

# Glencore - Mount Owen Continued Operations

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Submission March 2015

## Introduction

The Hunter Region has long held the reputation as the powerhouse of the NSW economy and ranks highly as one of the most valued, diverse and resilient regions in Australia.

The Hunter Business Chamber is the largest regional business chamber in Australia and is now over 129 years old. The Chamber represents over 1800 member businesses to all levels of government. The Chamber is the peak industry association in the Hunter which represents all sectors of business in the region.

The Hunter Business Chamber welcomes the opportunity to provide a brief submission on the *Mount Owen Continued Operations Project*.

## Key Points

The Chamber strongly supports Glencore's development consent application for the *Mount Owen Continued Operations Project*. The approval of this development consent is vital to providing future capacity and flexibility to respond to changing market conditions.

The Chamber notes that the plans will extend the life of its Mount Owen and Ravensworth East mines, producing 92 million tonnes of coal over the next 18 years and providing support to the local and regional economies.

It is the Chamber's understanding that key aspects of the project include: an approximate 382 hectare extension of the North Pit in a southerly direction; continued use of Ravensworth East voids for tailings emplacement as well as in-pit within the North Pit; and infrastructure upgrades including a rail overpass and new dual lane bridge over Bowmans Creek as well as the construction of an additional rail spur and upgrades to the existing CHPP and coal stockpile facilities.

We acknowledge the stakeholder consultation that has occurred and the subsequent Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) lodged with the Department of Planning and Environment.

The proponent's commitment to socially and environmentally responsible development is acknowledged with due attention to matters raised through the consultation phase around air quality, noise, blasting and traffic.

The Chamber also notes the importance of proactive strategies in regard to minimising impacts and addressing noise, air quality, blasting, water resources, aboriginal cultural heritage, traffic and transport, social and visual impacts.

The Chamber strongly endorses the sentiments expressed in the EIS regarding the importance of the economic returns of the project for its workforce, suppliers, and local and regional communities.

Of crucial importance is the acknowledgement of the protection of ongoing employment for the current workforce and the potential to create greater workforce inclusion throughout the construction phase. Approval of this development application will provide greater economic sustainability for employees and their families as well as more broadly throughout the supply chain in the Hunter region economy. While the industry is currently experiencing a downturn it is imperative to have appropriate approvals in place to provide the necessary operational flexibility for buoyancy.

The Chamber is pleased to provide its overall support to progressing the delivery of the *Mount Owen Continued Operations* project as vital contribution to the growth and sustainability of our region with subsequent positive influence on the state economy.

## Contact

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