

'Climate action' is brutal austerity

By *Jeremy Beck*

School children who plan to skip class again for “climate action” on 15 March likely think they’re part of a grassroots movement to save the environment. They are actually endorsing brutal forms of economic austerity and de-industrialisation under a green cover. The global propaganda network pushing this agenda, financed by many of the world’s billionaires, is the same City of London/Wall Street oligarchy which told us privatised electricity markets would introduce competition and lower prices. Now we’re told more “renewables” will help stop climate change. The big-business-funded Grattan Institute in its latest 54-page report, “Keep calm and carry on”, insists Australia should keep expanding “renewables”, and Australia’s establishment media has promoted its erroneous conclusions. Meanwhile global emissions of so-called greenhouse gases continue to rise, while China’s coal production in 2018 reached 3.55 billion tonnes, rising 5.2 per cent year on year.

According to the “School Strike 4 Climate Australia” website, their network is student-led, decentralised and grassroots. But it doesn’t take a researcher long to discover this network is controlled top down, and funded, by the City of London-centred financial oligarchy. Two mobile numbers are listed as contacts for media inquiries. Are they for school students—Year 12 student leaders perhaps? No! A quick internet search shows that they link to Charlie Wood and Alex Fuller.

Wood is Australian Campaigns Director of 350.org, an environmentalist activist organisation with a presence in 188 countries. It had a US\$16.8 million total revenue in 2017, and public records show wealthy foundations such as the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the George Soros-funded Tides Foundation have collectively funnelled in tens of millions of dollars to 350.org since its founding in 2007. The CEO of 350.org in Australia, Blair Palese, was a board member of Greenpeace Australia Pacific. Greenpeace has collectively received billions of dollars from establishment-run foundations such as the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Tides Foundation, and the Schmidt Family Foundation established by former Google CEO Eric Schmidt. The late Lord Peter Melchett, heir to the Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) fortune, was executive director of Greenpeace UK.

Fuller is Communications Manager of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC), which had a total income of more than \$2.8 million in 2017 alone. Curiously, the AYCC Facebook page links to the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and GetUp. Both have been establishment fronts from their inception. The ACF was established by Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh in 1964; its patron was the Governor-General, and its Chairman of the Benefactors and National Sponsors Committee—i.e. chief fundraiser—was Sir Maurice Mawby, managing director of Conzinc Riotinto Australia (CRA, later Rio Tinto). The two co-founders of GetUp, Harvard graduates Jeremy Heimans and David Madden, both worked for the Soros-funded MoveOn.org in the USA. Among GetUp’s founding board members were John Hewson, former Macquarie Bank executive director and Liberal Party leader; and Don Mercer, former ANZ Bank CEO.

The Grattan Institute report

Grattan’s “Keep calm and carry on” report, by Tony Wood, Guy Dundas and Lucy Percival, attempts to defend

the rotten state of affairs in Australia’s electricity market. Bear in mind that the National Bank, Westpac, Google, PwC, et al. fund the Grattan Institute, as does the Australian taxpayer through State and Commonwealth grants. The report’s main argument, as the mainstream media widely reported, is this: “The popular perception that Australia’s electricity supply has become less reliable with more renewable energy, and that this is inevitably going to get worse, is wrong and dangerous. It’s wrong because almost all outages are caused by problems in transporting electricity, and have nothing to do with whether the power was generated from new renewables or old coal or some other technology.”

Actually, the source of the power makes a big difference to the distribution. Wind turbines spread over large tracts require hundreds of kilometres of new interlinking transmission lines. Moreover, the two biggest failures in recent years, the South Australian blackout of September 2016 and the January 2019 blackouts that affected more than 200,000 Melbourne households and businesses, can be linked to the reckless reliance on wind and solar power. Sure, tornadoes damaged several high-voltage power lines. But nine wind farms were unable to cope with the disturbance, and disconnected from the system. So the entire State blacked out! This would not happen with a large baseload generator. And it’s undeniable that Hazelwood’s 1,600-megawatt capacity would easily have filled the 250 MW shortfall on 25 January.

The Grattan Report defends the so-called free market: “Governments should not underwrite or sponsor investment in new generation capacity, or to extend the life of existing generators, on the grounds of reliability. Government-subsidised capacity is likely to displace private investment, potentially harming rather than helping reliability.” The authors also defend the scandalous \$14,500/MWh price cap, which looted Victoria and South Australia of nearly \$1 billion on 24 January alone: “The NEM has maintained reliability primarily through commercial incentives. Prices are allowed to rise to very high levels, presently more than 100 times the average annual price ... [to] encourage energy retailers and large energy users to ensure they own, or contract with, enough generation capacity to supply their customers at all times. If they do not, purchasing from other generators at peak times, typically on hot summer afternoons, will be very expensive. Price spikes also encourage users to reduce demand at peak times.”

The report advocates more such “demand response”, an austerity measure sure to hit the poor and disadvantaged hardest when they are forced to turn off their air conditioners just when they need them the most, or are reduced—as some struggling pensioners have already been—to turning off their refrigerators, risking food poisoning, to save power. The underlying agenda is to reduce emissions at all costs: “Governments should not see the risk of power outages as a barrier to achieving ambitious emissions reductions in Australia’s electricity sector.”

Although author Tony Wood argued in November 2012 that “there could be an important national conversation about the need for nuclear power in Australia—if we are serious about addressing climate change”, there is no reference to nuclear power in this latest report. Without it, the children protesting today face dire poverty as a result of the “climate action” they have been coached to demand.