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INTRODUCING THE DIRTY DOZEN: AUSTRALIA'S FILTHIEST FOSSIL FUEL POLLUTERS

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Introducing the Dirty Dozen

AUSTRALIA'S FILTHIEST FOSSIL FUEL POLLUTERS

Fossil fuel corporations in Australia are feeding the climate crisis – threatening our future and destroying our environment – while raking in billions in profit and often paying little or no income tax.

For too long, these corporations have had a free ride on how much they can pollute - just check their records on emissions and environmental damage. Collectively, the 12 fossil fuel giants profiled in this report have pumped out a massive 287.8 million tonnes of harmful CO_2 equivalent emissions since 2016 - that's equivalent to more than half of Australia's total emissions for a year.[1]

As the Australian Government prepares to strengthen the key national policy that regulates industrial emissions - the Safeguard Mechanism - we've taken a closer look at these corporations. Together, these 12 fossil fuel giants produce just over 40 percent of all emissions regulated by the Safeguard Mechanism, so it is essential they start pulling their weight in the shared national effort to cut harmful emissions.

WHAT IS THE SAFEGUARD MECHANISM?

The Safeguard Mechanism is a set of rules that regulates Australia's 215 biggest polluters - including the Dirty Dozen fossil fuel producers under the spotlight in this report. Strengthening this law is a key part of the Federal Labor Government's plans to cut the harmful greenhouse emissions that are driving the climate crisis.

For the first time, the government is proposing to set big polluters in the Safeguard Mechanism annual targets for emissions reduction ('baselines'), and impose financial penalties if they don't meet these. The aim is to incentivise corporations to transform how they operate so they cut their emissions and avoid penalties.

Australia cannot meet or improve on our legislated emissions reduction targets, and make real progress on tackling harmful climate change, if we do not get the Safeguard Mechanism reforms right.

Why these 12 companies?

The Dirty Dozen are the top fossil fuel emitters regulated by the Safeguard Mechanism. There are other corporations in Australia that operate outside this - like the energy company AGL whose coal-fired power plants make it Australia's biggest polluter. Shining a light on the emissions profiles and corporate records of these 12 fossil fuel giants is important in understanding why we need strong reform of the Safeguard Mechanism.

1 Climate Council calculations based on facility emissions data from the Clean Energy Regulator and the June 2022 Quarterly Update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

What's at stake

Many of us have experienced the extreme weather events - such as bushfires, floods, heatwaves and droughts - that are happening more often, and becoming more severe, due to climate change. The world has already warmed by around 1.2°C and Australia is suffering significant losses with worse on the way. How much worse will be determined by how quickly and rapidly Australia and the world can cut emissions this decade.

While Australian families, businesses and communities suffer through record-breaking climate disasters, the fossil fuel corporations that are worsening climate change are making eye-watering profits. We are facing a future of more destructive extreme weather events due to climate change, with very wet as well as very dry seasons set to intensify. Climate change is primarily driven by the burning of coal, oil and gas, and scientists agree the only way to avoid a full catastrophe is by deeply cutting greenhouse gas emissions this decade.

So let's meet Australia's 12 biggest fossil fuel corporations who are behind these harmful emissions: the Dirty Dozen. Their dirty deeds aren't done cheap – they're costing all of us a safe future.

It's time to demand the Dirty Dozen stop putting profits before people and planet, and start pulling their weight by genuinely and rapidly cutting their emissions.

1. Chevron Australia

Total income[2] 2020-2021: **$12.5 billion AUD**

Company tax paid: **$30.00 AUD**

Emissions: **52.3 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of 2.7 million Australians in a year**

A notorious tax avoider and polluter, global oil giant Chevron tops the list of fossil fuel polluters in Australia.

Chevron has produced more than 52 million tonnes of harmful carbon pollution under the Safeguard Mechanism, belching out 9.5 million tonnes in the past year alone.

While Chevron pollutes with abandon, the corporation is getting rich off Australia's resources - funnelling billions offshore and paying essentially nothing in company tax. Last year, Chevron made $12.5 billion in total revenue from selling Australia's resources, but paid only $30 dollars in company tax. That's an effective Australian corporate tax share of revenue of 0.0000002 percent.

Chevron can't be trusted to do its fair share on emissions reductions either. Take the company's enormous $US54 billion Gorgon gas plant in WA (SMH 2022). Chevron was given permission to build the project on the condition that it captured all the carbon dioxide it produced and buried at least 80 percent of it. Unfortunately, the corporation broke that commitment straight away.

Despite promising carbon pollution from the project would be sequestered deep underground, Chevron did not have the technology ready to capture this pollution when the corporation started extracting fossil gas in 2016. Chevron did not start injecting CO_2 into the underground reservoir until August 2019, after three straight years of unchecked emissions.

Since then, it has only captured around a third of the harmful CO_2 emissions produced by the gas field. On top of this, Chevron is pumping out millions of tonnes of harmful CO_2 each year from burning gas to power the whole operation (SMH 2022a).

The simple fact is Chevron's 'carbon capture' technology doesn't work any where near the extent promised, six years on. The company is dumping millions of tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere, exporting Australia's gas for mind boggling profits, and avoiding paying its fair share of tax. Chevron cannot be trusted to cut its carbon pollution.

We need a strong Safeguard Mechanism that makes sure fossil fuel giants like Chevron cut carbon pollution and stop making empty promises.

2 Throughout this report, information on total income and income tax paid for each corporation has been taken from the Australian Taxation Office's Report of Entity Tax Information. Figures quoted only address income tax paid, and do not comment on other revenue lines such as the federal Petroleum Resource Rent Tax or state and territory royalty schemes. For further information see 'Methodology and data sources' p.25.

2. Woodside

Total income 2020-2021: **$6.7 billion AUD**

Company tax paid: **$0.00 AUD**

Emissions: **47.5 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of 2.4 million Australians in a year**

Woodside Petroleum is Australia's home-grown gas goliath, the tax-avoiding, ancient art threat and chronic polluter of our nation's air and sea. The corporation banked an eye watering $6.7 billion in income in 2020-21 but paid no (zero, none, zilch) company tax.

Woodside has pumped 47.5 million tonnes of harmful carbon pollution into the atmosphere since 2016. Far from working to cut its emissions, Woodside is actively pursuing new fossil fuel business. In July 2022, it bought all of BHP's petroleum assets, making it one of the largest extractors of oil and gas in the world (BHP 2022). The corporation is now pushing ahead to open up two new mega gas fields in Scarborough, off Karratha in WA,and Browse - north of Broome - that would blast Australia's emissions reduction targets out of reach (Hare 2022, Woodside 2022).

While a tax scrooge, the corporation has been happy to dole out more than $2.2 million dollars in donations to major political parties over the past decade and has benefited from huge chunks of cash from the public purse to bankroll its fossil fuel business model (Democracy for Sale 2022). For example, Woodside received $8.8 million from the former Morrison Government to provide advice on how to clean up an abandoned oil vessel it was responsible for off the coast of Darwin (Wilkins and Keane 2020). That means the Australian taxpayer paid a colossal multinational polluter to tell the government how to clean up a mess IT made!

Woodside has a history of covering up its dirty deeds. In 2016, the corporation spilled 10,500 litres of oil into the sea, with the leak continuing for two months - but it did not tell the community, regulators or even its own investors (The Guardian 2017a). Meanwhile, Woodside's enormous gas processing plants on the Burrup Peninsula are exposing one million ancient Indigenous rock engravings to noxious damaging emissions (SMH 2022b). This is threatening to become what Carmen Lawrence, former WA Premier, has called a repeat of the destruction of Juukan Gorge (SBS 2021).

It is clear that Woodside will not cut emissions on its own - the corporation is actively working to grow them by developing new gas projects. That's why we need a strong Safeguard Mechanism that forces major polluters like Woodside to start cutting carbon emissions, for a safer climate.

3. Anglo American

Total income 2020-2021: **$2.7 billion AUD**

Company tax paid: **$0.00 AUD**

Emissions: **31.6 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of 1.6 million Australians in a year**

One of the world's largest coal miners, Anglo American has a history littered with disregard for the health of local communities, workers and the environment where it operates.

Anglo American's emissions in Australia have ballooned by 42 percent since 2016, earning it third place in the Dirty Dozen. And yet the former Morrison Government gave the offshore multinational a free pass to increase emissions without penalty just months before the 2022 federal election. The decision lifted Anglo American's so-called pollution 'cap' on its Grosvenor coal mine by almost 135 percent - giving the corporation a literal licence to pollute (Mazengarb 2022).

A strong Safeguard Mechanism would do the opposite: put major polluters like Anglo American on a pathway to actually reduce emissions. That's why it's so important we get this in place as soon as possible.

Massive increases in pollution aren't the only thing Anglo American has gotten away with recently. In 2020-21 the corporation pocketed $2.6 billion in total income off the back of skyrocketing fossil fuel prices but paid nothing in Australian company tax. Not. A. Single. Cent.

If only Anglo American cared as much about worker safety as it does about avoiding company tax. In a shocking incident in May 2020, five workers were seriously injured in a methane explosion at the corporation's Grosvenor mine (ABC 2021a). The explosion was found to have resulted from the firm's repeated failure to drain dangerous mine gas in the months leading up to the foreseeable and avoidable incident, which almost killed the workers and left them suffering burns on up to 70 percent of their bodies (ABC 2021, Brisbane Times 2022).

The explosion adds to Anglo American's dubious history of disregard for the communities where it operates. The corporation is currently fighting a class action lawsuit launched against it on behalf of 180,000 women and children in Zambia, due to the toxic legacy left by the corporation's lead mines in the country (RFI 2022). Similarly, the corporation is accused of "participation in and direct responsibility for a litany of serious and systematic violations of environmental, human and cultural rights related to coal exploitation" at its monster Cerrejón[3] coal mine in Colombia (Cajar 2022). The corporation is accused of endangering the health of 13,000 workers and community members and causing

3 Recently divested to Glencore.

widespread environmental damage including the destruction of 12,000 hectares of tropical forest (The Guardian 2013).

It seems like no matter where you look, Anglo American is doing the wrong thing - by communities, its workers and the environment. We need a strong Safeguard Mechanism to make sure corporations like Anglo American start doing the right thing.

4. Santos

Total income 2020-2021: **$4.8 billion AUD**

Company tax paid: **$17,300 AUD**

Emissions: **27.7 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of 1.4 million Australians in a year**

Santos, the Australian gas giant and fracking enthusiast, comes in at number four in our list of top fossil fuel polluters.

Santos has produced a staggering 27.7 million tonnes of carbon pollution since 2016 – more than the annual emissions of every person in South Australia where the corporation is headquartered. But Santos doesn't just pollute in South Australia; the corporation has expanded to fracking farmland and native forest areas across Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory as well.

Santos is getting filthy rich off dirty fossil fuels - pulling in $4.8 billion in revenue last year - but is skimping on tax. Last year it paid just over $17,000 in company tax – that's less tax than the average Australian worker paid (ATO 2020).

The corporation has left a trail of environmental destruction in its wake across Australia. Santos has poisoned aquifers in NSW's Pilliga Forest with radioactive uranium (SMH 2014), caused ocean oil spills in coastal WA (SMH 2022c) with dead dolphins found in the slick (WA Today 2022), and was responsible for one of the biggest spills in Queensland's history when it leaked 250,000 litres of oil into the Channel Country that feeds inland waterways (Hunter 2013).

While Santos' business model is extracting dirty fossil fuels, it has been telling investors, governments and the community that its products are 'clean' - based on promises about unproven and expensive carbon capture and storage technology. The corporation is currently being sued by the Australian Centre for Corporate Responsibility about this alleged dishonesty, with the lawsuit accusing Santos of misleading investors and greenwashing its operations (The Guardian 2021a, EDO 2022).

Santos plans to keep extracting huge quantities of fossil fuels well into the 2040s (Santos 2020, Regan 2022), so its executives cannot be trusted to reduce emissions 'out of the goodness of their hearts', no matter what the corporation would have you believe.

That is why we need a strong Safeguard Mechanism, so that mega corporations like Santos are forced to do their bit to cut emissions - just like everyone else.


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5. BHP - fossil fuels

Total income 2020-2021: *

Company tax paid: *

Emissions: **22 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 from BHP's fossil fuel businesses - equivalent to those of 1.1 million Australians in a year**[4]

BHP used to brand itself as the 'Big Australian', but the 'Big Polluter' is a much better fit for the corporation that comes in fifth among our dirtiest fossil fuel emitters.

While well known for its iron ore mining, BHP is deeply entrenched in the dirty coal business, operating eight coal mines in Australia alone. Its facilities have belched out 22 million tonnes of carbon pollution since 2016 - that's before even a single tonne of the coal BHP produces is actually used.

What's worse, BHP now wants to expand its existing coal mines (The Guardian 2022a) and open up new ones that will see the corporation keep spewing out harmful CO_2 pollution until 2116 (AFR 2022a). On top of accelerating dangerous climate change, BHP's expansion plans are set to wreak environmental havoc. Expanding the corporation's Peak Downs mine in Queensland will see 4,000 hectares cleared that includes habitats for the endangered koala, greater glider and other threatened species (The Guardian 2022). BHP's coal expansion plans make a mockery of its so-called commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 (BHP 2021).

BHP hasn't even been able to keep emissions below the generous 'cap' provided for its existing mines. Analysis in 2020 showed the corporation had blown past pollution limits set for its coal mines, but the former Morrison Government simply upped its limit - with no penalty (ACF 2020a). Regular Aussies are doing their bit to cut emissions, so why can't the so-called 'Big Australian'?

That is why we need a strong Safeguard Mechanism for Australia's biggest polluters, so that corporations like BHP are forced to genuinely cut emissions.

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* BHP's earnings, taxable income and taxes paid are disclosed against multiple taxpayer entities in the ATO's 2020-21 Report of Entity Tax Information. BHP disclosed $300.8 million in corporate income tax payments paid in respect of its Australian coal business in the publicly available BHP 2021 Economic Contribution Report. However, the corporation did not disclose the total income associated with these payments.

4 Includes emissions from BHP's petroleum and coal businesses for facilities regulated by the Safeguard Mechanism up to 2020-21, the latest year for which data is currently available. BHP sold its petroleum facilities to Woodside in 2022 but continues to own multiple coal facilities.

6. Glencore Coal

Total income 2020-2021: **$16.6 billion AUD**

Company tax paid: **$0.00 AUD**

Emissions: **22 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of 1.1 million Australians in a year**

Secretive Swiss multinational Glencore comes in sixth among our Dirty Dozen of major fossil fuel polluters.

Glencore raked in $16 billion in revenue from its Australian operations in 2020-21 but didn't pay a cent in Australian company tax. Extracting resources and cash from other countries without contributing is a Glencore speciality.

Secret documents released in 2017 revealed how Glencore used dodgy offshore practices to extract $25 billion from Australia via Bermuda without paying company tax (The Guardian 2017b). In 2022, the corporation separately pleaded guilty and paid $US1.5 billion in penalties for concealing corrupt payments, foreign bribery and commodity price manipulation (AFR 2022b, U.S. Department of Justice 2022).

While Glencore shifts cash offshore to foreign tax havens (The Guardian 2017b), the corporation leaves behind a toxic legacy - and not just through the 22 million tonnes of harmful CO_2 emissions pumped into our atmosphere since 2016. In Queensland's Mt Isa, a decade-long investigation found Glencore's mining operations were contributing to the spread of poisonous arsenic, cadmium and lead contamination throughout the town's soil and water supply (Taylor et al. 2017). Workers at Glencore's Oakey mine in Tieri were also exposed to potentially harmful levels of coal dust which can cause the deadly 'Black Lung' disease (pneumoconiosis), after the corporation admitted in 2017 that it had flouted dust limits (ABC 2017).

Glencore clearly cannot be trusted to cut its harmful pollution without a strong and enforceable cap on emissions. With a strong Safeguard Mechanism, big multinationals like Glencore will have to pull their weight in cutting Australia's emissions.

7. Inpex Holdings Australia

Total income 2020-2021: **$3.6 billion AUD**

Company tax paid: **$0.00 AUD**

Emissions: **20.5 million tonnes CO_2 since 2018 - equivalent to those of 1 million Australians in a year**

Inpex is a Japanese-owned oil and gas giant operating massive offshore gas operations in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The corporation's Ichthys LNG project - off the northwestern coast of Australia - only commenced operations in 2018, but has seen Inpex rocket through the ranks to reach number seven on the list of this country's biggest fossil fuel polluters.

The firm's gas operations are delivering super profits, with Inpex earning $3.6 billion in revenue last year. Like its offshore fossil fuel fellows in the Dirty Dozen, Inpex paid nothing in Australian company tax despite these billion dollar revenues.

Inpex has supersized its emissions profile though, generating 20.5 million tonnes of carbon pollution since operations commenced, and 6.3 million tonnes in the past year alone.

Already in the polluting fossil fuel business, Inpex is dirtier than most. The carbon intensity of its Ichthys gas project is far greater than any other project mining gas in Australian waters. In fact, environmental approval submissions indicate Inpex produces twice as much harmful carbon pollution per unit of gas compared with Australia's other offshore gas operations (Milne 2021a).

The corporation says it is working to reach net zero by 2050, with questionable carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology at the centre of its emissions reduction claims (Evans 2022). But as recently as 2019, Inpex said the use of CCS 'cannot be commercially justified' (Inpex 2019). Why work to cut harmful emissions that are fuelling the climate crisis when it would just eat into your billion dollar profits, after all?

Inpex plans to exploit the Ichthys gas field for more than 40 years; it cannot be trusted to reduce emissions with those plans on the table. We need a strong Safeguard Mechanism to force corporations like Inpex to walk the talk on emissions reduction.

8. Shell Australia

Total income 2020-2021: **$12.3 billion AUD**

Company tax paid: **$47.8 million AUD**

Emissions: **19.1 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of more than 986,800 Australians in a year**

British fossil fuel giant Shell is one of the largest carbon polluters in the world today, and comes in at number eight in Australia's Dirty Dozen.

Shell has known about the dangers of climate change for decades, warning about the risks as early as 1991. But rather than act on its own warnings, Shell has actively lobbied against climate action and invested billions into opening up dangerous new fossil fuel projects (The Guardian 2017c).

When it's not hushing up the risks of climate harm, Shell has shown a consistent disregard for the environment and worker safety in Australia.

Workers aboard its enormous Prelude floating gas plant off the coast of Broome have reportedly been subjected to hellish working conditions which have threatened the lives and safety of crew. The plant has been plagued by safety incidents including onboard fires, cascading electrical faults that left 250 workers on board grappling with dangerous power outages, critical safety systems failures, and damaged crew evacuation systems (WA Today 2021, Jacobs 2022). The plant is so dangerous that in December 2021 the offshore industry regulator shut down Shell's production due to repeated safety and environmental mishaps.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, Shell's coal seam gas fracking enterprise QGC was also fined in 2021 for dumping 1.1 million litres of polluted wastewater in Queensland's Western Downs (QLD Department of Environment and Science 2021).

No matter where it operates, it seems Shell can't be trusted to do the right thing on emissions, worker safety, or environmental pollution. We need a strong Safeguard Mechanism so that corporations like Shell are finally forced to cut emissions after decades of denial and delay on climate change.

9. ConocoPhillips

Total income 2020-2021: **$5.7 billion AUD**

Company tax paid: **$0.00 AUD**

Emissions: **14.9 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of more than 772,800 Australians in a year**

ConocoPhillips is number nine in Australia's Dirty Dozen, as the Texan fossil fuel giant fracks, blasts and sucks oil and gas out of every corner of Australia.

ConocoPhillips is already the largest miner of fracked coal seam gas in the country (ConocoPhillips 2023), and is now hunting for oil along the pristine and fragile coasts off Victoria and Tasmania. Since 2016, the firm has pumped almost 15 million tonnes of harmful carbon pollution into the atmosphere through its extractive activities.

The corporation extracts more fossil fuel from Australia than almost anywhere else in the world, apart from the USA. Yet despite gaining enormous profits from selling Australia's resources it contributed nothing in company tax last year. That's $5.7 billion in revenue from Australian operations but $0 in company tax.

The corporation's insatiable appetite for fossil fuels is now threatening the livelihoods of Australians involved in more traditional industries. ConocoPhillips' seismic blasting program across 4,000 square kilometres of ocean around King Island in the Bass Strait is a major risk to the area's commercial fishing sector, which is crucial to the Tasmanian economy (The Guardian 2017b).

The corporation is also rapidly developing plans to extract oil and gas from the Otway Basin, which runs alongside the tourism magnet that is Victoria's pristine and globally renowned Surf Coast (Wilkinson 2022).

ConocoPhillips claims to be working towards net zero emissions, but actions speak louder than words. Right now the corporation is spending $12 million dollars each and every day to open up new oil and gas projects that will accelerate harmful climate change (The Guardian 2022b).

ConocoPhillips can't be trusted to reduce emissions, pay its fair share of tax, or do the right thing to keep global warming to safe levels. We need a strong Safeguard Mechanism regulating Australia's biggest polluters so that corporations like ConocoPhillips don't keep fracking our shared future.


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10. South32

Total income 2020-2021: **$3.7 billion AUD**

Company tax paid: **$87 million AUD**

Emissions: **10.4 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of more than 536,900 Australians in a year**

South32 is a mining corporation spun out of BHP Billiton in 2015, but stands on its own high polluting record to make it into Australia's Dirty Dozen.

South32 generated $3.7 billion dollars in revenue last year, and unlike some of its fossil fuel fellows the corporation did actually pay some tax. But hold the applause because this mining giant's tax payable in 2020-21 was still just 2.4 percent of its revenues. That's less than a tenth of the average tax rate paid by Australian workers (OECD 2022).

The corporation showed its true colours during the COVID pandemic when it cynically exploited the crisis to drive down contract wages and safety conditions for workers (Caruana 2020, MEU 2020). Workers at the firm's Appin coal mine in the Illawarra were still fighting the corporation for a fair deal in late 2022 and were forced to threaten South32 with strike action following its ongoing efforts to crunch wages during a time of record profits (Reuters 2022).

South32's penny pinching approach is also putting a safe climate further out of reach. Alumina produced in South32's coal-fired Worsley refinery generates significantly more carbon pollution per tonne than nearby gas-fired alumina facilities run by Alcoa (Milne 2021b). While using dirty, cheap coal saves South32 dollars, it is also accelerating climate change, with 1.5 million extra tonnes of carbon pollution pumped into the atmosphere each year as a result.

And it is not just the climate South32 is wrecking. For example, the corporation's Dendrobium coal mine was found to have illegally dumped millions of litres of coal sludge into creeks on Mount Kembla due to inadequate infrastructure (ABC 2021b). South32 walked away with a $15,000 fine; pretty cheap for despoiling local waterways.

South32 treats the climate and our environment just like it treats its workers: badly. A strong Safeguard Mechanism would pull major polluters like South32 into line so that these corporations start driving down harmful emissions.

11. Esso Australia

Total income 2020-2021: **$11.1 billion AUD (ExxonMobil Australia - Esso parent company)**

Company tax paid: **$0.00 AUD (ExxonMobil Australia)**

Emissions: **9.7 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of more than 500,600 Australians in a year**

Esso Australia, a local arm of global oil giant and Texas-based tax avoider ExxonMobil, is number 11 in our Dirty Dozen.

Esso's highly profitable extraction of gas from the Bass Strait oil fields was a major contributor to ExxonMobil Australia's bumper revenue of $11.1 billion in 2020-21. And yet somehow, Esso and ExxonMobil Australia still paid nothing in company tax. In fact, ExxonMobil is notorious for its tax tactics. The Australian operation has generated tens of billions of revenue over the past decade, while virtually always avoiding contributing a cent in company tax. Investigations by the Tax Justice Network have uncovered Exxon's use of shadowy shell companies in the Netherlands and Bahamas to transfer wealth out of Australia (The Guardian 2017d).

Esso's workplace record is not any better than its contribution on tax. Workers have described a "culture of fear" aboard its offshore oil rigs in Gippsland, with employees afraid of being sacked if they raised safety concerns (The Age 2021).

In April 2021, a worker suffered serious burns to his hands and arms after a flash fire broke out at one extraction platform in the Bass Strait.

The corporation has also scarred the Bass Strait since it began extracting gas there in 1969, drilling 421 wells and running 600 kilometres of pipeline over the seabed. The environmental risks have become so bad that the offshore petroleum regulator intervened in 2021 to order its parent company Exxon to plug 180 wells and dismantle 10 platforms in the area to address the extensive damage it has done (Milne 2021c).

Esso seems to only take action when it is forced to; otherwise it appears to just keep putting profits before people and our planet. That is why we need a strong Safeguard Mechanism, to force corporations like Esso to finally clean up their acts.

12. Centennial Coal

Total income 2020-2021: **$1 billion**

Company tax paid: **$0.00 AUD**

Emissions: **9.5 million tonnes CO_2 since 2016 - equivalent to those of more than 489,400 Australians in a year**

Centennial Coal rounds out Australia's Dirty Dozen, digging up and shipping out millions of tonnes of coal each year that are fuelling the climate crisis.

In recent years, Centennial has been getting away with pumping out huge amounts of harmful carbon pollution without consequence. In 2017-18 the corporation massively overshot the pollution cap on its Myuna coal mine by 65 percent, then overran its cap again by 47 percent in 2018-19 (ACF 2020b). Centennial should have had to buy penalty offsets to cover these breaches, but instead the former Morrison Government simply lifted the facility's cap. That free pass saved Centennial around $8.3 million, even as the corporation poured more fuel on the fire of harmful climate change (ACF 2019).

Pollution caps are not the only thing Centennial has been breaking. The corporation's Mount Airly coal mine has caused extensive cracking in the unique sandstone pagodas of the Mugii Murum-Ban State Conservation Area which adjoins the Gardens of Stone National Park in the Blue Mountains. Centennial's operations, which extract 1.8 million tonnes of coal from under the formations, have caused cracks up to 250 metres long in an area fondly called the '300 Sisters' after the more famous Three Sisters rock formation up the road in Katoomba (The Guardian 2022c).

A $150,000 fine for the damage has not deterred Centennial. The corporation is now pressing to reopen the shuttered Angus Place coal mine further north in the Blue Mountains. If this goes ahead, the federal environment department has said the mine would likely have: 'significant impacts on world heritage, national heritage, listed threatened species and communities, migratory species and a water resource.' (ABC 2022).

Repeated pollution breaches, fines for environmental damage and plans to dig even more coal show that Centennial will not reduce emissions on its own. We need a strong Safeguard Mechanism to stop corporations like Centennial Coal from worsening harmful climate change.

Delivering a strong Safeguard Mechanism

Australia cannot meet - and improve on - our legislated emissions reduction targets, or make real progress on tackling harmful climate change if we do not get the Safeguard Mechanism right. If the Dirty Dozen and other big polluters regulated by it don't pull their weight, every other part of our economy and community will have to do more - families and businesses alike.

There are four key issues which are essential to get right to ensure the Safeguard Mechanism becomes a strong tool for reducing industrial emissions.

#1 The Safeguard Mechanism must deliver genuine emissions reduction

The Safeguard Mechanism must send a strong signal to major polluters to transform their operations to deliver genuine emissions reduction. Allowing corporations to buy unlimited carbon offsets to cover up pollution as usual will not achieve this. There should be a clear and strong cap on the use of carbon offsets within the Safeguard Mechanism.

#2 Don't open the door to new coal, oil and gas

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency have both made clear that there is no room for new coal, oil and gas projects if the world is to avoid a climate catastrophe.[5] Despite this, Australia currently has more than 100 proposed coal, oil and gas projects in the pipeline that would likely be covered by the Safeguard Mechanism if they were already operating today (DISER, 2022). Any new, high polluting project will add to the difficulty of achieving Australia's national emissions reduction targets. That's why new coal, oil and gas projects should be more tightly regulated through the Safeguard Mechanism. This includes ruling out the use of offsets to write off their additional harmful pollution, and ensuring they do not have access to public funding or other forms of support within the Safeguard Mechanism architecture.

5 The Sixth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change shows clearly that existing and currently planned fossil fuel projects would blow any chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C (IPCC 2021). The International Energy Agency's (2021) pathway to Net Zero by 2050, assumes no investment in new fossil fuel supply, including gas.

#3 Australia's biggest polluters must pull their weight

The Safeguard Mechanism must ensure major polluters do a fair, proportional share of Australia's required emissions reduction task. The simplest way to achieve this would be to require entities within the scheme to reduce their emissions by at least 43 percent by 2030, in line with Australia's current national target. This would require companies to cut emissions by at least 10 Mt CO_2-e a year, or around 7 percent of the sector's 2020–21 emissions.

#4 No special deals for some sectors at the expense of everyone else

Corporations which export overseas (so called 'Emissions Intensive Trade Exposed Industries') have called for special treatment within the Safeguard Mechanism because of their exposure to international trade competition. To ensure the priority of the Safeguard Mechanism remains on reducing emissions from industry, exporting companies should not be given special treatment within the scheme - such as more lenient targets for annual emissions reduction. Any assistance which is given alongside reforms to the scheme should focus on measures to help achieve business transformation, such as funding for technology innovations that reduce emissions or access to expertise related to energy efficiency or the use of renewable energy.

To find out more about the Climate Council's positions on strengthening the Safeguard Mechanism visit: www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources

If we get the Safeguard Mechanism right, it can deliver the biggest cuts to industrial emissions ever seen in Australia. But getting it wrong will mean more pollution-as-usual and worsening climate harm that will threaten the lives and livelihoods of Australians right around the country.

Methodology and data sources

Throughout this report, emissions produced by the Dirty Dozen have been calculated using data reported to the Clean Energy Regulator by these corporations. This includes any of the corporation's facilities which emit more than 100,000 tonnes of CO_2 equivalent per year. This annual data is available at: www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/NGER/The-safeguard-mechanism/safeguard-data.

Under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (Safeguard Mechanism) Rule 2015, the Clean Energy Regulator (the agency) is required to publish the following:

- information about emissions baseline determinations (baselines)
- for each facility covered by the safeguard mechanism in a reporting year - the baseline emissions number in force for that year, total reported emissions, the responsible emitter(s) for each facility, any Australian carbon credit units surrendered and whether the facility has a multi-year monitoring period in place.
- an estimate of the total number of Australian carbon credit units (ACCUs) likely to be surrendered by facilities with multi-year monitoring periods that are ongoing.

For each corporation, the emissions figure included in this report represents total emissions reported to the Clean Energy Regulator for all relevant facilities covered by the Safeguard Mechanism. Emissions are limited to operational (scope one) emissions only, as these are all that are required to be reported. Where ownership of individual facilities has changed during the reporting period, emissions have been allocated to the corporate entity that owned this facility in the relevant reporting year.

Comparisons of the Dirty Dozen to Australia's total national emissions and emissions per capita uses data from from Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory which is broken down by sector (energy - broken into electricity, stationary energy excluding

electricity, transport, and fugitive emissions; industrial processes and product use; agriculture; waste; and land use, land use change and forestry). This data is available at: www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/publications/national-greenhouse-gas-inventory-quarterly-updates.

Amounts of income tax paid for each corporation are taken from the Australian Taxation Office's Report of Entity Tax Information. This report aggregates data provided by the corporations via annual tax returns. This data is available at: data.gov.au/data/dataset/corporate-transparency.

The Report of Entity Tax Information provides details of a corporation's total income, taxable income and tax payable for each income year. The latest available data is for the financial year 2020-21, and has been used throughout this report. Climate Council's analysis only addresses income tax paid, and does not comment on other revenue lines such as the federal Petroleum Resource Rent Tax or state and territory royalty schemes. Amounts of tax paid reported by corporate entities may therefore differ from amounts included in this report as multinational fossil fuel corporations generally aggregate all forms of tax payable for the purpose of their public communications.

In instances where a safeguard facility has multiple owners, emissions have been allocated in full to the largest shareholder of the facility. Similarly for joint ventures which are listed in the Australian Taxation Office's Report of Entity Tax Information, associated revenue and company tax figures have been allocated in full to the largest shareholder.

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