

I am an Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at the University of NSW with much experience teaching environmental science. The proposed Kurri Kurri gas powered plant must not proceed. It would exacerbate global climate change, harm the health of the local community and disturb the development of new technologies.

The private sector is driving the new sustainable technologies. These are long-term investments producing low-cost electric power, in stark contrast to the proposed gas-based facility that will generate more expensive power, cause health issues locally and will result in stranded infrastructure.

The proposed plant makes no economic sense. The role of government is to provide a favourable regulatory framework so that the private sector can accelerate the development of sustainable technologies. The proposal to build a fossil fuel plant at Kurri Kurri is doing the opposite. It is indefensible.

The science is clear, and the experts are unanimous:

- The recent report by the International Energy Agency “Net Zero by 2050: a Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector (<https://www.iea.org/events/net-zero-by-2050-a-roadmap-for-the-global-energy-system>) reached the same conclusion “If we want to reach net zero by 2050 we do not need any more investments in new oil, gas and coal projects.”. Note that BP, Shell and ENI contributed to this report.
- Kerry Schott, Chair of the Australian Energy Security Board, has stated the key argument that the private sector would not build this plant because it will generate expensive electricity and makes no commercial sense.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/30/australian-energy-board-chair-says-gas-fired-power-plant-in-hunter-valley-doesnt-stack-up>
- Ross Garnaut, economist and author of the Climate Change Review (2008, 2011), has damned the project as a colossal waste of money.
<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/we-re-burying-banknotes-ross-garnaut-rubbishes-government-s-600m-gas-plant-20210525-p57usa.html>
- The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (an international body) concludes “anyway you look at it, it just doesn’t make sense” <https://ieefa.org/ieefa-australia-why-gold-plated-gas-plan-makes-zero-sense/>

Regarding global climate change, Australia is becoming a politically isolated country with commercially stranded fossil-fuel infrastructure. Now is the time to start making decisions that recover our international position and our national economy.