



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Australian

July 20, 2024 Saturday

Australian Edition

Copyright 2024 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: COMMENTARY; Pg. 12

Length: 721 words

Body

Bubble bursts for Labor's green hydrogen dreams **Fortescue** founder Andrew Forrest says Labor should push ahead with billions of taxpayer dollars in tax incentives for green hydrogen, yet his own actions reveal a starkly different stance. Forrest has made the difficult decision to scale back his green hydrogen initiatives, citing difficulties with the commercial viability of the project.

This prudent business decision raises an important question: if green hydrogen projects are not currently viable for private investors such as Forrest, why should Australian taxpayers be expected to shoulder the financial risk? The discrepancy between Forrest's public advocacy and private actions signals the need for a thorough reassessment of taxpayer investments in green hydrogen.

Public funds should be allocated prudently, ensuring that investments are both economically viable and beneficial for the broader community, not for billionaires' business interests.

Don McMillan, Paddington, Qld

Friday's editorial ("Hydrogen rush is hitting reality", 19/7) clearly sets out what the federal government should be in relation to Australia's ongoing energy supply. Opposition energy spokesman Ted O'Brien says: "Hydrogen was a good example of why governments should avoid trying to pick winners and instead diversify the risk for taxpayers." The current Coalition stance is effectively that we must leave our options open.

We know from our own and overseas experience that energy technology is developing rapidly. In practical terms, we are increasingly seeing new energy supply opportunities revealed. I would like to think we are a fairly pragmatic country when it comes to the uptake of new technologies.

As your editorial says, "The responsible thing to do is to safeguard electricity supplies using known technologies while alternatives are properly evaluated." We certainly have the skills and political nous to make long-term decisions for the benefit of all Australians.

John Houghton, The Gap, Qld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brilliant letter by Mark Scanlan ("Bowen EV policy driving us into dystopian future", 19/7) on the future for green hydrogen and the advent of the zero-emissions Twigster! I hope he has sent copies to the Prime Minister, Energy Minister and rent-seekers of government energy investment schemes.

Kerry MacDermott, Binalong, NSW

The chooks have come home to roost. To sustain a renewable energy pipe dream takes a lot of money. Even Andrew Forrest, who seems to have lots of it, and government largesse aren't enough to overcome the reality of supply and demand. There simply isn't sufficient renewable electricity currently or in the pipeline to service **Fortescue's** proposed production of 15 million tonnes of hydrogen by 2030. Given supply-side issues, the cost of renewable energy for the purpose of green hydrogen production is exorbitantly high. The **Fortescue** pullback has punched a mammoth hole in the government's renewable ambitions. It raises serious questions about the reliability of the government's forecasts and its promises in the energy space more generally. It's a wake-up call that to wed this country's energy security to technologies that are yet to be proven at scale is not only fraught but also irresponsible.

Kim Keogh, Claremont, WA

It is hilariously strange to witness the evolution of the views of energy analysts and even Australia's Chief Scientist on the outlook for green hydrogen in our energy mix since **Fortescue's** pirouette on its future application. I wonder if our next chief scientist might have a better grasp of the second law of thermodynamics.

There has been so much ignorant, greenwashing bunkum delivered to potential investors around projects to deliver hydrogen as a fuel. In fact, the manufacturing process itself consumes about three times as much energy as it delivers in use. I've seen wild projects touted as environmentally friendly taking hydrogen from brown coal or methane, coupled with carbon capture, while every second element of the periodic table has suddenly become "critical". Carpetbaggers and lifestyle company directors have had a field day.

The sad and concerning aspect of this madness is how poorly our government has been advised and the many tens of millions of taxpayer dollars that have been splashed around on harebrained projects of dubious merit. Peter Strachan, Cottesloe, WA

Load-Date: July 19, 2024