

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

LABOR PARTY PLANS COALFIELD THE SIZE OF BRITAIN IN CLIMATE CHANGE U-TURN

Date: 24/05/19 | [The Times](#)

Climate change was supposed to have won the party the Australian election. But yesterday, routed in the polls, panicking Labor Party leaders backed the opening of a coal field bigger than the UK to mining.

Concern over jobs in coal mining at sites like this one in the Hunter Valley have taken precedence over climate fears in Australia

Fearing a wipeout in state elections next year amid a rising tide of pro-coal workers and a rebellion against its plans to halve Australia's carbon emissions, the Labor state government in Queensland accelerated its decision on 105,000 square miles of coal-rich outback land known as the Galilee Basin.

It came days after the party lost what was dubbed as the "climate election" to the incumbent centre-right, pro-coal government of Scott Morrison, suffering the most damage with swings of up to 20 per cent in the coal country of central Queensland and the Hunter Valley of New South Wales.

Queensland's premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, announced she was overturning all attempts to block mining and all outstanding approvals would be resolved within three weeks. She said she was "fed up" with her own government's processes, and that the election had been a "wake-up call" on mining the basin. The move was welcomed by the federal resources minister, Matt Canavan, who told *The Times* yesterday that the Galilee Basin represented a victory for the "hi-vis workers' revolution" — a reference to the armies of mine workers, dressed in high-visibility shirts, who make Australia the world's biggest coal exporter, and seemingly a reference to the "yellow vest" movement in France which battled President Macron on his climate policies.

The international climate action movement argues that if the Galilee Basin's estimated 27 billion tons of coal was extracted, exported and burned, the extra carbon dioxide released each year would be far more than Australia's total emissions, and would set back the world's chances of keeping the increase in global warming under 2C.

Until yesterday, the Labor government in Queensland had put a series of hurdles in the way of the Indian energy conglomerate, Adani, which wants the basin's coal to fuel India's power stations. In its last attempt, last month, the government argued that a tiny finch might be wiped out if its basin habitat was mined.

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