



PM versus the EPA

DANIEL MERCER

Scott Morrison has rubbished the environmental watchdog's justification for bombshell greenhouse gas emissions guidelines.

Environmental Protection Authority chairman Tom Hatton yesterday blamed Federal Government inaction for the controversial move, which industry says will cost jobs and curb gas supplies.

But the Prime Minister said: "I think it's completely rubbish. I can give you a tonne by tonne description of how we meet our 26 per cent emission reduction targets."

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KING SIZE

CHAOS REIGNS

Investors get the jitters, heat goes on Premier as full extent of EPA's green demands are revealed

EXCLUSIVE
DANIEL MERCER, PETER DE KRUIJFF AND NICK BUTTERLY

The backers of a planned new industrial development worth hundreds of millions of dollars could pull their investment after controversial pollution guidelines were introduced by WA's environment watchdog.

The Environmental Protection Authority dropped a bombshell on Thursday when it announced all new projects emitting more than 100,000 tonnes of carbon a year would be asked to fully offset their pollution to get the green light from the agency.

The Weekend West can reveal the equivalent of an area 250



times the size of Kings Park would need to be planted with trees every year to offset such an amount.

Amid a furious reaction by business to new curbs on carbon

emissions from major projects, it is understood the proponents of a mineral processing plant were yesterday reassessing whether to go ahead with the project.

The dramatic step came despite assurances from Premier Mark McGowan that the State Government did not support the EPA guidelines and would not be following them.

It also prompted Prime Minister Scott Morrison to question how the Premier had allowed the EPA to make the changes.

He also rejected suggestions the EPA had been forced to intervene because of Federal inaction on emissions policy. I think it's completely rubbish," Mr Morrison said. "I can give you a tonne by tonne description of how we meet our 26 per cent emission reduction targets."

The decisions of environmental watchdogs have sparked controversy on the east coast with projects such as the proposed Adani coal mine in Queensland.

EPA chairman Tom Hatton stood firm, saying the absence of adequate Federal Government controls on carbon emissions meant there was an "absolute obligation" to act. He denied the guidelines would affect big ticket projects such as Woodside's Scarborough LNG development, which he said fell outside the State's remit, or the Balla Balla iron ore mine, which already had environmental approval.

WA's peak mining lobby, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, called for the guidelines to be scrapped, saying they "created nothing but instability". CME chief executive Paul Everingham argued the guidelines would capture most major mining and LNG projects, as well as those in the battery mineral processing industry, which was needed to lower global carbon emissions.

He said it was already threatening to scare away investors.

"The uncertainty ... has already led to some of our members looking at their long-term investment decisions and whether to move their downstream processing overseas," he said.

"This goes against the Government's plan for jobs and growth and also the growing desire to diversify our economy by increasing the industry's level of production and processing in our own backyard."

Woodside hit out at what it said was a lack of consultation and said it was reviewing the effect of the guidelines on projects such as the \$15.6 billion Scarborough project and \$29 billion Browse development.

Mr McGowan said climate change policies were best handled by the Commonwealth.





Left: EPA members and their pay. Only Dr Hatton's position is full-time. Right: Adani protesters. Picture: AAPIMAGE