



REEF HANGS IN THE BALANCE

Queensland election is looming and by the time the newsletter gets out, election fever will be running high. AFA has no doubt that Newman called an early election to circumvent the Senate Inquiry into his government which was instigated by the Palmer United Party.

This is a critical inquiry and major issues relating to Gladstone, the Great Barrier Reef, coal seam gas, Abbot Point dredging are going to be put under investigation. The inquiry has been swamped with submissions, giving some indication of the extent of concern by many Queenslanders and many environmental groups.

One of the advisors for the inquiry Chair, Senator Glenn Lazarus, told AFA that major concerns revolve around coal seam gas with more than 3,249 wells operating in the state. So many people are suffering terrible consequences to their health. Their children are coming down with asthma and respiratory problems, their animals are dying, their water is poisoned. The immense damage to agricultural lands, the waterways, and wildlife is being censored politically and in the mainstream media.

Farming communities impacted by coal seam gas are losing their livelihoods, their health and their investments. These are dark days for many families and many communities. It's impossible to separate coal seam gas from the health of the Great Barrier Reef as the gas is being piped to Gladstone where giant LNG tankers are docking, loading up with LNG which is going overseas.

Gas prices will rise in Australia because all the gas is going to China, India and the only people benefiting are the overseas investors. Queensland will, according to projections, make a miserable \$500 million annually from royalties.

With projections of one LNG



**UNPRECEDENTED
DESTRUCTION!!**

tanker a day coming into Gladstone to load up with gas, the traffic along the Reef combined with coal vessels and other shipping will create massive problems because of underwater noise and potential oil spills.

In spite of all the efforts of AFA, meetings with state and Federal Ministers, letters to every Federal member of Parliament, every Federal Senator, submissions to mainstream media, presentations at major scientific conferences by our Co-ordinator, underwater noise remains a non-issue with almost complete ignorance at the political and scientific level on the impacts.

The Newman government – along with all the state and

Federal governments – rejects balance sheets which set out the cost of the massive environmental damage caused by the coal seam gas wells; the pollution of rivers, waterways and the Great Artesian Basin; the toxic contaminants caused by dredging the marine environment; the loss of marine life; the loss of commercial fishing industry; the real cost of the resource industry is kept in the closet.

The battle for the Reef is depressing and it's been going on for so long that most people feel weary just thinking about the difficulties and their inability to have any real impact on the major political parties.

We're living in a political nightmare as it doesn't seem to

matter which party makes government at the state or federal level, the environmental destruction is an obscene juggernaut. An unstoppable, never-ending machine which has no stop light.

The mainstream media is reporting none of the major issues involving the environment. Polls on the Queensland election don't even mention the environment as an issue. Climate change is detailed but it's always last in the results. No doubt a result of the constant denial the existence of any change by News Ltd and the failure of major political parties to address this critically important issue.

Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney is threatening to allow the dumping of 3 million cubic metres of dredge spoil into the Reef if the Federal Government refuses to allow the spoil to be dumped on land.

Federal Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt, is without doubt the worst environmental minister that AFA has encountered in our 30 years of operation. The charity has always enjoyed good relationships with previous Coalition Environment Ministers. This Minister showed his true colours with the Gladstone Bund Wall Inquiry which he promised would deal with all the major issues which are the hallmark of the disastrous Gladstone LNG terminals.

Instead, the Inquiry was a whitewash and his promise to follow up on the meagre, measly recommendations by the Panel is another fairy story.

MACKAY CONSERVATION GROUP MOUNTS LEGAL CHALLENGE OVER ADANI MINES

Good news ! A new legal challenge to the proposed Carmichael coal mine – Australia's largest – will test in the federal court whether climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions should be taken into account when assessing prospective coal licences in Australia.

The challenge, by the New South Wales Environmental Defenders Office on behalf of the Mackay Conservation Group, will argue that federal environment minister Greg Hunt failed to take into account the climate impact of greenhouse gases emitted by the burning of coal from the Carmichael mine when assessing whether to grant its licence.

It cites the impact of global warming on the Great Barrier reef, an area of world and national heritage, as a relevant consideration which the minister should have been taken into account.

the minister should have been taken into account. This is a land mark legal challenge and AFA supports the Mackay Conservation group in its historical effort.

ADANI AND ABBOT POINT

According to the Australian Institute, Queensland taxpayers have subsidised the Abbot Point coal port expansion to the tune of



almost \$2bn, with it expected to cost hundreds of millions of dollars more. This money has been made available with no public cost benefit analysis of the project being undertaken. The money spent on Abbot Point by the Newman government, according to the report, comes at the expense of other government services such as education and health.

Newman doesn't want to discuss the subsidies, he's "not going to comment on things I've haven't seen". And .. "it's the way to go to get over 20,000 jobs in Queensland." Newman is apparently electioneering in Queensland accompanied by Adani's CEO. Meantime, Trade Minister Andrew Robb has described billionaire Adani as a "passionate entrepreneur". Adani and Robb have been doing tours

of Adani's assets in India, with Australia's Trade Minister fawning over the billionaire.

"Not only has Mr Adani's business proposals for the Galilee Basin cleared " strict Australian environmental standards" but his business plans had also passed the test. The fact that this coal deposit will light up 100 million homes for 100 years, critics should consider what that meant for these people who lived without electricity."

So let's do the sums. Queensland taxpayers have forked out nearly \$2bn to facilitate Adani and create a rubbery 20,000 jobs so that 100 million homes in India will have electricity for 100 years. Now that's really generous of Queensland taxpayers and particularly so given that there's no guarantee of any decent return – nor has the damage to the Reef been costed or the potential downgrading to a World Heritage in Danger.

TAIJI DOLPHINS

The dreadful slaughter of dolphins is happening in Taiji and AFA is in regular contact with Ric O'Barry who is there, monitoring the nightmare week after week.



PLEASE SUPPORT THIS IMPORTANT WORK BY VISITING: <http://dolphinproject.net> www.facebook.com/ricobarrysdolphinproject

AFA has given a major grant to Ric's dolphinproject.net as we support his extraordinary work and witnessing.

However, the continuing murder of dolphins in Japan can only be dealt with under international conventions and the only way this horrific slaughter will stop is if a member country takes Japan to the International Court of Justice.

Then again, because the Court has no monitoring, no

navy, no means of enforcing its findings, Japan is planning to start killing whales again in the Antarctic and no doubt any finding against the dolphin slaughters would meet the same inaction.

Japanese people are not to blame for the dreadful whale and dolphin killing policies of the Japanese government. The problem lies with the political parties and politicians. (Isn't that a familiar story!)

SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES



Image by Felix Salazar

AFA has to apologies to supporters for the failure to send out a newsletter over the last few months but the office has been almost completely snowed under. We're dealing with massive issues and having to set priorities is the only way the charity has achieved goals.

Our Co-ordinator has given scientific presentations to the Australian Marine Sciences Association, to the Society for Marine Mammalogy, and compiled extensive submissions to the World Heritage Secretariat on the Reef destruction.

We've worked tirelessly with a number of scientists who are deeply involved with the Reef issues.

The blog which AFA set up:

www.greatbarrierreef.org.au

is now extremely well followed both on FaceBook and through its own domain.

As well, we have a blog on

australiansforanimals.org.au

and

californiagrayscalecoalition.org

These blogs require considerable research and writing, taking up huge amounts of time.

But AFA believes its vitally important to counter-act the mainstream media silence on critical environmental issues and social media certainly helps get the word out.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITES
australiansforanimals.org.au
greatbarrierreef.org.au

Please Give Generously

You can donate to Australians for Animals through GiveNow's secure online server or please send your donations to:

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 PO BOX 414
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PO Box 414, Brunswick Heads 2483 Australia
 Tel: 61 2 6680 3674
 Fax: 61 2 6680 3612 suearnold@linknet.com.au
 Reg. Charity No. CFN12644

facebook.com/australiansforanimals

GEORGE, THE COOK ISLAND PUSSY CAT

We know that many of you want to know what happened to George. Ah, it's a strange story but one that confirms we're surrounded by a mysterious force which is beyond understanding.

Sue and Norm had booked a two week trip to the Cook Islands in late November. Both have been quite deeply involved in investigating a number of major scandals which cannot be discussed in this newsletter at the moment. But as always, finding out how George is doing, is always a priority. Thanks to the weekly visits by Sharon, the President of the Cook Islands SPCA, we had the good news that the cancer on George's nose had disappeared and that he was looking great.

The house-sitter we booked cancelled just ten days before we were due to leave creating chaos. Sue frantically going through house-sitting websites trying to find a suitable person to care for Mitch the rescue dog who was almost recovered from his cruciate ligament operation as well as two spoilt, demanding Burmese cats and several families of butcher birds with babies. She'll tell the story in her own words.

"I finally found a guy who from his credentials and references seemed ideal. We talked a couple of times on the phone and he was available for the dates.

"When he arrived late afternoon the day before we were due to leave, both of us had minor anxiety attacks. In spite of telling me he could drive, he couldn't and the nearest shops are a long hot walk away.

"Almost everything we wanted him to do with the animals became a saga. No, he didn't wake up early in the morning, he was used to sleeping in.... the cats wake up at 6.30am when I get up and that's their habit but to no avail. The guy was a full time drama queen.

"Then in the morning, I woke up to find him having hysterics in the kitchen because his computer didn't work and he had a documentary to write whilst we were away and what what what were we going to do about it! No amount of me offering to take him down to the nearby computer expert made any difference, just more hysterics.

"The only thing he had going in his favour was that he really liked animals, other than that, all I could see what a looming nightmare. I



went down to the beach for a swim and decided that there was no way we were going to get on the plane later that morning.

"When I got home I told Norm – no way- this guy is too much of a problem. But Norm disagreed and pointed out that we had already paid for the fares and accommodation and there was no way we would get the money back. So with huge reluctance we left, praying that the animals would be okay.

"We got to Rarotonga in the mid afternoon. At the small villa where we stayed, I looked everywhere for George as he usually knows when we're coming (mental telepathy) but there was no sign of him. I found the housekeeper and asked her 'where is George?'

"She told me he had disappeared for two or three days but he had just this moment come back and I would find him lying around the back of the owner's flat. I walked there and found George lying quietly on the concrete. My heart sank. He looked terrible. He was emaciated, his fur was dank and lifeless.

"I picked him up and took him back to our room, where I could inspect his condition. George was a very sick cat and it looked like severe kidney disease as he drank an enormous amount of water and uncharacteristically, would not eat.

"Next morning, we took George to our friend the vet who runs a local clinic. She confirmed our worst fears. George had renal cancer, and there was no possibility of recovery. But with hydration he would be more comfortable and probably be okay if we took really good care of him for the next week

or two .. however there was no question that he would have to be euthanased. If his condition deteriorated more rapidly, it would have to be done earlier.

"For the next two days George had a drip and then we took him home, nursed him, feeding this precious little creature with chicken, freshly caught tuna, yoghurt, whatever he wanted. We took him to bed with us at night and enjoyed his wonderful intelligence and love – knowing each day was a miracle. Finally, the day before we left, his kidneys were the size of my clenched fist, his little body so emaciated as all we were really feeding him was going straight to the tumours, and he had started throwing up.

"It was the saddest experience to put this little pussy cat down. My two friends, the vet and the SPCA

president came to do the deed. George was wrapped in my sarong and buried in the garden where he loved to catch mice as presents for us.

"And the mystery of it all? If we hadn't got on that plane and we'd cancelled the trip, George would have died a miserable, painful death with no one caring for him. We would never have had the most beautiful loving experience of being with his blessed wise soul as he was such a beautiful pussy cat.

"He knew we were coming. He always knew. Loving animals the way most of us do, we know they're such teachers of unconditional love and they have an intelligence and ability to connect in ways we will probably never understand.

"I'm so grateful to the Creator for allowing us the privilege of being with precious George at this time.

AFA has donated \$1000 to the Cook Islands SPCA who are building a desperately needed shelter. We have put up the funds for a cattery which will be named after George.

And yes, when we came home the animals and birds were all okay and the house was like a gigantic rubbish tip. It was so filthy taking hours and hours to clean. But we really didn't care, we had been with George at the time he needed us most and we had to be grateful for that gift.

EXTRA CARE DURING THE SUMMER HEAT!



Meantime, let's give our animals a big hug and remember to ensure there's water in the garden for the birds who are really feeling the heat. Let's hope there will be no more bushfires that cause so much misery for our wildlife.

***For the Animals,
Sue Arnold & Friends.***