

The Big Picture

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"News to use & bemuse"

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Could it be true?

JULIA Gillard has learned nothing from Kevin Rudd's failure -- she tells us the planet is under threat, but she cannot act until a political consensus is reached.

Labor's stand is riddled with hypocrisy and gimmicks.

The spin that crippled Rudd seems more intense under the new Prime Minister.

The proposed Citizens Assembly to assess the case for climate change is an unconscious Labor joke -- a grand focus group to conceal its leadership failure. [Australian](#)

Our democracy

In Eden-Monaro, sections of angry, undecided voters could dictate the fate of the nation. [CanberraTimes](#)

That Was The Week That Was

Governance + spin

Campaign focus on aspirational and apathetic voters [TheAge](#)

Extra \$18 m to support 24 MP s in retirement [Telegraph](#)

Moving forward to real action gets us nowhere [SMH](#)

Electoral roll makes a mockery of election [SMH](#)

Forestry/Food/Agriculture

Misleading ads back overseas suppliers [Mercury](#)

Climate/water/energy/resources/environment

Consumers quake at power bills [HeraldSun](#)

Gillard says she (ie. we) will pay to lose old cars [Australian](#)

Flak over Labor's climate plan [TheAge](#)

Health & education revolutions/communication/defence

NSW hospitals keep repeating same mistakes [Telegraph](#)

Govt plan to snoop on web use declared secret [SMH](#)

Dying of malnutrition in hospital [SMH](#)

Education system fails autistic kids [TheAge](#)

Economy/social/shelter/transport/free speech

New Melbourne/Albury 'high speed' rail line unsafe [TheAge](#)

Rail problems left untouched for years [TheAge](#)

Risks of double dip recession rising: Stiglitz [TheAge](#)

World & GFC

US spy system too big to control [TheAge](#)

BP tries to buy scientists' silence [SMH](#)

The war to control the internet [ICH](#)

How could this have happened?



Transocean is under scrutiny after it emerged that Deepwater Horizon's safety systems were off when it exploded. Photograph: Gerald Herbert/AP

Vital warning systems on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig were switched off at the time of the explosion in order to spare workers being woken by false alarms, a federal investigation has heard.

The revelation that alarm systems on the rig at the centre of the disaster were disabled – and that key safety mechanisms had also consciously been switched off – came in testimony by a chief technician working for Transocean, the drilling company that owned the rig.

Mike Williams, who was in charge of maintaining the rig's electronic systems, was giving evidence to the federal panel in New Orleans that is investigating the cause of the disaster on 20 April, which killed 11 people.

Williams told the hearing today that no alarms went off on the day of the explosion because they had been "inhibited". Sensors monitoring conditions on the rig and in the Macondo oil well beneath it were still working, but the computer had been instructed not to trigger any alarms in case of adverse readings.

Both visual and sound alarms should have gone off in the case of sensors detecting fire or dangerous levels of combustible or toxic gases.

The evidence of deliberate dilution of the rig's safety mechanisms is likely to have wide ramifications for BP and Transocean, the world's largest offshore drilling company. It switches the spotlight of blame away from BP and towards the subcontractor which took the decisions. Of the 126 crew on board the rig on 20 April, seven worked for BP and 79 for Transocean.

More on this informative story of corporate responsibility at the [Guardian](#)