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Fossil-funded Atlas Network ‘think-tank’ disinformation is driving misinformed community opposition to the vitally important Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone.

Key points:

- Fossil fuel combustion is progressively destroying ocean ecosystems, irreversibly, through ocean heating, ocean acidification, and the direct impact of offshore oil and gas exploration and fossil-fuelled shipping. Therefore, it is vital to replace the fossil fuel industry rapidly with clean energy sources such as solar and wind.
- The ‘community’ campaign against the Illawarra REZ relies on the same highly sophisticated and proven disinformation tactics generated by fossil fuel funded science denial ‘thinktanks’ affiliated with the shadowy global Atlas Network, e.g., ‘wind kills whales’. All the evidence points toward the fossil fuel industry’s secretive Atlas Network driving the disinformation targeting the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone, using identical ‘astroturfing’ tactics they have developed to block offshore wind in the USA via the Heartland Institute, the Caesar Rodney Institute, C-FACT and the Texas Public Policy Foundation.
- These tactics are highly effective, and involve untraceable ‘dark money’: the Australian branch of the Atlas, which does not declare its funders but was founded by fossil fuel interests and has consistently opposed climate policy, ran almost the entire Vote No disinformation campaign against the Voice referendum, in order to remove potential legal obstacles to fossil fuel development.
- Therefore, all the public submissions against the Illawarra REZ generated by the shadowy Stop Offshore Turbines website (which has no names or contact details indicating who built and operates the site) and associated Facebook groups can safely be regarded as fossil fuel industry derived ‘disinformation’- intentionally deceptive and false claims – or ‘misinformation’ the voluntary propagation of disinformation by well-intentioned if perhaps ill-informed citizens, and is more than likely traceable to fossil fuel interests.

Introducing the fossil-fuelled Atlas Network's international strategy mobility tactics. From the anti-Voice campaign to the assault on NZ's Treaty of Waitangi

According to the Australian climate minister Chris Bowen, the proposed Illawarra offshore wind Renewable Energy Zone will generate enough clean energy to power 3 million homes, or in other words, to provide an equivalent amount of non-destructive, non-fossil energy that could be used to push coal off the grid and to power the electrification of cars, trucks and so on. Yet almost none of the 'debate' on social or legacy media or around the desirability of the project, mentions this fact, nor that fossil-fuels are irreversibly killing the world's oceans, nor the systemic disinformation that has been generated for over three decades by fossil fuel corporations that have known their products would generate global catastrophe since at least the early 1960s. I will first discuss the fossil corporation funded Atlas Network's global reach and strategy via the recent defeat of the referendum on Indigenous constitutional recognition, and then move on to the Atlas Network's anti-wind disinformation and astroturfing efforts.

Just like the mass disinformation campaign run by the Centre for Independent Studies' pop-up campaign unit Advance Australia against the 2023 Referendum on constitutional justice for Indigenous Australians, which was conducted by the Australian branch of the fossil-fuel funded Atlas Network (comprising c. 600 partner thinktanks in 100+ countries) to prevent First Nations people speaking against coal, oil and gas,¹ the systemic disinformation and astro-turfing via Facebook 'community' groups against the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone offshore wind proposal is almost certainly being targeted by secretive, highly organised, experienced and well-funded propaganda experts linked to the Atlas Network,² which carbon-copies successful strategies to neutralise renewable energy, climate policy, corporate taxation, and legal obstacles to fossil fuel corporations from one country to the next.

In Canada, the tactic of generating vast media coverage for a tiny handful of Indigenous speakers against movements to fortify Indigenous legal recognition through the ratification of UNDRIP was run by Atlas thinktank the Macdonald Laurier Institute, explicitly because they saw it as a legal standpoint that could Canadian Indigenous peoples could use to block tar sands oil, gas and pipeline expansion.³ Back in November 2022, when public support for the Voice was polling at 60+ %, and well before Fair/Advance Australia began its relentless disinformation campaign in April 2023 that dove the Yes

¹ Walker, J. (2023) 'Silencing the Voice: the fossil-fuelled Atlas Network's Campaign against Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australia'. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies* vol. 15, no 2.

<https://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/mcs/article/view/8813>

<https://www.cis.org.au/commentary/opinion/the-indigenous-voice-will-give-unjust-power-to-those-who-have-no-authority-to-speak-for-us/>

ABC Radio National, RN Drive. 'The "mother of all thinktanks" could be behind disinformation about the Voice referendum'. <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/radionational-drive/atlas-network-voice-referendum-no-campaign/102930444>

ABC Radio National, Late Night Live. 'What is the Atlas Network?' 23mins interview with Philip Adams, producer Anna Highfield. <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/latenightlive/atlas-network-jeremy-walker-think-tanks-/103041202>

² Atlas Network, 2020, 'Partner directory'.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200620052651/https://www.atlasnetwork.org/partners/global-directory>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jul/18/conservative-us-network-undermined-indigenous-energy-rights-in-canada>

DeSmog.com 'A Secretive Network Is Fighting Indigenous Rights in Australia and Canada, Expert Says'.

<https://www.desmog.com/2023/10/10/a-secretive-network-is-fighting-indigenous-rights-in-australia-and-canada-expert-says/>

vote down to 40%, Warren Mundine published a piece on the CIS website that argued *exactly the same thing*: warning that a Voice to Parliament could assist First Nations communities to *slow* (NB: not stop, or refuse) the approval of massive new fossil fuel projects like the Adani Carmichael project, or the James Price Pt or Beetaloo gas basins.⁴

On the same day as the defeated Voice referendum in Australia, a national election was held in Aotearoa/New Zealand. With the recent change of government to the right in New Zealand, the radical right wing National coalition partner the ACT party, led by David Seymour, is now running a carbon copy campaign to try and bring about a referendum on Māori co-governance and the long settled constitutional recognition of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, citing polling by the Atlas thinktank New Zealand Taxpayers Union.⁵ ACT's election campaign slogan "End division by race" will sound very familiar to Australians.⁶ Of course there was no mention of 'race' in the proposals of the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, the Uluru Statement for the Heart, or the constitutional discourse on the Treaty of Waitangi. The term was surely deliberately introduced by Atlas thinktanks precisely to foster and license racial discourse (e.g., to encourage racism), the better to 'divide us on the basis of race'.



Screenshot: Fair/Advance Australia⁷

During the Voice referendum, Atlas thinktank the Institute of Public Affairs - with a long history of climate denial, fossil funding from coal billionaire Gina Reinhardt and others where known, and executive and board positions held in recent years by senior executives of fossil fuel interests Rio Tinto, Woodside, Loy Yang coal, Clough and Shell - drew parallels to the claims made by ACT against Waitangi to falsely argue that "the Waitangi Tribunal shows the Voice will possess a veto over certain legislation" whereas the Voice proposal was for a purely advisory body with no voting powers at all,

⁴ <https://www.cis.org.au/commentary/opinion/the-indigenous-voice-will-give-unjust-power-to-those-who-have-no-authority-to-speak-for-us/>

⁵ <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/election-2023-majority-would-support-acts-treaty-referendum-although-voters-unsure-if-they-want-to-vote-on-it/CQFL5K2AFVGFBI6QMjWBYO4MI4/>

⁶ <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/election-2023-majority-would-support-acts-treaty-referendum-although-voters-unsure-if-they-want-to-vote-on-it/CQFL5K2AFVGFBI6QMjWBYO4MI4/>

<https://theconversation.com/racism-and-democracy-why-claims-of-division-by-race-in-the-nz-election-and-voice-referendum-need-challenging-213651>

⁷ <https://www.fairaustralia.com.au/why-support-no>

and that “the Voice will engage in divisive racial politics; and create new types of Indigenous rights, which means extra rights for one group of Australians based on their race.”⁸

The New Zealand Taxpayers Union, another Atlas outfit, has in recent years worked to catalyse spiralling protests against Māori co-governance and the NZ Labour government’s Three Waters reforms, arguably leading to the resignation of PM Jacinda Ardern.⁹ Inflamed by the opposition National and ACT parties, Three Waters became a lightning rod in 2021 for the eruption of the Groundswell protest movement by farmers incensed by Māori rights and environmental legislation. They soon found allies in the Evangelical movement and among the ‘pro-Freedom’ groups of anti-vaxxers, some of whom had made threats of rape and death against Ardern. Its supporters voiced rising racism and misogyny: ‘Say no to comy [sic] bitch’ and ‘Stop ramming Māori language down our throats’.¹⁰ In November 2021, the Atlas-affiliated NZ Taxpayers’ Union was unmasked as having registered the www.motherofallprotests.nz domain name, showing its direct link to the radical fringe group Groundswell.¹¹

Given the permanent, global Atlas Network campaign since 1988 to deny climate science and/or otherwise obstruct effective climate and environmental policy by any means possible- which has also defeated the efforts of the UN climate treaty since 1992 - why might the NZ Atlas units be involved in provoking racist sentiment against Māori participation in environmental law reform, unleashing hatreds and protests that toppled a sitting prime minister? As Greenpeace NZ has said of Ardern’s moratorium on offshore fossil fuel development:

“By closing off the vast majority of its huge Exclusive Economic Zone to further fossil fuel development, New Zealand became one of the first countries in the world to decisively stand up to fossil fuel interests. That bold leadership was globally significant and something most New Zealanders are rightly proud of [..] It’s also a stark contrast to the National Party leader Christopher Luxon’s nonsensical plans to bring back oil and gas drilling. In the middle of a climate emergency, there is nothing more absurd than pledging to search for new fossil fuels to burn.”¹²

Her replacement as Labour PM, Chris Hipkins, quickly walked back much of Adern’s climate policy agenda.¹³ These capitulations to the policy preferences of the fossil fuel industry, expressed by proxy via formidable Atlas thinktank disinformation, push-polling and astro-turfing experts, did not ultimately help retain Labour in government.

Before entering formal NZ politics, ACT party leader David Seymour spent five years working in Canada, for two Atlas Network climate denialist/fossil funded thinktanks.¹⁴ One was the Manning

⁸ <https://ipa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/The-New-Zealand-Maori-Voice-to-Parliament-and-what-we-can-expect-for-Australia.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.taxpayers.org.nz/taxpayer-update-new-poll-stop-3-waters-roadshow-heads-north-337k-for-a-ribbon-cutting>

¹⁰ <https://mondediplo.com/2023/02/09new-zealand>

¹¹ <https://www.newsroom.co.nz/chiding-in-plain-sight>

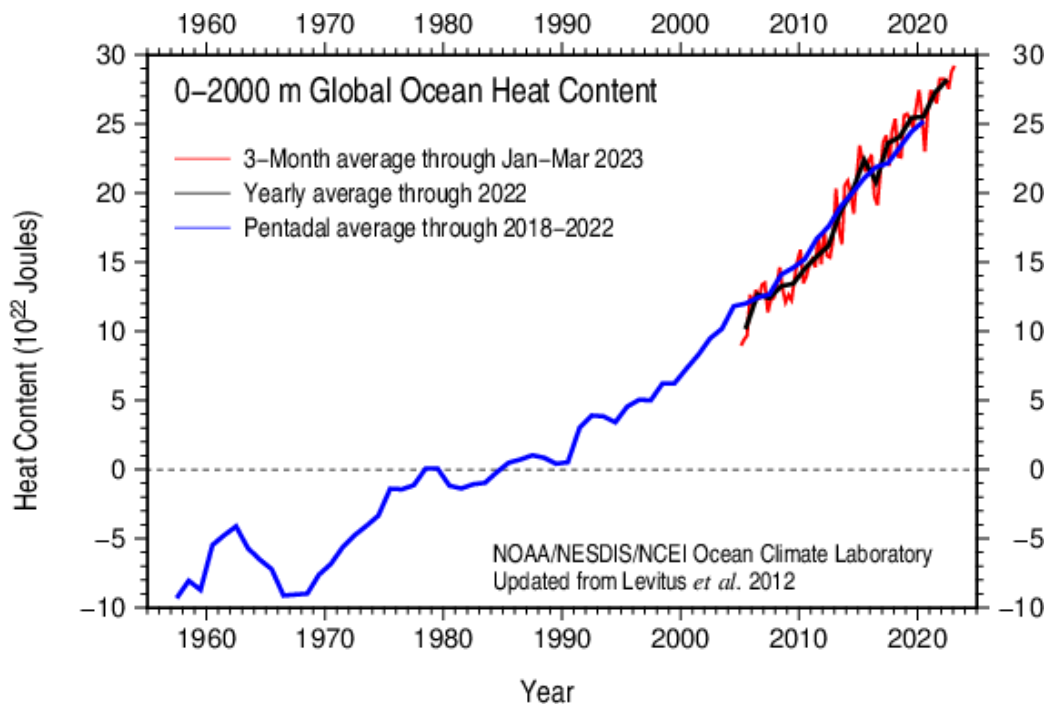
¹² <https://www.greenpeace.org/aotearoa/press-release/climate-action-should-be-bread-and-butter-for-the-chris-hipkins-government/>

¹³ <https://www.thepress.co.nz/environment/350097699/policy-bonfire-jeopardised-climate-target-and-mathematical-change-fixed-it>

¹⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200117140948/https://nzbpt.nz/david-seymour-mp-2/>

Centre (now Canada Strong and Proud) based in Calgary in the oilsands capital of Calgary, Alberta, which makes no secret of its petroleum industry funding and advocacy. The other was the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, known for its science denial and anti-climate activism,¹⁵ which included ACT party founder Roger Douglas (MPS), ex-Labour finance minister for NZ during radical neoliberal reforms of the late 1980s, and ex- National finance minister Ruth Richardson (MPS- now on the board of NZTU).¹⁶ Thus it is hardly surprising that Seymour’s ACT is now seeking to reverse the ban on offshore oil and gas exploration as well as attacking Te Tiriti.¹⁷

Over in gas-rich Argentina, Javier Milei, front runner in the presidential elections, says that climate change is ‘another lie of socialism’. Like Jacinta Price and Warren Mundine, his career and public profile has long been fostered through his connections with the Atlas thinktanks in that country.¹⁸



The Australian anti-offshore wind campaign mirrors US Atlas Network ‘save the whales’ campaign against windfarms.

The world’s oceans are being destroyed by the coal, oil and gas industry and fossil fuel combustion. More than 90 percent of the excess heat trapped in the Earth system due to human-caused global

<https://www.atlasnetwork.org/partners/global-directory/canada>

¹⁵ <https://www.desmog.com/frontier-centre-public-policy/#s4>

¹⁶ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200117140948/https://nzbpt.nz/david-seymour-mp-2/>

https://canadastrongandfree.network/?s=oil+gas&jet_ajax_search_settings=%7B%22search_source%22%3A%5B%22post%22%2C%22activities%22%2C%22partners%22%2C%22speakers%22%2C%22events%22%5D%2C%22results_order_by%22%3A%22relevance%22%2C%22results_order%22%3A%22asc%22%7D&post_type=post%2Cactivities%2Cpartners%2Cspeakers%2Cevents

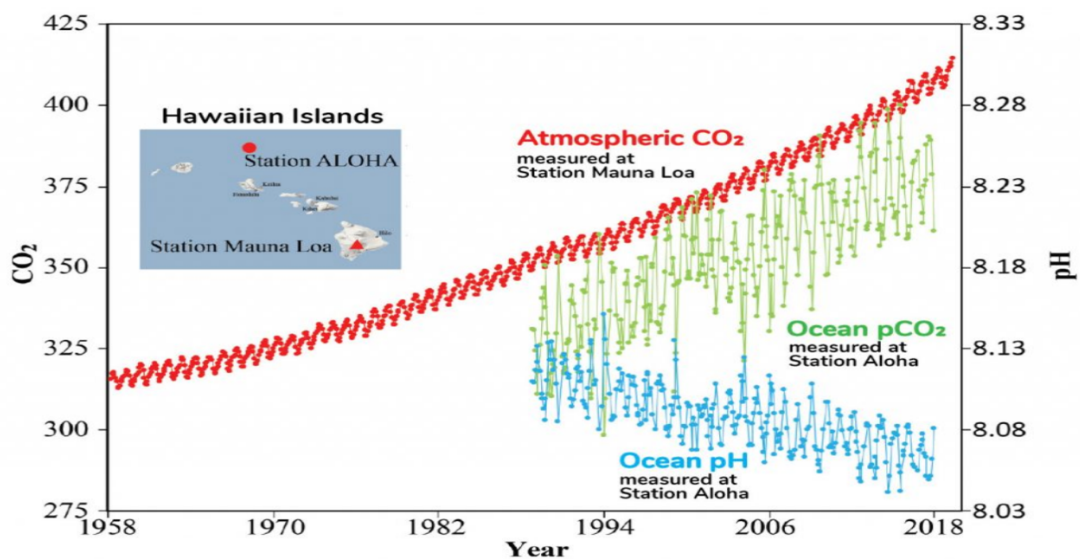
¹⁷ <https://www.1news.co.nz/2023/09/03/act-wants-to-reverse-ban-on-offshore-oil-and-gas-exploration/>

¹⁸ <https://www.desmog.com/2023/08/22/javier-milei-argentina-atlas-network/>

warming, most driven by fossil combustion, has been irreversibly absorbed by the oceans.¹⁹ This is the key driver of global heating, as air does not have the mass to absorb and hold heat anywhere that of the seas.

Marine heatwaves are the cause of the mass die-offs of coral reefs, including the mass bleaching events of the Great Barrier Reef and the catastrophic loss of kelp forests of the Great Southern Reef: “under water bushfires which can’t be stopped”.²⁰ Very roughly half of fossil fuel CO₂ emissions are absorbed by the oceans. Whilst this has delayed the rise of atmospheric temperatures, rising concentrations of CO₂ on the seas are causing ocean acidification, a rapid fall in the Ph levels of the seas.

Ocean acidification



Source: <https://ugc.berkeley.edu/background-content/ocean-acidification/>

Ocean acidification attacks the formation of the calcium carbonate (CaCO₃) skeletons of marine organisms such as corals, seashells, and coccolithophores: a major class of the photosynthesising marine microbes at the basis of the global carbon cycle, leading if unchecked to the collapse of ocean biodiversity, marine food chains.²¹

Acidification, high temperatures and hypoxia- the decline of oxygen (eutrophication) in coastal seawater driven by nutrient runoff and other forms of human-caused pollution place ever greater stress on the survival chances of marine organisms.²² These catastrophic changes in ocean heat content and chemistry are completely irreversible, and may already be enough to result in the 6th mass extinction crisis since life began on earth, likely also causing human extinction and an overheated, largely uninhabitable Earth with oceans depleted of marine life for millennia to come.

¹⁹ <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-ocean-heat-content>

²⁰ <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/the-underwater-bushfire-coming-for-australia-that-can-t-be-stopped-20231023-p5eeac.html>

²¹ <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/12904/chapter/6>
https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/oa/resources/ocean_acid2_nms.pdf

²² <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2022.861850/full>



The only ‘solution’ to the crisis of the world’s oceans, atmosphere and biosphere is the rapid, permanent, phaseout of the fossil fuel industry, as the industry itself has known in a long series of internal scientific reports from 1959 through to 1988, when the oil industry adopted the ‘Exxon position’- to “emphasize the uncertainty in the scientific conclusions regarding the enhanced greenhouse effect.”²³ As human civilisation has come to depend on high levels of energy use, only the rapid rollout of clean energy sources such as wind and solar to completely replace fossil fuels can slow, but not reverse, the catastrophic global heating trend.

Therefore, large scale clean energy projects capable of substantially replacing fossil energy use with zero mining inputs and pollution outputs (after built) such as the Illawarra REZ are absolutely vital to ensuring the survival of the oceans, including vulnerable large animals such as whales, already threatened by offshore oil and gas development, heat driven changes in food availability, and coastal shipping, including coal carriers.

Media are slowly waking up to the fact that a well organised campaign enrolling coastal communities against offshore wind is already likely to sabotage the Illawarra REZ, with a major prospective wind developer already pulling out. SMH has reported that a faked *Marine Policy* journal article falsely claiming that offshore wind turbines proposed for the Illawarra and Hunter regions could kill 400 whales a year has been circulating on social media, posted by No Offshore Windfarms Illawarra.²⁴ Crikey reports that a wide range of Facebook groups repeating misinformation such as ‘offshore wind kills whales’ are now mobilised around the country.²⁵

²³ Climate Files 2023, ‘1988 Exxon Memo on the Greenhouse Effect’, Climate Files, 3 August 1988. <https://www.climatefiles.com/exxonmobil/566/>

Climate Files 2023, ‘Collection index’. <https://www.climatefiles.com/collection-index>

²⁴ <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/wind-farms-misinformation-peter-dutton-climate-change-20231101-p5egvn.html>

²⁵ <https://www.crikey.com.au/2023/11/06/facebook-groups-offshore-wind-farms-fighting/>

According to Cam Wilson,

“So effective it has been that some proponents of the project have wondered whether this campaign is being backed by anti-renewable interests — a claim supported only by scant circumstantial evidence and no smoking gun. Rather, the opposition to offshore wind farms shows the chaotic, energised and at times murky experience of communities organising online around a culture war issue.”

This is a shallow analysis, that fails to investigate the origins and global history of anti-climate policy efforts since 1988, most of which has been conducted with fossil fuel money via the ever-expanding Atlas Network of over 500 ‘institutes’ in 100 countries, which routinely generate untraceable ‘astro-turf’ units: fake ‘grassroots’ orgs which generate disinformation, which is then spread voluntarily by those who are taken in by it (misinformation), which is the intended aim of corporate PR tactics of this sort. There is plenty of evidence to support the hypothesis that the anti-wind campaign is being driven by the fossil fuel interests which established the Atlas Network thinktanks, which have all opposed climate policy since it emerged on the public agenda in 1988, and since the neoliberals won the ‘economic wars’ (ending trade union power, welfare rights, protectionism and tariffs, public ownership of oil and other assets, progressive taxation, climate policy etc) have moved to provoke ‘culture wars’ (against Indigenous rights, women’s rights, queer rights, secularism, ‘wokeness’ etc), resulting in the current appeal to far-right white Christian nationalism linked to climate denial. Its effectiveness has already been demonstrated in the highly sophisticated and overwhelming disinformation campaign against the Voice to Parliament.

The main website driving the ‘community environmental campaign’ against the Illawarra REZ and likely others – No Offshore Turbines - is very professionally designed to drive submissions against the project. It does not name person or organisation who is responsible for the content, has no way of contacting the site owners, no phone number, no address, and the domain owner is listed as private.²⁶ Among its claims are that ocean floor mapping will involve destructive seismic testing which deafens marine mammals and fish, but the link goes to a site talking about the use of this technology by oil and gas exploration, a technique not needed for the offshore wind industry. This rigorous secrecy and slick PR is a hallmark of Atlas popup campaign units, which generate vast quantities of highly political, inflammatory, social media content whilst remaining untraceable to the public.

So far, no Australian commentators have investigated the US origins of this specific disinformation effort, but in the US journalists have traced the evidence-free disinformation (‘windfarms kill whales’) and the creation of local ‘community’ anti-wind groups to Big Oil via the Atlas Network thinktanks they fund: including the Caesar Rodney Institute, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, C-FACT and the Heartland Institute.²⁷ Long-term anti-wind campaigns in Australia have been run since 2013 through the anonymous Australian website ‘Stop These Things’ – a veritable clearinghouse for thoroughly debunked fossil industry disinformation alleging that windfarms cause sickness by ‘infrasound’ also relays US based the ‘wind kills whales’ disinformation. This site, as can all the anti-offshore wind media and front groups (often populated by well-meaning if ill-informed conservationists as well as NIMBYs), can all be traced to the shadowy Atlas Network, and thus to fossil fuel interests that share the STT website goal: “We’re not here to debate the wind industry- we’re here to destroy it’.²⁸

²⁶ <https://www.nooffshoreturbines.com>

²⁷ <https://www.fastcompany.com/90856401/these-groups-fighting-offshore-wind-say-its-about-whales-but-theyre-funded-by-big-oil>

²⁸ <https://stopthesethings.com/?s=whales>

The earliest anti-wind ‘experts’ listed on the STT website were Angus Taylor, whose contributions to the advancement of the fossil fuel industry and the frustration of clean energy as climate and energy minister in the last federal Australian Liberal/National government need no introduction, and Alan Moran, a long-term director of the Melbourne-based IPA, which has run science denial, anti-climate policy and clean energy disinformation since around 1990 for its fossil fuel sponsors.²⁹ A key contributor to the STT site is vocal climate denier and Australian Atlas Network veteran Maurice Newman, who arranged the founding grants for the CIS in the late 1970s from Santos, Shell, BHP, Rio Tinto, Western Mining and Murdoch’s *Adelaide Advertiser*. Newman also was involved in founding Advance Australia, central to the systematic disinformation against the Voice to Parliament referendum. Moran now works with what is probably the largest fossil-funded Atlas climate denial outfit, the Heartland Institute in Chicago.³⁰ Heartland has, since Moran has worked there, joined the Atlas crusade to ‘save the whales from windfarms.’³¹

Guardian US has reported the links of the Atlas thinktank the Texas Public Policy Foundation to a string of ‘community’ front groups such as the Save Right [Whales](#) Coalition (SRWC) of Rhode Island, which falsely claim that offshore windfarms are responsible for hundreds of whale deaths, tying images of beached whales to the false claim that they were killed by wind turbines.³² It is far more likely that whales beach due to the relentless underwater noise of fossil-fuelled shipping, driftnets, or the seismic blasting of offshore oil and gas survey, than offshore wind farms.³³

“Many of the whales that have washed up in [the New Jersey region] since 2016 — including recent whales to wash ashore this winter — have been marked by scars and recent wounds from apparent ship collisions. Scientists suspect that [...] warmer water due to climate change likely forced them to seek new areas for prey, bringing them closer to shipping lanes where they were more prone to be struck, sometimes fatally.”³⁴

Efforts to derail offshore wind turbines in New Jersey has been linked to the Caesar Rodney Institute, yet another Atlas thinktank.³⁵

“Records show the advocacy group, supported in part by dark money contributions from a petroleum trade group and headed by a climate crisis denier, has helped fund websites with environmental-sounding names such as Protect Our Coast, in an effort to link the deaths of the whales to offshore wind generation to stir up public opposition to the industry.”

CRI has been funded by [American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers](#), the [American Energy Alliance](#), as well as Donors Trust and Donors Capital: dark money vehicles set up by the Atlas Network

²⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20140625121313/http://stopthesethings.com/experts/>

³⁰ Walker, J (2023) [Silencing the Voice: the fossil-fuelled Atlas Network’s campaign against constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australia](#), *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies*,15(2). (Open Access)

³¹ “[Public Interest Groups Hire Counsel to Protect Endangered Right Whale from Offshore Virginia Wind Project](#),” *The Heartland Institute*, September 27, 2022. <https://archive.ph/RYCxR>

³² The Climate and Development Lab. 2023. “Discourses of Climate Delay in the Campaign Against Offshore Wind: A Case Study from Rhode Island.” The Climate and Development Lab, April, 2023. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V7oyIVIMOZdgjgIbr2men1mcAPBf0-VQ/view>

³³ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/may/10/whales-gulf-of-mexico-regulators-consider-endangered-status>

³⁴ <https://www.nj.com/politics/2023/04/wind-resistance.html>

³⁵ <https://www.atlasnetwork.org/partners/global-directory/united-states>

to launder and anonymise the oily sources of money flowing to climate denial. thinktanks after ExxonMobil was exposed for systematically doing so by the Greenpeace 'Exxon Secrets' project, along with other researchers.³⁶

CRI director David Stevenson, who recently founded the American Coalition for Ocean Protection, with new chapters in waterfront communities on the US east coast, says he does not think climate change amounts to an irreversible and intensifying crisis, despite the vast mountain of scientific evidence to the contrary.

“We don’t have to scare children to death with climate change,” Stevenson said. “It is something that’s happening slowly that we can fix at a more measured pace.”

Heartland, Caesar Rodney and veteran Exxon-funded climate denial thinktank C-FACT (all Atlas thinktanks) have all joined together to in a joint legal effort with an anti-wind front group created by the Cesar Rodney Institute, the American Coalition for Ocean Protection, to oppose the Coastal Virginia Offshore Energy Project. The group alleged the wind project threatens the endangered North Atlantic right whale.³⁷

The campaign website and Facebook and other social media outputs of Stop Offshore turbines fails to mention the climate crisis, the role of oil, coal and gas in driving it, nor its utterly catastrophic effects fossil fuel use is already having on marine ecosystems.

Much of the content being shared on the Facebook, Instagram and other sites linked to Stop Offshore Turbines Illawarra originates in US Atlas Network linked front groups discussed above. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, all Atlas thinktanks, where known, have core funding sources from fossil fuel billionaires, oil, gas and coal corporations and the banks that are still investing in new coal, oil and gas, risking our children’s survival, and indeed of complex life on Earth.³⁸

³⁶ Brulle R (2014) Institutionalising delay: foundation funding and the creation of US climate change counter-movements. *Climatic Change* 122: 681-694.

ExxonSecrets.org

<https://www.desmog.com/who-donors-trust/>

³⁷ <https://www.desmog.com/committee-constructive-tomorrow/>

³⁸ Walker, J (2023) [Silencing the Voice: the fossil-fuelled Atlas Network’s campaign against constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australia](#), *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies*,15(2). (Open Access)

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