
— Rear Window

Andrew Forrest collects the whole set

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Columnist



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In the past week, mining baron and ecological enigma **Andrew Forrest** has been back in his natural habitat: the headlines.

Reduced to a bit player at the Albanese government's theatrical Jobs and Skills Summit, Forrest left Parliament House on Friday afternoon in a Logan Roy-style convoy of black limousines and took off in his Bombardier 7500 before the Prime Minister had even located his Rabbitohs scarf and jumped in CI.

Speaking of convoys, this week, Forrest's beef business Harvest Road emerged as an objector to [<https://www.afr.com/companies/mining/forrest-sees-red-over-ellison-s-3b-iron-ore-project-20220903-p5bf6c>] the proposed land shipping route for Mineral Resources' Onslow Iron project, which will haul ore on driverless trucks along the fenceline of Forrest's Minderoo cattle station in the Pilbara.

Forrest is trying to obstruct rival **Chris Ellison** from getting his product to port using the pretence of the impinged-upon serenity of a few choice cows.

This is after spending a decade railing indefatigably against Rio Tinto and BHP – taking them all the way to the High Court – when the iron ore majors blocked fledgling Fortescue's access to their Pilbara rail lines their shareholders had built and paid for.



Fortescue boss Andrew Forrest has accumulated nearly 2.9 million hectares of pastoral land in Western Australia. **Getty**

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Forrest would have been a formidable advocate at the bar. He can prosecute either side of any argument compellingly. He's occasionally liable to argue both of them at the same time.

Incidentally, Forrest has now accumulated nearly 2.9 million hectares of pastoral land in Western Australia, so the boundaries of his properties are becoming increasingly difficult to avoid.

The state's Land Administration Act forbids the minister from allowing any person to own more than 500,000 hectares unless the minister is satisfied it does not result in a concentration of ownership against the public interest. The minister must be remarkably accommodating.



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Also this week, Forrest appointed [<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/forrest-hires-zibelman-to-advise-on-energy-20220906-p5bfrm>] the previous head of the Australian

Energy Market Operator **Audrey Zibelman** to the board of his Squadron Energy. With a name like that, she ought to have been a cult novelist.

Marvel as the green energy visionary builds out his royal court. He acquires a regulator here, a former central bank deputy governor there, an ex-prime minister [<https://www.afr.com/rear-window/malcolm-turnbull-veers-off-andrew-forrest-s-script-20211110-p597u0>], an ex-premier, a retired spy chief [<https://www.afr.com/rear-window/if-only-nick-warner-was-still-spy-chief-20220501-p5ahlg>]; even **Andrew Liveris** [<https://www.afr.com/rear-window/more-brilliant-ideas-from-andrew-liveris-20211115-p5994v>], who transcends the descriptors of ordinary men.

It's like Forrest is buying McHappy Meals to collect the whole set of power figurines. Plausibility props for his biblical mission, some of them more plausible than others. With the right circle of eminent disciples on retainer, the emperor should never need any clothes at all.

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