

Mining and Industry Projects
Dept. of Planning and Infrastructure
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19 September 2012

This is a submission objecting to the proposed Incitec Pivot Ammonium Nitrate manufacturing facility Kooragang Island (SSD-4986) in Newcastle.

The Incitec Pivot Ammonium Nitrate Manufacturing Facility proposal must not be approved due to many significant and unacceptable risks and impacts on communities surrounding Kooragang Island.

These risks and impacts include:

Explosion Risks – Hazards

The storage of large amounts of ammonium nitrate in one area increases the explosion risk and the area affected by an explosion including injuries, deaths and damage to buildings.

The Incitec storage of 12,500 tonnes together with the Orica storage of 9,000 tonnes adds up to a massive 21,500 tonnes with an explosive power of around half the atomic bomb that fell on Hiroshima. No matter how small the chance of an explosion this catastrophic consequence of such an explosion is totally unacceptable to communities.

Ammonium nitrate can explode under a range of conditions including fire, shock and contact with contaminants. I know there have been many accidental explosions worldwide despite precautions being taken to avoid explosions. I also know from the explosions even for smaller quantities as in the Toulouse explosion (300 tonnes) there were many injuries and damage to buildings up to 5 km from the plant.

The South Australian Government is trying to shift Incitec storage in Port Adelaide due to explosion risk for residents near the storage as outlined in a SA WorkCover and EPA reports. Such a massive concentration of ammonium nitrate storage within 800 m of residents is unheard of worldwide to my knowledge and is unacceptable to the community.

Air Pollution

The Incitec plant will also add to cumulative impacts on air quality in surrounding suburbs by releasing fine particles of ammonium nitrate from the Prill tower and

nitrous oxides from the nitric acid plant. Both these pollutants can affect the health of residents and we know that there are already exceedances for instance in Stockton of PM10 particles above the standard of 50 ug/m³.

We are already experiencing high levels of coal dust in suburbs surrounding Kooragang Island and proposed projects including T4 and Incitec will add more fine particles.

Noise Pollution

We are already experiencing excessive noise from Kooragang Island in Stockton. The current night time levels of noise are above the 45 dB standard for suburbs, being 49 to 51dB. The Incitec plant will further increase noise levels and this is totally unacceptable to the community.

The EIS calling for an increase in the allowable noise levels in regard to their project is insulting and totally unacceptable the community.

Traffic Impacts

The traffic is already a major problem on Kooragang Island which is a major link road and the amount of traffic associated with truck movements and general traffic with the plant will further add to the traffic problems being experienced.

The extra diesel truck movements will add to dangerous carcinogenic fine particles and nitrous oxides levels.

Employment impacts in Newcastle and Lower Hunter

I note that this plant will not be a big employer in the Hunter rather there will be only 60 people employed at the plant. The risk this plant brings to tens of thousands of people for a cheap source of ammonium nitrate for the mining industry for so few a jobs is not acceptable to the community.

Financial Impact to the State & Federal Economy

My understanding is that both the State & Federal Governments enjoy high financial income from the coal industry. If an explosion did take place on the Island we could see all the coal loaders & docks destroyed, this could bring the Hunter Valley coal industry to its knees and I would assume have a substantial effect on both the Federal + State income.

Is it worth the huge potential financial damage that could be caused to our Australian economy.