



# LETTERS

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

All letters sent in must include your address and phone number and be under 350 words.

### Current climate policy unacceptable

**AN** announcement of public funding for Queensland coal mines, followed by a ministerial backdown over a plan to cut pollution from the electricity sector, adds up to a week of policy chaos.

To give \$1 billion of taxpayers' money to build a rail line from the Carmichael coal mine to Abbot Point breaks a promise made by the Prime Minister during the election, increases the chances of a climate disaster, and hastens the destruction of the Great Barrier Reef.

This coal mine madness has to stop, for the sake of the planet and the

Reef. Money should go to protecting this natural wonder and the 70,000 jobs and \$6 billion tourism industry that relies on it.

The mega coal mine is a disaster – more industrialisation along the coast, hundreds more coal ships ploughing through a World Heritage area, and more global warming.

Energy and Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg rightly asked, "How do we meet our emissions reduction targets while keeping electricity prices affordable?" and added that he would wait and see what the experts say. It seems the experts who run this

country have had their say.

They are the usual suspects - the electricity price doomayers and climate change deniers, and now the Minister is ruling out the common-sense plan of a carbon intensity scheme.

Such a plan would be effective in reducing carbon pollution and other toxic emissions at low cost.

Either the government introduces some form of emissions pricing, or it increases the renewable energy target, or it puts a whole lot more taxpayers' money into planting trees and other low-return schemes.

Delaying the inevitable transition to clean renewable energy will cost more.

Residents of the Mid North Coast have a choice – if we want a safe climate we must either get active and urge local National Party MPs to change course, or we must vote for other candidates who understand the issues and will take effective action.

To join us in fighting for a safe climate and clean energy, go to [www.climatechangehastings.org.au](http://www.climatechangehastings.org.au)

**Harry Creamer President**  
Climate Change Australia  
Hastings

### Pensions reduced

**IT** is all very well for local member David Gillespie to urge residents "Shop Small and Local" (Your Local Independent December 1).

However, many residents of the Hastings and Macleay are on Defined Benefits Superannuation Incomes and in receipt of Centrelink pensions.

These pensions have been substantially reduced since January 1, 2016 - in some cases by over \$150 per fortnight.

Many thousands more will either lose, or have their pensions reduced

after January 1, 2017 as a result of policies of the current Federal Government, of which Dr Gillespie is a member.

The reduced benefits paid to many pensioners has, and will, severely reduce their incomes and hence ability to spend money on goods and services offered by local business in this region.

These actions will no doubt be a factor when pensioners and their extended families and friends come to vote in the next Federal election.

**Max Grubb**  
Port Macquarie

### Rate rise 'smells'

**YOUR** correspondent of December 8 ('PMHC rate rise must be publicised') raises some concerning issues with council's proposed rate increases.

Something smells about this whole deal. Mayoral candidate Peta Pinson warned about these rate hikes and was ridiculed. Council's website 'PMHC Listening' invites ratepayers to complete a survey on the subject.

The questions are sneakily worded to funnel the participant to agree with the major rates increases. It states the average residential rate increase is a

meagre \$28.70.

I don't know how they arrived at that figure, as a 6.46 per cent increase on my very average land value would be \$95. This is a whole new ball game - lies, lies and statistics. A permanent 6.46 per cent rate increase over five years will mean my residential rates will rise by a staggering \$552. I don't begrudge council trying to tryng to get a little ahead to carry out the backlog of works caused by almost 40 years of rate pegging, but they need to be upfront and honest about it.

**Doug Emmanuel**  
Port Macquarie