in Chile](#)

THE copper price is expected to gain even more ground this week as strikes by workers in Chile create further pressure on global supplies. ... State-owned Codelco has also shut its Andina and Salvador mines because of the strike. Together, the three mines yield more than 735,000 tonnes of copper annually in a mix of copper cathodes and refined copper ingots.

Output in Chile, which produces about 40 per cent of the world's copper, is already being dogged by shortages in power supplies because of a nationwide drought that has dramatically lowered levels in the dams used to power hydro-electric generators. At El Teniente, the world's biggest underground copper mine, hostile striking workers have barricaded the entrance.

#### The Australian - [Surge in global demand for LNG](#)

As the odds increase that the US will pass climate change regulations that raise financial penalties for burning coal, cleaner burning natural gas is gaining favour as the fuel to power electric plants. Overall, gas demand from the US power sector grew by 10 per cent last year, according to the Energy Information Administration. By 2025, US domestic production may lag demand by 15 to 20 billion cubic feet a day, Linda Cook, executive director of gas and power for Royal Dutch Shell, told a recent energy conference.

The increased global trade in natural gas has been driven partly by huge investments since 2003 in facilities to liquefy gas for export -- chilling it to -160C -- as big Western oil companies saw a business opportunity and ramped up spending on LNG infrastructure. This created economies of scale and further drove down the price of producing and shipping LNG over long distances. This triggered a revolution in gas markets. Previously, countries such as Nigeria, which has ample natural gas, had no easy way to sell it due to a lack of pipelines to markets needing the fuel. The same was true for Qatar, also home to enormous gas reserves.

Bloomberg - [BHP Billiton Leads Arctic Gold Hunt in Global Warming Bonanza](#)

The melting of Arctic ice has increased access to a region that holds as much as a seventh of the world's untapped oil and gas, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, as well as gold and iron ore deposits. At the same time, record prices for gold and oil and a surge of as much as 71 percent in the value of iron ore this year have made exploring more attractive for companies such as BHP Billiton Plc, Teck Cominco Ltd. and Royal Dutch Shell Plc. ...

Global warming, while making increased exploitation possible, also threatens environmental disasters such as drought and flooding. Tapping the resources will require moving heavy machinery and fuel-laden ships into fragile ecosystems. The potential for oil spills, air pollution and damage to animals and plants has already sparked lawsuits and led Royal Dutch Shell to scale back operations that could have harmed wildlife.

Peak Energy - [Strong Current Warning](#)

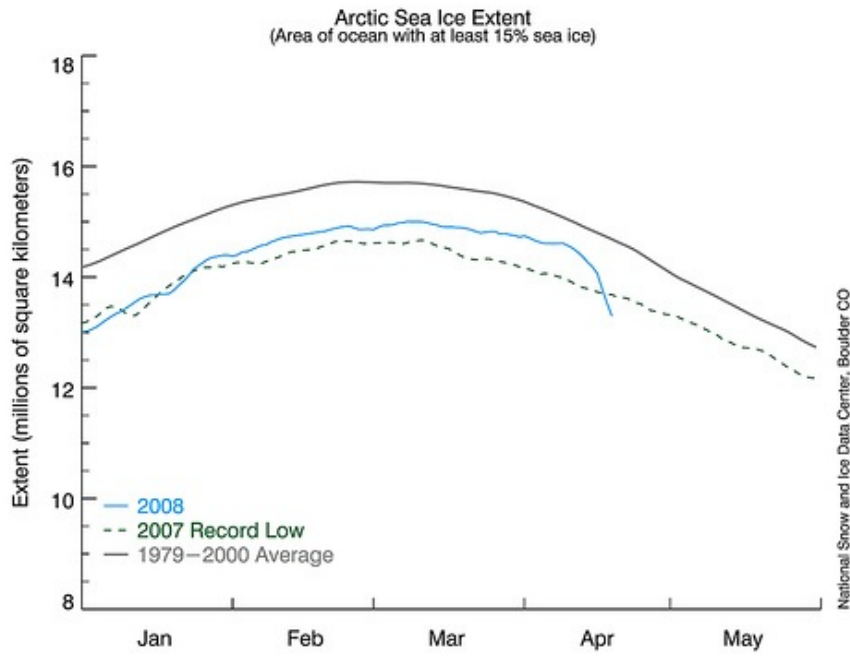
The Daily Telegraph (not one of my usual sources for science news, but whatever) reports that deep Antarctic waters are freshening, prompting concerns about sudden shifts in ocean current circulation. For background reading check out Stefan Rahmstorf's site on Thermohaline Ocean Circulation and these links on the Antarctic Circumpolar Current.

Peak Energy - [Return Of The Shrinking Polar Ice Cap](#)

There was quite a bit of talk in climate skeptic circles over the northern winter about arctic ice forming over a larger area than in previous years (though scientists cautioned they were on thin ice, so to speak, as the new stuff wasn't equivalent to the older, thicker ice pack).

Judging by the data appearing at the US National Snow and Ice Data Centre in recent weeks, this thin cover has rapidly melted and disappeared, with arctic sea ice extent now lower than the same period in 2007 (which was the previous record low).

Anyone care to hazard a bet as to which year we will see the complete summer disappearance of arctic ice for the first time ? I've already seen one prediction of 2011.



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