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Case Study



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Title
Big Gas is Taking the Piss: How a Pub Test Reframed Australia's Gas Debate

Category
A10. Not-For-Profit Organisations

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Q1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & WHY DOES THIS CASE DESERVE AN AWARD?

Australia's gas companies were extracting $149 billion in LNG while paying no royalties on more than half of it. The ATO called parts of the industry systemic non-payers of tax. Domestic energy bills tripled. And almost nobody was talking about it.

The Australia Institute had the evidence. What it didn't have was public attention. A niche email base of 72,000. No annual national advertising budget. And an opposition - the gas lobby - consistently spending in the tens of millions to keep the issue invisible.

'Big Gas is Taking the Piss' changed that.

Built on a strategic insight that this wasn't a policy problem but a fairness violation, the campaign staged the gas industry's behaviour as a pub-test moment every Australian would recognise. A suited stranger walks into a pub, steals a local's beer, and walks out. The room knows exactly what's happening. So did the country.

On $748,000 in total paid media - TAI's largest-ever national buy - the results were disproportionate by any measure.

First, TAI built what matters most to a think tank: subscribers more than doubled to 146,000, petitions hit 228,435, and the number of donors per fundraising email quadrupled - a self-funding policy advocacy engine.

Then it became the defining voice of the debate: TAI-attributed media reach grew +1,860% YOY, and the campaign's language - 'Big Gas' and 'taking the piss' - entered Federal Parliament, was adopted by campaigners as diverse as Punters Politics and Greenpeace, was repeated unprompted by voters in focus groups, and even named directly by the Prime Minister.

The industry spent $12 million trying to shut it down. It didn't work.

Within 18 months, gas taxation moved from specialist obscurity to the centre of national debate. Dutton proposed an export tax. The Albanese Government announced a Domestic Gas Reservation Scheme. A Senate inquiry reported Australians want "a fair return." And now, a gas export tax is well and truly on the table.

A think tank took on one of Australia's most powerful industries and changed the national conversation.

Hardly taking the piss.



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Q2. WHAT WAS THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE?

A POLICY ISSUE HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

In 2024, Australians were deep in a cost-of-living crisis. Energy bills had tripled in a decade [1]. Yet one of the biggest structural causes of rising prices - Australia's uncontrolled gas export industry - was almost entirely absent from public debate.

The numbers were staggering. 80% of Australia's gas was exported, 56% of it royalty-free. Over four years, multinationals had extracted $149 billion of LNG without paying royalties on more than half [2]. The ATO had publicly called the oil and gas industry "systemic non-payers" of tax [3].

None of this was secret. The Australia Institute (TAI) - Australia's leading progressive policy think tank - had published rigorous research on it for years. The problem wasn't the evidence; it was getting enough people to notice.

A THINK TANK IN A MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR SHOUTING MATCH

The gas industry had a history of spending big to keep things as they were. Comms Declare and Standard Media Index data shows fossil-fuel advertising repeatedly intensifying around budgets and elections, with the Minerals Council and Australian Energy Producers among the top spenders [4].

In contrast, TAI's resources were modest. An engaged but niche email base of around 72,000 [5]. No retained media agency, no always-on presence, no annual national advertising budget.

And TAI's previous advocacy looked like every other policy ad: stock footage, bold supers, data stacked on data. Comms a reasonable person would watch, agree with, and forget by lunch.

THE PARADOX: PASSIVE AGREEMENT, NO ACTIVE DEMAND

Pre-campaign polling done in Western Australia by Talbot Mills Research (May 2024, WA, n=1,001) revealed a telling paradox. While 70% of West Australians already agreed gas companies should pay royalties, only 20% correctly understood that royalties weren't being paid on all gas [6].

The research tested message frames connected to everyday life: 'nurses pay more tax than gas companies'; 'drivers pay more in rego than gas pays in royalties'; 'beer excise raises more than the PRRT' [7]. These scored highly and became inspiration for the creative platform.

Because WA is Australia's gas state, its residents hold stronger pre-existing views than the national average.

THE CHALLENGE: Take a complex issue the gas industry has spent decades making invisible and make it personal, urgent and impossible to ignore - and build an audience able to help spread the word and fund the fight.

Footnotes: [1] DCCEEW Gas Market Review (2025). [2] Australia's Great Gas Giveaway, TAI (2024). [3] ATO Top 100 Tax Performance Program (2023). [4] Comms Declare / SMI, Mirage News, 7 May 2026. [5] TAI internal records, Jan 2025. [6] Talbot Mills, WA (May 2024), p.14-15. [7] Talbot Mills, WA (May 2024), p.17–20.

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Q3. WHAT WERE YOUR OBJECTIVES? State specific goals.

With a WA state election in March 2025 and a federal election in May, TAI identified a narrow but consequential window of heightened public interest in policy. It committed its largest-ever national media investment - $440,000 for Burst 1 (Feb to May 2025). This meant the investment had to do double duty: cut through now, but also expand the Institute's audience, donor base and authority to sustain pressure.

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES — Grow TAI's audience and advocacy capacity.

- Grow subscribers from ~72,000 to 100,000+ (a 40%+ increase).
- Double the average number of donors per gas-themed eDM (indexed baseline: 100) [1].
- Generate donations sufficient to extend the campaign beyond Burst 1.

BEHAVIOURAL / POLITICAL OBJECTIVES — Convert passive agreement into action.

- Drive 100,000+ petition signatures - more than double TAI's pre-campaign best (54,915 on "Increase the PRRT," Feb 2024) [2].
- Move the gas giveaway beyond TAI's channels into mainstream political debate and third-party advocacy.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES — Become the defining voice and help build national consensus.

- Become the most-cited organisation in gas-tax coverage (named mentions vs issue mentions).
- Contribute to majority national agreement (>50%) that Australia exports too much gas - a question never tested nationally, on an issue with no prior public salience.
- Contribute to majority support (>50%) for gas tax reform among voters of every major party.

A NOTE ON MEASUREMENT: TAI's pre-campaign research was WA-specific and royalty-focused. Post-campaign polling tested exports / export tax, because the national debate moved to those terms. We evaluate success primarily through indicators the campaign can directly own - audience and fundraising growth, public action and language adoption. Polling and policy are presented as corroborating context.

Footnotes: [1] Donor response figures indexed to protect commercially sensitive data. Baseline (100) = pre-campaign average donors per gas-themed eDM. [2] TAI NationBuilder records.

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Q4. WHAT WAS YOUR STRATEGY AND HOW DID YOU GET THERE?

WHO WE NEEDED TO MOVE

TAI's audience had two tiers: already-engaged Australians and the real prize - the much larger, less politically engaged Australian who didn't follow energy policy, didn't trust think tanks.

THE STRATEGIC INSIGHT

The gas industry's behaviour wasn't a climate story, and it wasn't a tax-policy story. It was a fairness story.

Talbot Mills confirmed it: 77% agreed if mining pays royalties, gas should too; 74% agreed no government should give gas corporations a free pass during a cost-of-living crisis [1]. The industry's own counter-narratives were dead - only 18% believed royalties would threaten jobs; only 33% believed companies would relocate [2].

Australians didn't need more evidence. They needed permission to be angry.

Every other mainstream advocacy voice in this space was still leading with data, graphs and policy language. Nobody had tried to make people feel it. That was the white space.

THE STRATEGY: Reframe the gas giveaway from a policy debate into a fairness violation - personal and visceral enough to convert passive agreement into active calls for policy change.

Footnotes: [1] Talbot Mills, WA (May 2024), p.19. [2] Talbot Mills, WA (May 2024), p.19.

Q5. HOW WAS YOUR STRATEGY BROUGHT TO LIFE?

THE CREATIVE INSIGHT: THE PUB TEST

Strategy identified the emotional nerve. Creative had to find the place that kind of judgement actually gets made. In Australia, that place is the pub.

The creative idea: stage the gas industry's behaviour as a social violation in a pub. Personify Big Gas as an immaculately dressed stranger who walks up to the bar, takes the locals' beer and money, and walks out. Then deliver the verdict the room is already thinking: ‘That's just taking the piss’.

The tone had to hold outrage and authority at the same time. The language was pub language, not policy language; but the craft was editorial - masthead serif typography, restrained cinematography, production values that signaled credibility, not activism.

The platform was co-developed with musician John Butler, who helped fund production [1]. Butler brought cultural authority and a loyal following.

THREE CONTEXTS WHERE THE VERDICT WAS UNAVOIDABLE

The films. The 30" hero staged the metaphor. A 15" Exports cut compressed the logic for digital. BVOD ran during election programming; social added frequency via a 9:16 animated series translating the OOH proof points into vertical content.

OOH, Newspaper and Social. Each execution carrying one devastating comparison from the highest-scoring Talbot Mills frames [2]: ie 56%+ of gas for free; 3x less tax than nurses; $40 billion richer while your bill has tripled.

Parliament House. The campaign's films reached Parliament House's own screens via Sky News broadcast. A billboard truck ran directly outside during sitting weeks. Senator Jacqui Lambie filmed her own piece to camera - “They're taking the piss right out of you” - and shared it [3].

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FROM ONE BURST TO TWO

Burst 1 ($440,000) was designed to do double duty: cut through and build an audience willing to fund what came next. It worked. The films generated 625,000+ organic views across TAI's and Butler's channels [4], and TAI's subscribers surged from 72,000 to nearly 118,000.

In late 2025, TAI reinvested $308,000 into Burst 2 (Dec 2025-Mar 2026). Total campaign investment sat just under $800,000 (paid media: $748,000, production $50,000) [5]. Q6 reflects the cumulative impact of both.

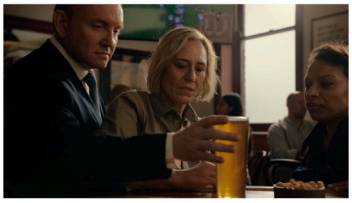
Footnotes: [1] Production partner records [2] Talbot Mills, WA (May 2024), p.17–20. [3] TAI Social Channels — Apr 2025. [4] TAI (261,700) + Butler (366,000) = 627,700 organic. [5] Covers production as well as media, TAI records.



Vision: Open in a classic Australian pub.



Vision: A world-weary, thirty-something woman receives her beer at the bar next to her mate



Vision: Before she is able to reach for it, a well-shaven man in a beautiful suit appears next to her, and promptly takes her beer.

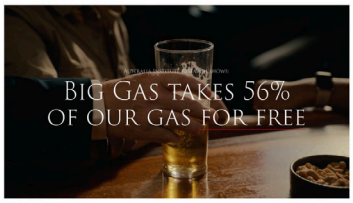


Vision: The suit begins to drink the woman's beer, while keeping his gaze locked on hers. You can sense the tension in the room.





Vision: Before putting the beer down, the suit spits some of back into the glass, leaving a meagre half.



VO & Super: BIG GAS TAKES 56% OF OUR GAS FOR FREE



Vision: As the suit looks to leave the bar, another man stands up as if about to confront him.

VO: That's just taking the piss



Super: IT'S TIME PARLIAMENT ACTS.



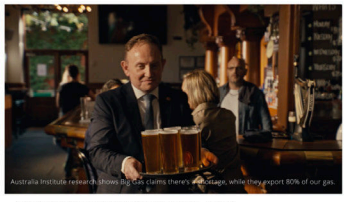
Vision: Open in a classic Australian pub. Two women receive their beers from the barman



Vision: Before they're able to reach for them, a well-shaven man in a beautiful suit appears, and promptly grabs their beer.



VO: Big gas claims there's a shortage, while they export 80% of our gas.



Vision: The suit begins to walk away.

VO: And it's driving our prices up.



Vision: As the suit looks to leave the bar, another man stands up as if about to confront him.



VO: That's just taking the piss

Super: IT'S TIME PARLIAMENT ACTS.

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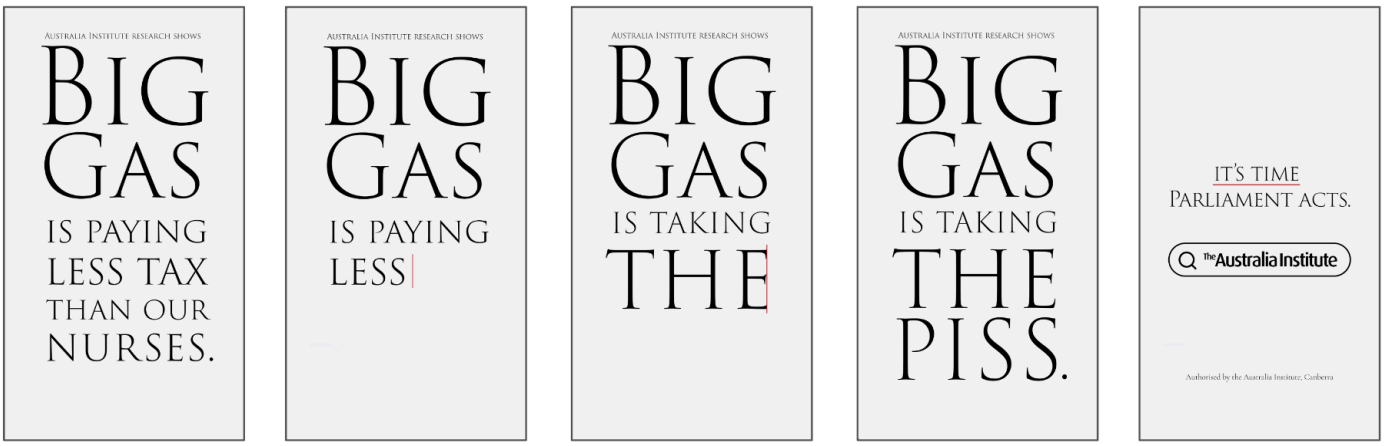
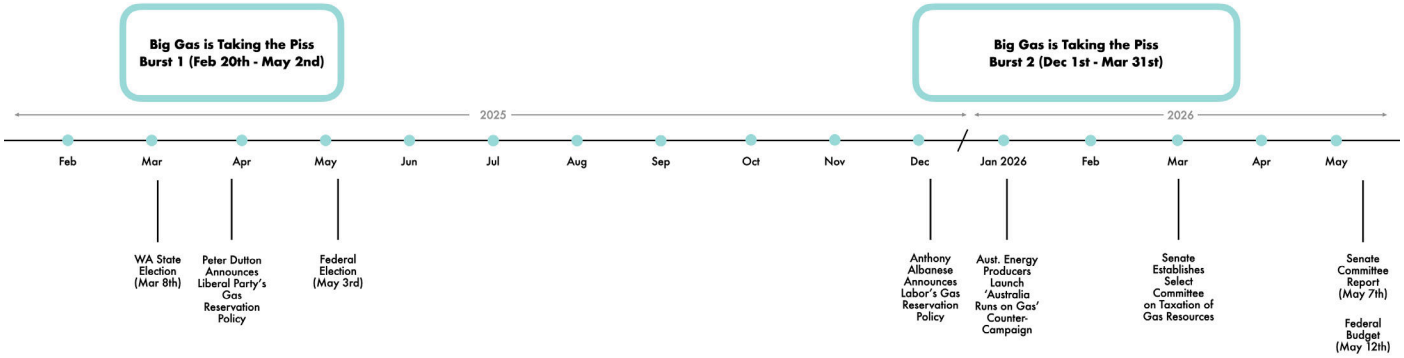


Big Gas is Taking the Piss - Campaign timeline and the national debate it shaped



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Q6. HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOUR CAMPAIGN WAS SUCCESSFUL?

On total paid media of $748,000 - against an industry that would spend $12 million on a single counter-campaign [1] – 'Big Gas is Taking the Piss' doubled its own audience, multiplied its fundraising, mobilised hundreds of thousands of Australians to act, and put its own language into the mouths of politicians, media and the public.

We lead with the results TAI can directly own. Polling and policy outcomes are presented last, honestly, as a movement the campaign helped catalyse alongside others.

RESULT 1: THE AUDIENCE AND FUNDING WE BANKED

For a think tank, audience, direct action and fundraising are the business results. The campaign transformed all three.

Subscribers.

- Objective: 72,000 to 100,000+.
- Result: more than doubled, 71,568 to 146,109, with both major surges aligned precisely to the campaign bursts [2]. Target exceeded by 46%.

Petition action.

- Objective: 100,000+ signatures (2x benchmark).
- Result: 228,435 Australians signed one of four Big Gas petitions [3]. The flagship petition ("Fix Australia's gas export problem") drew 125,020, the largest single petition in TAI's history and more than double the benchmark [4].

Donors.

- Objective: Double the average number of donors per gas-themed eDM (indexed baseline: 100).
- Result: Average number of donors per email more than quadrupled to an index of 426 [5].

Self-funding engine.

- Objective: generate donations sufficient to extend the campaign beyond Burst 1.
- Result: Donation yield from Big Gas-themed eDMs grew 8.6x from the pre-campaign annual baseline (index 860) [5]. This increased fundraising more than covered the $308,000 media cost of a second burst, turning a single-burst effort into a sustained, audience-funded pressure campaign.

RESULT 2: TAI BECAME THE DEFINING VOICE

- Objective: most-cited organisation in gas-tax coverage.
- Result: Meltwater analysis, campaign period vs baseline [6]:
  - the broader issue grew +713%;
  - mentions naming TAI grew +619%;
  - TAI-attributed reach grew +1,860%.

As coverage of the issue surged, TAI was named in roughly one in four of all mentions of it (11,100 against 45,400 for the issue overall), making it the most-cited advocacy organisation in the debate.

In a field that came to include a viral senator, a national content creator (Punters Politics), the ACTU, Greenpeace and both major parties, TAI became the most-cited source. The issue ultimately grew even faster than TAI's own footprint – the hallmark of a campaign that catalysed a debate bigger than its originator.

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RESULT 3: THE LANGUAGE ENTERED THE NATIONAL VOCABULARY

- Objective: move beyond TAI's channels into political debate and third-party advocacy.
- Result: Before the campaign, neither "Big Gas" nor "taking the piss" was established as a frame for Australia's gas debate. After launch, the campaign's exact language was used repeatedly in Federal Parliament, by Greens senators and independents across both chambers [11]. Beyond Parliament: Senator Jacqui Lambie directly referenced the campaign on camera [12]; Greenpeace ran a campaign titled "Stop Big Gas" [8]; Conservation Council of WA titled an event after it [13]; the PM named the campaign [7]; the Resources Minister said TAI's framing was "taken up with great gusto" and separately accused TAI of cherry-picking its research on ABC TV [14] - a cabinet minister attacking a think tank by name, twice, across different outlets. Across mainstream reporting, the campaign's own "big gas" naming was among the most frequent key phrases Meltwater captured [6].
- Most tellingly: independent post-budget focus groups found voters spontaneously repeating campaign messages - "they don't pay anything," "we're giving it away for free" - described as "very rare" [15].

With the campaign's words coming out of senators' and voters' mouths unprompted – the idea had outgrown the media buy.

RESULT 4: THE INDUSTRY RESPONDED

Nothing validates agenda penetration like the opponent reacting. In early 2026, the Australia Energy Producers (AEP) launched a $12 million counter-campaign ("Australia Runs On Gas") - 16:1 against TAI's media budget of $748,000 [16]. The industry treated TAI as a combatant.

RESULT 5: PUBLIC OPINION MOVED (CORROBORATING EVIDENCE)

We present polling as corroborating evidence, not a shift the campaign claims to own on its own (see Q8).

Objectives:

- Contribute to majority national agreement (>50%) that Australia exports too much gas - a question never tested nationally, on an issue with no prior public salience.
- Contribute to majority support (>50%) for gas tax reform among voters of every major party.

Results:

- Agreement that "Australia exports too much gas": 62.4% (Apr 2026), with strong agreement 34.7% [17].
- Agreement that "Gas corporations should pay a flat 25% tax on gas exports": 71.8% (Apr 2026) [18], cross-partisan - Labor 79.7%, Liberal 53.5%, One Nation 69.7%, Greens 77.1% [19].

RESULT 6: THE MOVEMENT THE CAMPAIGN HELPED CATALYSE

The campaign hasn't passed legislation yet. But it has been an early and material force in a movement that reshaped the political agenda.

Since the campaign launched in February 2025:

- Apr 2025: Then Opposition Leader Peter Dutton proposed a gas export tax in the lead up to the May 2025 Federal Election [20].
- Dec 2025: Albanese announced a Domestic Gas Reservation Scheme - the first east coast structural constraint on exports in Australian history [21]. On May 8th, the Government confirmed this scheme would commence on 1 July 2027 [22].
- Mar 2026: Senate established the Select Committee on Taxation of Gas Resources [23].
- May 2026: the Committee reported "substantial evidence that Australians want a fair return" [24].
- May 2026: SA Premier Malinauskas told gas executives the push "is cutting through" [25].
- And, while a Gas Export Tax was not included in the May 2026 budget, it remains an ongoing policy discussion [26].

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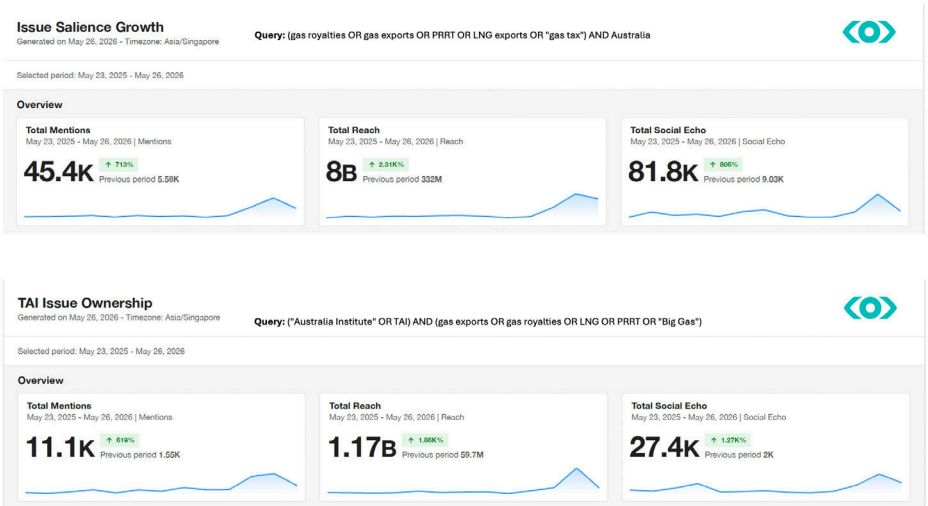
Footnotes: [1] AFR, 23 May 2026. [2] TAI subscriber records. [3] TAI NationBuilder – de-duplicated records. [4] TAI NationBuilder. [5] TAI fundraising records. Per-email and per-donor metrics indexed to protect commercially sensitive data. Pre-campaign baseline = 100. Donor response index 426 = 4.3x growth. Donation yield index 860 = 8.6x growth. Average donation index 88 = slight decline per donor, offset by volume growth. [6] Meltwater analysis. Reporting window: May 2025–May 2026. Campaign launched February 2025; the comparison period therefore includes early campaign effects, making reported growth figures conservative. [7] AFR, 23 May 2026. [8] Greenpeace, Nov 2025. [9] AFR, 23 May 2026. [10] TAI media monitoring, May 2026. [11] Examples drawn from Federal Hansard, 2025–26. [12] Campaign Brief / B&T / Mumbrella, Apr 2025. [13] CCWA, Mar 2026. [14] AFR, 23 May 2026 / ABC TV. [15] AFR, 23 May 2026. [16] Comms Declare / Mirage, 7 May 2026. [17] uComms Apr 2026. [18] uComms Apr 2026. [19] uComms Apr 2026. [20] Crikey, May 2025 [21] Joint Media Release, 22 Dec 2025. [22] Aust. Govt. Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 8 May 2026. [23] Senate Hansard, 30 Mar 2026. [24] Senate Select Committee Report, 7 May 2026. [25] TAI communication, May 2026. [26] TAI communication, May 2026.

CHARTS/IMAGES SUPPORTING CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

TAI active subscribers by quarter, Jan 2025–Apr 2026

Date	Active TAI Subscriber Count	Change From Previous Period
Jan 1st 2025	71,568	
Apr 1st 2025	117,867	46,299 (+64%)
Jul 1st 2025	112,696	-5,171 (-4.4%)
Oct 1st 2025	100,942	-11,754 (-10.4%)
Jan 1st 2026	104,475	3,533 (+3.5%)
Apr 1st 2026	146,109	41,634 (+39.9%)

Meltwater - Overall Issue Salience Growth vs TAI Issue Ownership



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Meltwater - Most Frequent Key Phrases



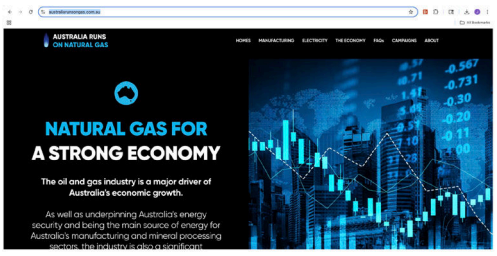
FINANCIAL REVIEW

Inside the online army fighting the gas tax war (and it's not over)

How a teacher-turned-podcaster, a heterodox economist and a rugby player sparked a groundswell of discontent.

"The Australia Institute have run this campaign," Albanese told Perth radio host Oliver Peterson this month. "But they need to be fair dinkum about it as well. They need to be honest that gas companies paid $22 billion of tax last year, that they pay royalties, that they pay company tax as well as PRRT. And the PRRT we reformed in our first term. That's something that, you know, we didn't go to the election in 2022 saying we would do. We did it. It was the right thing to do. And that will mean that over a period of time, revenue increases from that measure."

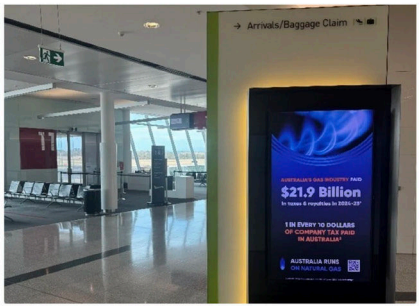
Last week, Resources Minister Madeline King was asked whether Australia gets "more from beer". "That is not true," she responded. "And that is some spin that the Australia Institute has really taken upon itself to spin into institutions right around the country, such as media players like yourselves. And it's been taken up with great gusto, with little or zero critical thought applied to the figures they produce."











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Q7. WAS THE CAMPAIGN A GOOD INVESTMENT?

For a not-for-profit advocacy campaign, return on investment must be evaluated at three levels: efficiency, disproportionate impact, and social return.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

On a $798,000 total campaign budget, the campaign delivered measurable action at a cost most paid acquisition could not match [1]:

- ~$3.50 per petition signatory (228,435 signatures).
- ~$10.71 per net new subscriber (74,541 net new; 71,568 to 146,109).
- ~$1.27 per organic view (627,700 organic views) - before counting paid reach or 800,000+ TAI website pageviews.

And the campaign substantially funded its own continuation: donation yield grew to 8.6x the pre-campaign baseline (index 860) and comfortably covered the $308,000 second burst - the audience paid for the campaign to keep running.

TAI wasn't trying to make money. It was trying to change the national conversation. That it nearly paid for itself in the process says something.

DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

The campaign's owned proofs (Q6) - +1,860% TAI-attributed reach, language in Parliament, voters repeating it unprompted - were delivered against an opponent spending $12 million on a single counter-campaign, a 16:1 media spend disadvantage [2]. When an opponent outspends you 16-to-1 and the public still adopts your language, the investment has returned far more than it cost.

SOCIAL RETURN

TAI modelling estimates a 25% export tax would generate ~$17 billion/year [3]. The campaign didn't deliver that tax. But it contributed - alongside others - to conditions producing a Gas Reservation Scheme, a Senate inquiry, and bipartisan acknowledgement the settings are untenable. Even a fractional attribution of the policy value vastly exceeds $798,000.

The more measurable return: TAI went from 72,000 supporters and limited advocacy capacity to 146,000 supporters, a proven fundraising engine, and the infrastructure to maintain pressure indefinitely.

Footnotes: [1] Cost ratios on $748,000 total paid media (TAI media records) against the action volumes in Q6; donation total from TAI fundraising records. [2] Meltwater. [3] TAI modelling.

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Q8. DEMONSTRATE THAT THE RESULT WAS NOT DUE TO OTHER FACTORS

ISOLATING RESULT 1: AUDIENCE, FUNDRAISING AND ACTION

The shape of subscriber growth carries the central isolation argument.

Subscribers rose ~46,000 during Burst 1 (71,568 in January to 117,867 in April 2025). They then decayed by ~17,000 across the inter-burst period (April to October 2025) despite a worsening cost-of-living crisis, the post federal election cycle, and TAI's other advocacy continuing in market. Burst 2 drove a second surge of ~45,000 (October 2025 to April 2026, reaching 146,109).

If background factors were driving the growth, the curve would have accumulated steadily across 16 months. It rises tightly with the campaign's paid activity, decays without it, and rises again when paid activity resumes. That pattern points to the campaign as primary driver of subscriber growth, not the beneficiary of broader tailwinds.

On donor patterns. Donor response per email more than quadrupled (index 426) while average donation declined slightly (index 88). That pattern indicates broadened acquisition of new supporters, not deeper extraction from existing ones. Background-factor growth would have shown the opposite - same donor count, larger gifts.

On petition action. All four Big Gas petitions launched aligned to campaign bursts.

ISOLATING RESULTS 2-6: THE BROADER DEBATE

The shift in national debate had multiple contributors.

THE OTHER FACTORS

- David Pocock's viral video (December 2025): his Senate estimates exchange - beer excise raises more than the PRRT - drew ~8 million Instagram views [1] and renewed attention to the debate.
- Konrad Benjamin / Punters Politics: a following of hundreds of thousands translating policy into accessible language, reaching demographics TAI's channels couldn't [2].
- Cost-of-living crisis: gas prices had tripled; energy affordability was the defining election issue and this only intensified as the conflict in Iran took hold - a significant tailwind.
- Civil society: Climate Council, ACTU, Greenpeace and AYCC all supported reform.

Six points show the campaign was an early and material force among them.

1. **The campaign was first.** Burst 1 launched February 2025 - before Dutton's policy (April), Greenpeace (November), Pocock's video (December) and Benjamin's peak (late 2025). The Lowy Institute added a gas-exports question for the first time in 21 years in its 2025 poll [3].
2. **The research came from TAI.** The AFR confirmed TAI was "the very first to compare the PRRT to beer excise" - in May 2023 [4]. That frame was tested in the baseline (65% convincing), built into the OOH, and published before Pocock used it [5]. Benjamin "more frequently cites the Australia Institute" [4]. Greenpeace used TAI proof points verbatim [6].
3. **The language didn't exist before.** "Big Gas" and "taking the piss" had not been established as a frame for the gas debate before the campaign. The campaign gave the issue an identity sticky enough for others to build on.
4. **TAI became the most-cited named voice in the debate.** As the issue grew +713%, TAI's own named mentions grew +619% and its attributed reach grew +1,860% [7]; TAI was named in roughly one in four of all mentions of the issue – the most-cited advocacy organisation in the field, not a passenger on others' momentum.
5. **Other TAI activity.** TAI did run other gas-related communications during the period. None carried comparable media investment, national reach or sustained flight. Big Gas is Taking the Piss was TAI's only sustained national campaign across both bursts.
6. **The people in the room said so.** The PM: "The Australia Institute have run this campaign" [8]. The Resources Minister: "(TAI's campaign has been) taken up with great gusto" [9]. A Labor operative: "it's fuelling a movement that's extremely hard for the government to ignore" [10].

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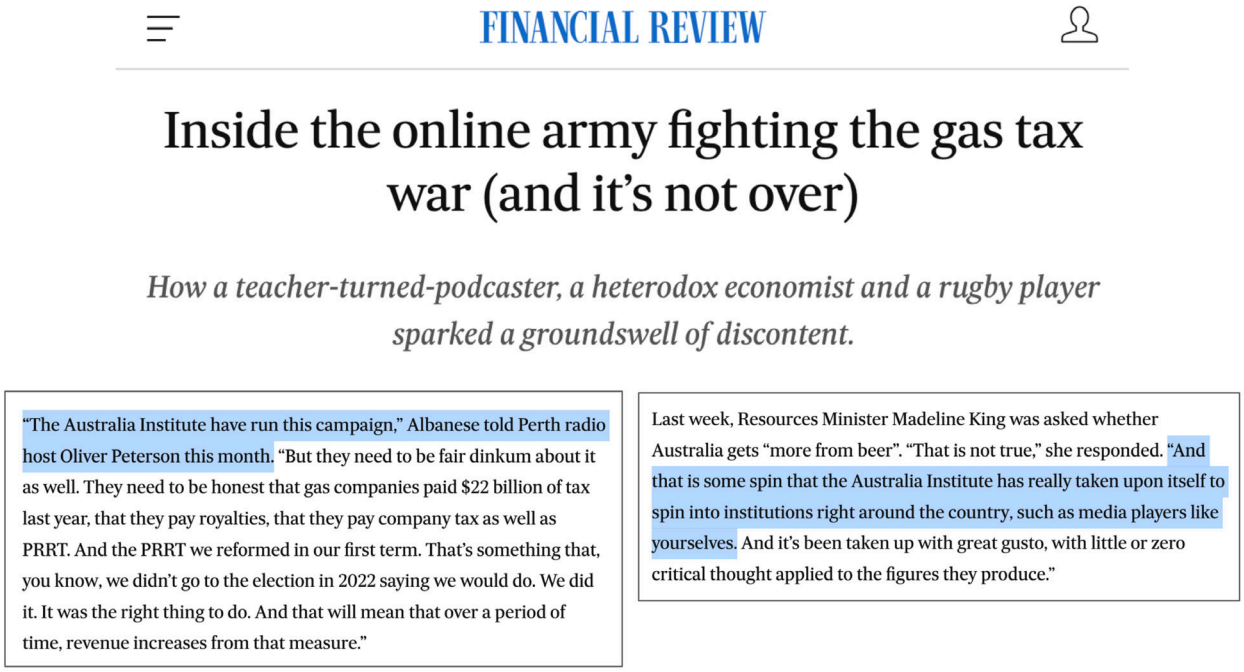
THE HONEST FRAMING

TAI provided the research. The campaign gave it emotional resonance and a vernacular identity. Others amplified it - using TAI's data, proof points and, in documented cases, TAI's exact words. On the evidence the campaign can directly own - being first, media share, public action, language adoption and industry response - it did exactly that.

Footnotes: [1] AFR, 23 May 2026. [2] AFR, 23 May 2026. [3] Lowy Institute Poll 2025. [4] AFR, 23 May 2026. [5] Pocock Media Release, 2 Mar 2026. [6] Greenpeace, Nov 2025. [7] Meltwater. [8] AFR, 23 May 2026. [9] AFR, 23 May 2026. [10] AFR, 23 May 2026. [11] TAI communication, May 2026.

TAI active subscribers by quarter, Jan 2025–Apr 2026

Date	Active TAI Subscriber Count	Change From Previous Period
Jan 1st 2025	71,568	
Apr 1st 2025	117,867	46,299 (+64%)
Jul 1st 2025	112,696	-5,171 (-4.4%)
Oct 1st 2025	100,942	-11,754 (-10.4%)
Jan 1st 2026	104,475	3,533 (+3.5%)
Apr 1st 2026	146,109	41,634 (+39.9%)



FINANCIAL REVIEW

Inside the online army fighting the gas tax war (and it's not over)

How a teacher-turned-podcaster, a heterodox economist and a rugby player sparked a groundswell of discontent.

"The Australia Institute have run this campaign," Albanese told Perth radio host Oliver Peterson this month. "But they need to be fair dinkum about it as well. They need to be honest that gas companies paid $22 billion of tax last year, that they pay royalties, that they pay company tax as well as PRRT. And the PRRT we reformed in our first term. That's something that, you know, we didn't go to the election in 2022 saying we would do. We did it. It was the right thing to do. And that will mean that over a period of time, revenue increases from that measure."

Last week, Resources Minister Madeline King was asked whether Australia gets "more from beer". "That is not true," she responded. "And that is some spin that the Australia Institute has really taken upon itself to spin into institutions right around the country, such as media players like yourselves. And it's been taken up with great gusto, with little or zero critical thought applied to the figures they produce."

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Q9. GIVE CONTEXT TO BUDGET IN COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS.

Budget is less

Q10. GIVE CONTEXT TO THE BRAND'S OVERALL BUDGET.

Brand budget is more

Q11. MEDIA BUDGET ELABORATION

> Paid did a lot of the heavy lifting at prior to the WA and Federal Elections in early 2025, as well as in the lead up to the Federal Budget in early 2026 - $748,000 across TV, BVOD, OOH, newspaper and social.
>
> Owned was an important tool to amplify paid: TAI's email base, website, social channels and the dedicated petition pages converted attention into action and donations.
>
> Earned built throughout the life of the campaign, spiking in and around the lead up to the Federal Budget in early 2026 - TAI-attributed media reach grew +1,860%, with the campaign covered across the AFR, ABC, SMH, Sky News and Federal Parliament.
>
> Shared was the multiplier the campaign was engineered for: 627,700 organic views across TAI's and John Butler's channels, plus third-party adoption by Greenpeace, the CCWA, Senator Lambie and content creators including Punters Politics.

Q12. DESCRIBE OWNED MEDIA ACTIVITY

> TAI's email subscriber base, which grew to 146,109 as a result of the campaign.
>
> TAI's social channels are spearheaded by their X account (54,800 followers) and Instagram (166,000 followers)
>
> TAI's website - https://australiainstitute.org.au/

Q13. OUTLINE ANY SPONSORSHIPS

> N/A

Q14. OUTLINE COMMUNICATION TOUCHPOINTS

> BVOD
>
> SkyNews
>
> Large Format and Small Site OOH
>
> Truck Billboard - in and around Canberra CBD
>
> Social Media - Meta, YouTube
>
> Press - The Australian, Canberra Times

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