

Editorial

Importing Russian oil is pouring blood on troubled waters. It's time to act

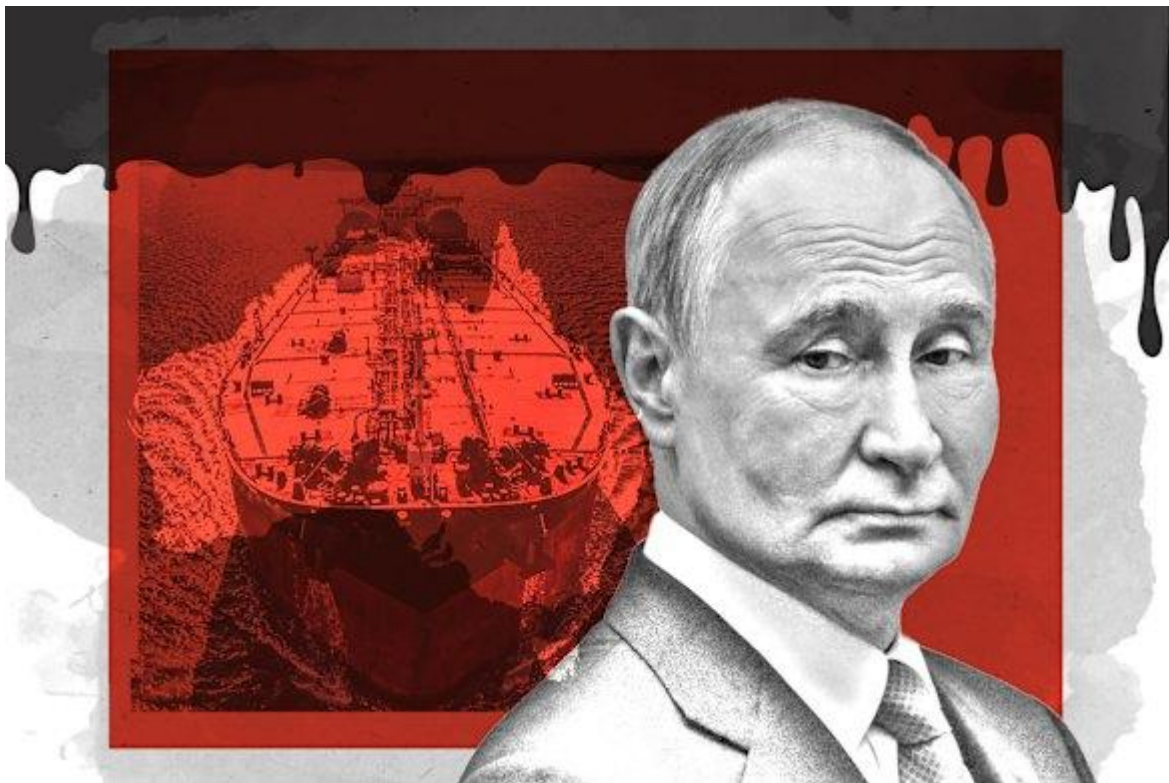


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Blood oil: A new series by the Herald and The Age.

The *Herald* today begins Blood Oil, our series showing how oil imported to Australia is helping Russian President Vladimir Putin pursue his evil war on Ukraine. Australian motorists, through no fault of their own, are inadvertently aiding the bloodshed.

Of equal concern, [our retirement savings may also be funding Russia's war effort](#), with some of the country's biggest superannuation funds accused of investing in South-East Asian companies and ports distributing the tainted Russian oil.

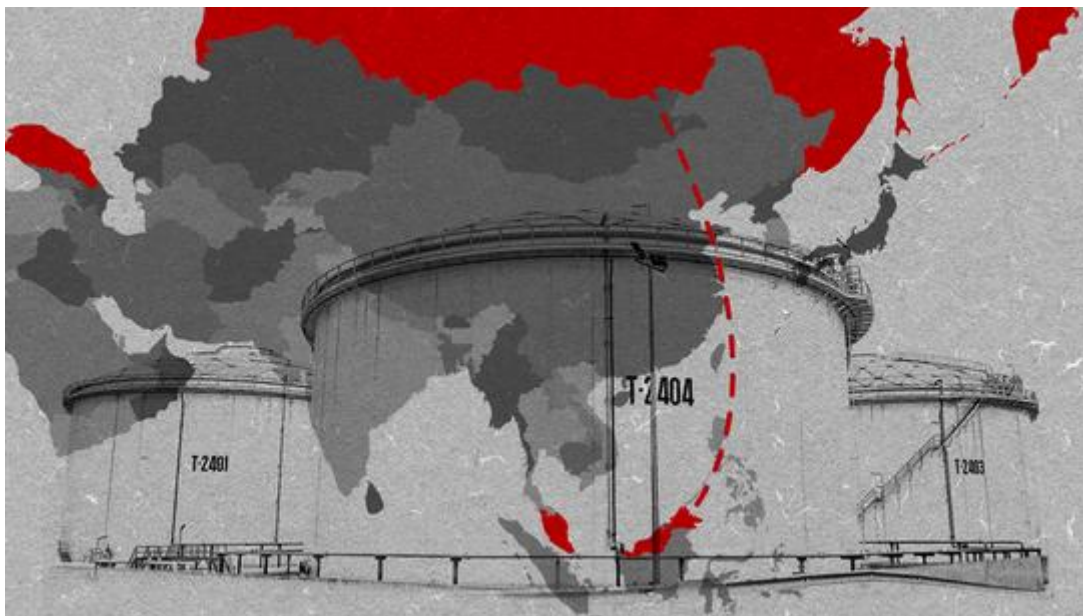


Australia is helping to fund Vladimir Putin's war machine.

Australia banned the import of Russian crude in early 2022 when Ukraine was invaded, but a loophole is allowing the import of oil products of Russian origin if they have been refined in a third country. Russia and the big oil companies have scrambled to find a way around these measures by “laundering” the oil through refineries in India, Malaysia, Singapore and China.

Some refineries have started to read the room and look elsewhere for oil. [Our Europe correspondent David Crowe reports](#) that Reliance Industries, the largest Indian supplier of fuel to Australia, has vowed to stop using Russian cargoes to produce petrol and diesel for our market after the global backlash. We will see if the promise is delivered.

This oil trade is now the next flashpoint in the Australian debate about the war in Ukraine. Superannuation companies and their owners ducked for cover when we sought to ask them about their ethical investments and the Albanese government is doing little to ensure Australian businesses do not use supply chains helping to fund the Putin regime. Oil companies say they are doing the right thing and comply with the trade sanctions and do not buy from Russia, but choose to ignore the issue of the oil being processed in third countries and on-sold to Australia.



For its part, Canberra has been lethargic about closing the loopholes and even eschewed joining recent moves by the European Union and Britain to crack down on imports of oil products refined in third countries from Russian-origin crude.

These moves by some of our biggest allies to toughen their sanctions on Russia to stop the trade and starve Putin of hard currency are in stark and telling contrast with the Albanese government’s lack of action.

Australia imported \$3.8 billion of oil refined from Russian crude between February 2023 and June 2025 and Ukraine's ambassador to Australia, [Vasyl Myroshnychenko](#), estimates the loophole means Australians have sent at least \$2 billion to Russia since it invaded.



Loopholes are allowing Australia to help fund Vladimir Putin's evil war machine. The Herald and The Age Blood Oil series is urging our government to act.

Meanwhile, Australia has provided \$1.76 billion aid to Ukraine, including military, humanitarian and direct financial assistance.

The Albanese government cannot remain asleep at the wheel while our petrol pumps are war profiteering for Moscow and should demand petroleum importers and suppliers guarantee they source and import products free of Russian oil.

Of course, ensuring the spirit and reality of the Russian sanctions are one and the same may have a minor impact on Australian fuel prices and force super funds to reconsider investing ethically. But, the *Herald* shares the view of brave Ukrainian advocates that the costs pale when compared to the counterproductive and criminally stupid policy of funding friend and foe at war.