

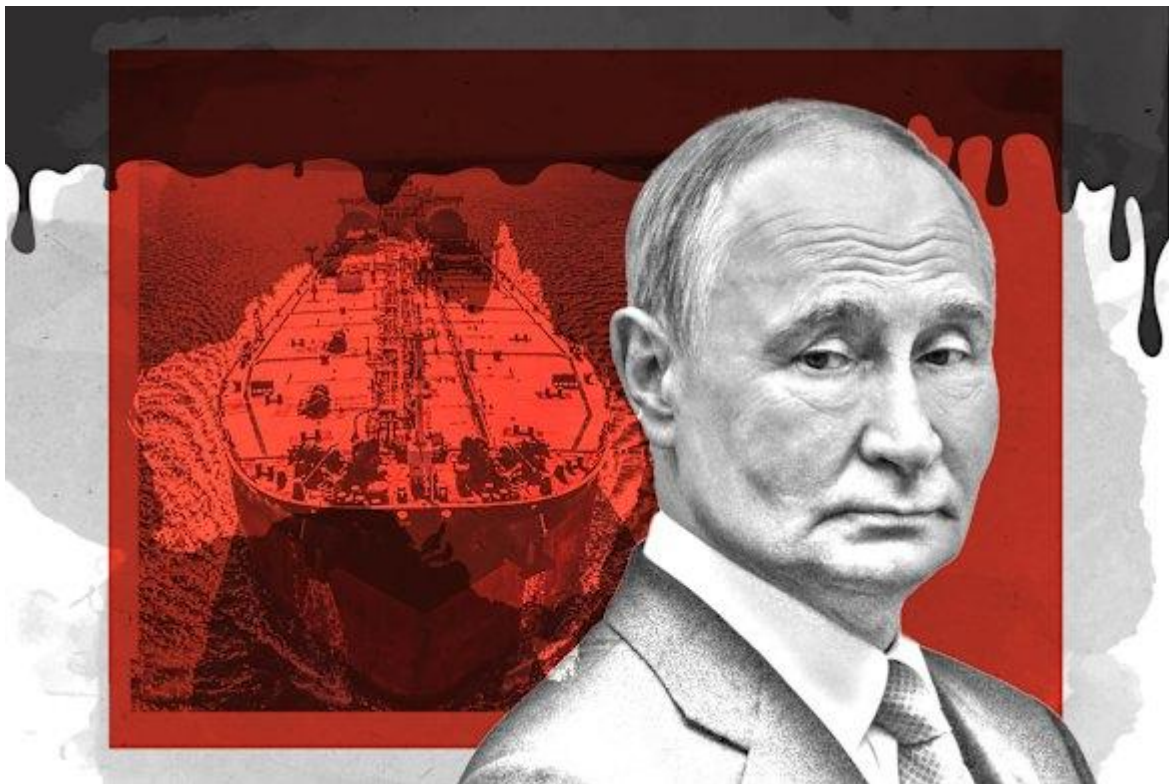
# It's time to stop paying Putin



By [Bevan Shields](#), Editor, Sydney Morning Herald, November 21, 2025

One of the great things about editing a newspaper is being able to throw a spotlight on issues that might otherwise struggle to attract attention – and keep the glare firmly fixed until you achieve a result.

We have a great track record of that at the *Herald*. Recently, we have revealed systemic corruption in the CFMEU via our [“Building Bad” investigation](#). We have also pushed the federal government to fix the leaking roof at the National Gallery of Australia via a [“Save our NGA” campaign](#), lobbied hard for an overhaul of poker machine policy in NSW through the [“State of Addiction” series](#), and lifted the lid on underquoting in the Sydney property market with the [“Bidding Blind” probe](#).



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

The *Herald* this week launched our latest campaign, [“Blood Oil”](#), showing how oil imported to Australia is helping Russian President Vladimir Putin pursue his evil war on Ukraine. **It's sick, it's wrong and it needs to end. It's time to stop paying Putin.**

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.



The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, a non-profit group based in Europe, estimates that between February 2023 and June 2025, Australians bought \$3.8 billion worth of petrol and diesel produced from Russian crude and refined in India alone, generating about \$2 billion in tax revenue for Moscow.

Shamefully, Australia has recently been the world’s largest importer of refined fuels made from Russian crude. And at a time when we should be cutting out any reliance on Russian products, Australian imports from Indian refineries using Russian crude more than doubled between September and October.

Ukraine’s ambassador to Australia, Vasyl Myroshnychenko, thinks it’s possible that Australian consumers, industry and perhaps even the Australian Defence Force have never consumed more Russian-derived fuel than they do today.

“It seems immoral that Australia’s \$2 billion in payments to Russia exceeds its \$1.5 billion of support to Ukraine,” [he recently wrote](#) in the *Herald*.