

Open season for our notion-building pollies

Written by Mike Sandiford, Chair of Geology & Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor, University of Melbourne

Since the Finkel review was announced it has been open season for *notion building* in the energy space. While Malcolm has been spruiking Snowy 2.zero pumped hydro, Craig has been promising death by renewables, quite literally. Josh seems to be for just about everything, besides Labor state governments of course, and reckons we are on track to meet Paris commitments. Barnaby, true to form, is backing coal reckoning Paris can take care of itself, while Electricity Bill is *keeping mum*, knowing it won't but banking it will.

The one I like the best, but really hasn't been nailed quite the way I thought it should, is Tony's call for nuclear subs. Imagine, our first truly dispatchable power system, capable of delivering a few hundred megawatts just about anywhere you need it. "Float and plug" - just what we need to shore up our fragile energy system. A tour of dispatch last year including Tasmania from January through June, South Australia June through November, and then on to Queensland for the summer would have been a nice little money spinner for the Navy, worth around quarter of a billion dollars on the energy markets. And that doesn't include offsets, such as the purported [\\$44 million Tasmanian government spent on diesel gensets](#). Could it be our best notion yet for meeting Paris?

It goes without saying that our political masters don't need much provocation to indulge in a bit of notion building. After all, it is what they do best.

But, in case you are wondering why this sudden release of energy, it might be useful to reflect on some recent analyses that paint a truly disturbing picture for our energy sector.

The first comes from the [European Commission's latest electricity market update](#) providing the comparison of wholesale electricity prices shown below.

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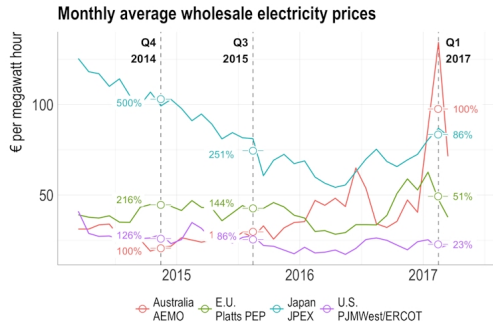
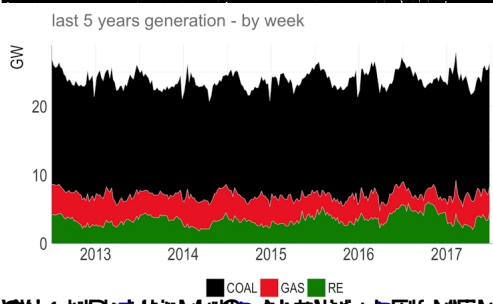
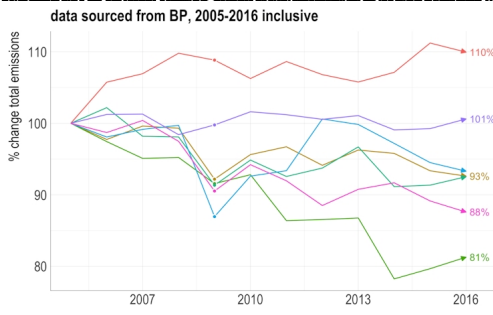
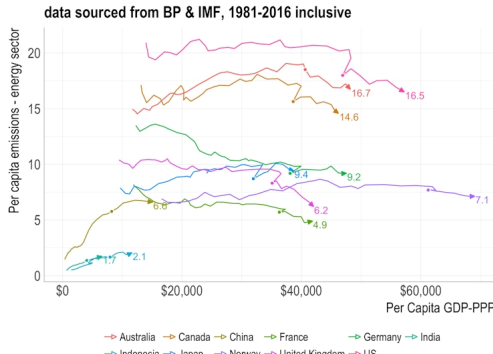


Figure 33 Quarterly average European electricity capacity Q1 2017



<http://www.breitbart.com/open-season-for-air-pollution-building-polices-01-16>