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Queensland exports record amount of coal

By **Felicity Caldwell**
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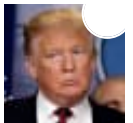
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Queensland exported a record amount of coal in 2018, boosting the state's bottom line.

Data from Queensland's ports revealed total coal exports of 223 million tonnes over the year to December 2018, surpassing by 2 million tonnes the record set in 2016.

Queensland Resources Council chief executive Ian Macfarlane says green activists are wrong when it comes to coal. LOUIE DOUVIS

Queensland coal was exported to 30 countries and territories, including Argentina, Brazil, China, England, Finland, India, Japan, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine.

Queensland Resources Council chief executive Ian Macfarlane said the record could only be achieved through the hard work of 215,000 Queenslanders who worked in or with the coal industry.

"Countries around the world are using our metallurgical coal to make steel needed for building modern cities and our high-quality thermal coal is delivering tomorrow's energy needs through high-efficiency, low-emission coal-fired power plants," he said.

"Green activists continue to claim the world is turning away from coal but the data proves it's an essential ingredient for the world economy to grow."

But Greens MP Michael Berkman said the world was heading for a cliff edge, with scientists warning of the need to phase out thermal coal.

"The coal lobby must be feeling the heat after the last month of freak bushfires, drought and the unfolding Murray-Darling River disaster showed just how dangerous their product is," he said.

"The coal lobby is living in dreamland if they think Australia can cut ourselves off from the global transition to clean energy."

More than 7 million tonnes of coal was exported through the Port of Brisbane, the Abbot Point

Coal Terminal exported 29.8 million tonnes, while the Port of Gladstone handled 67.9 million tonnes.

According to the International Energy Agency, Australia's net exports of coal were forecast to increase by 20 per cent by 2040.

In addition, Queensland LNG from the Port of Gladstone set an export record of 20.58 million tonnes in 2018.

Mr Macfarlane said every tonne of coal and other resources exported brought in royalty taxes, which helped pay for roads, schools and hospitals.

But Mr Berkman said Queensland should be focusing on building publicly owned, 100 per cent clean energy by 2030 to create thousands of steady jobs.

He has introduced legislation to ban coal mining in the Galilee Basin, the site of the proposed Adani mine.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has a target of 50 per cent renewable energy generation capacity by 2030.

Queensland's midyear budget update revealed coal royalties were expected to tip in $4.26 billion in 2018-19, which was $739 million more than expected due to an improvement in coal prices.

Coal prices declined on average during the first half of 2018 but prices increased following the June budget and remained elevated through the December quarter.

Felicity Caldwell

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