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Aussie power generators flunk carbon test: WWF

Eleven dinosaurs of Australia's power generating industry, including poor performers Rio Tinto, Alcoa and Intergen, are horribly unprepared for a low carbon future, a new report has shown.

According to the *2008 WWF-Australia Power Generators Carbon Future Score Card* almost half of the 19 generators audited fared very badly, with 11 companies rating two or less stars out of a possible five.

Despite knowing for 20 years that carbon emissions would have to be cut, the carbon footprints of the worst performing companies from power generation and mining interests remain enormous and extremely damaging.

In addition, many still have to make their pollution reduction targets publicly available and some compound this with virtually no investment in low emissions technology research.

"It's remarkable how these dinosaur companies can complain about their future and ask for hand-outs but do zero to reduce their emissions," WWF Development and Sustainability Program Manager Paul Toni said.

"For two decades there has been no wringing of hands, no worrying about the future or the impact on our environment, just business as usual, without a second thought for anything but short-term profits."

The scorecard reveals how much – or how little - the biggest power generators are spending of their record profits to introduce low emissions technology to help combat the threat of global warming.

The appalling results of companies such as Rio Tinto and Intergen are in stark contrast to industry leaders like Origin Energy, TRUenergy, Babcock and Brown, Transfield Infrastructure Services and Verve who scored five and four stars respectively. AGL, CS Energy and International Power scored reasonably well on three stars.

Companies with positive results have already lowered their emissions and are preparing for the future by aiming for low carbon targets and investing in research to assist them in getting there.

However, across the board, it is clear that many Australian power generators could do much better.

With the Garnaut interim report, *Target and Trajectories*, due for release this Friday, it is astonishing to discover that three quarters of those surveyed hadn't even developed their own low emissions targets.

"Our power generators need to focus on targets now, so they can focus on goals for the future," Mr Toni said. "A low carbon future is coming whether our power generation companies are ready or not. The time for our corporate leaders to sit on their hands has long gone."

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Fossil Fuel Power Generators Positioning for a Low Carbon Future

Firm ¹	Low Emission Generation Mix ²	Pollution Reduction Targets ³	Low-emission Research & Investment	Ranking out of 5 Stars
AGL	★	NIL	★ ★	★ ★ ★
Alcoa	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Babcock & Brown	★ ★	NIL	★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★
CS Energy	★	NIL	★ ★	★ ★ ★
Delta Electricity	NIL	NIL	★ ★	★ ★
Eraring Energy	NIL	NIL	★ ★	★ ★
Ergon Energy	★ ★	NIL	NIL	★ ★
HRL Limited	NIL	NIL	★ ★	★ ★
Intergen	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
International Power	★	NIL	★ ★	★ ★ ★
Loy Yang Power	NIL	NIL	★ ★	★ ★
Macquarie Generation	NIL	NIL	★ ★	★ ★
Origin Energy	★ ★	★	★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Rio Tinto	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Stanwell Corporation	NIL	NIL	★ ★	★ ★
Tarong Energy	NIL	NIL	★ ★	★ ★
Transfield Services Infrastructure Fund	★ ★	NIL	★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★
TRUenergy	★	★	★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★
Verve Energy	★ ★	NIL	★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★

¹ WWF wrote to each of the listed firms requesting information about the proportion of its electricity generation contributed by coal, gas and low emission sources of energy such as wind and solar power, and the extent of its investment in low emission electricity research and development. WWF thanks AGL, HRL Limited, Macquarie Generation, Transfield Services Infrastructure Fund, Stanwell Corporation Limited and Tarong Energy for their responses. In all other cases WWF relied on publicly available information such as annual reports, sustainability statements and the firm's website. Marubeni Corporation was inadvertently not contacted and is therefore not included.

² Low emission generation mix is scored as follows: 2 stars are awarded where more than 50% of total generating capacity is comprised of gas or renewable energy; 1 star is awarded where 10% to 50% of generating capacity is comprised of gas or renewable energy; no stars are awarded if less than 10% of total generating capacity is comprised of gas or renewable energy. Large hydroelectric generators are not included as they have limited opportunity to increase supply.

³ Publicly available quantified emission reduction targets receive 1 star.