

OPINION

The green inner-city bogymen is a figment of the government's imagination



Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack.

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June 18, 2021

Deep in the laneways of the inner city lurks a very scary monster that wants to destroy Australia. It's true! I've spotted this treacherous ghoul myself, once at a bookshop and twice at a Lincraft. Am I to believe that this undying trash goblin was simply pursuing the bookshelves for its latest read or purchasing yarn to crochet its tiny dog even tinier socks? Unlikely story!

This week Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack exposed this sly devil while espousing the virtues of coal. “[Coal] pays for a lot of hospitals. It pays for a lot of schools,” he said. “It pays for a lot of barista machines that produces the coffee inner-city types sit around and drink and talk about the death of coal.”

Ah-ha! Those bloody city-dwelling, caffeine-guzzling, coal-hating devils are at it again, ruining the Australian economy and crushing the livelihoods of tens of thousands of hard-working Aussies by suggesting we phase out coal power generation “because it's the single biggest cause of greenhouse gas emissions”.

Except it wasn't "inner-city types" who suggested that at all. It was the G7, the world's largest (so-called) advanced economies, who last weekend announced a plan to end government support for new coal power plants. In fact, that plan was what Mr McCormack was responding to when he brought up the "inner-city types."

This, friends, is straight out of the Coalition's often-used "How to Deflect Questions About Our Increasingly Conspicuous Inaction on Climate Change by Slagging off Inner City Dwellers" playbook.

Rule one is to shrug off support for renewable energy as the frivolous musings of a small group of people who sit around all day sipping lattes and seeking to destroy something that they are too hypocritical to admit they benefit from. It doesn't matter that the seven most powerful countries in the world agree with them.



Not everyone who thinks climate change affects bushfires is a "raving lunatic".

Rule two is to call anyone who tries to point out the dire impact climate change has on bushfire seasons an "inner-city raving lunatic" as Michael McCormack did during the Black Summer bushfires. Never mind that one of the loudest voices in that chorus belonged to then NSW Rural Fire Service boss Shane Fitzsimmons, hardly an "inner city" stalwart and hardly a "raving lunatic".

Rule three is to declare that we "will not achieve a net-zero emissions target in the cafes, dinner parties and wine bars of our inner cities" in the hope that no one notices that we won't achieve it in Canberra either.

According to 2016 census data about 700,000 people live in the "inner city" (i.e. roughly five kilometres from a major capital's CBD). That's approximately 3 per cent of the Australian population.

Thing is, 60 per cent of Australians say they "view climate change as a serious and pressing problem. Seventy-one per cent say they somewhat or strongly support action to meet the Paris targets. Sixty-one per cent want Australia to achieve a net-zero emissions target by 2050.

It doesn't matter which poll you read, the majority of Australians want action on climate change and the majority of Australians don't live in the inner city. Something isn't adding up!

Turns out Mr McCormack has quite a bit in common with “inner-city types” namely a strong love of a good caffeinated beverage. “I want people to come to the regions – big enough in which to get a good cup of coffee, small enough to still care,” he told Sky News on June 16. Turns out latte-sipping is an activity enjoyed the country over.

So grab your flat white-with-two sugars Mick and have a chat with your average concerned citizen. The ones who want a cleaner, greener future for their children. You probably won't find them in the inner city though because that monster lives mainly in your imagination.

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