



**Mining &
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Union**

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Secretary: Shane Thompson

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Energy and Resource Assessments
NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
Via Major Projects Planning Portal

To whom it may concern,

Submission in support of HVO North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826681) and HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826621)

The Mining and Energy Union Northern Mining and NSW Energy District (MEU) is proud to represent coal mine workers in the northern coalfields of NSW, including at the Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) complex.

We strongly support the approval of the HVO North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826681) and the HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826621) (collectively, the Project).

The Project extends the operation of HVO's North pit through to the end of 2045 and the South pit to the end of 2042. The extension of mining at HVO will protect approximately 1500 well-paid jobs and the economic viability of hundreds of supply chain businesses for a further two decades.

The Project is expected to deliver net economic benefit of \$5.7 billion to NSW including:

- Over \$2 billion in coal royalties to the NSW Government
- Over \$1 billion net benefit to workers reflecting higher rates of pay in mining than other sectors
- Nearly \$2 billion net benefit to NSW businesses supplying goods and services to the project.

Without approval, HVO North would close at the end of 2026, with mining at HVO South concluding in March 2030. With major closures like Mt Arthur already scheduled for 2030, the premature end of mining at HVO would compound local socioeconomic impacts in the Hunter, particularly for the communities of Muswellbrook and Singleton.

The retention of the HVO jobs through the 2030s and into the 2040s would provide a vital lifeline for the Hunter community during a period where a significant number of mining operations in the Hunter Valley are expected to close. In a broader context of structural economic change – and the projected overall reduction in coal mining activity in the Hunter – HVO's extension would provide continuity of well-paid mining employment in the region while new industries that are planned for the Hunter as part of state and federal government reindustrialisation initiatives are under development.

HVO exports high-grade coal that supports the energy needs of our overseas trading partners. As Australia and the world transition to a lower emissions economy, mines like HVO will be relied upon

to safeguard the energy security of our trading partners and deliver the revenue and regional economic activity that NSW needs to invest in new clean energy industries and fulfil its commitments to regional development and proactive industry policy.

HVO have considerably amended their original application in response to government and community concerns. The revised submission is substantially less than the original proposal, both in scale and duration. These amendments reflect a constructive and practical approach to responsible mining and demonstrate that HVO has been prepared to make significant concessions to address legitimate issues raised during the assessment process.

Key changes include:

- Reducing the project's proposed life extension at HVO North from 2050 to 2045, and at HVO South from 2045 to 2042 – a significant shortening of the mine life compared to the original plan.
- Lowering the total amount of coal extraction, with notable reductions in overall tonnage across the life of the project.
- Avoiding extraction from higher-gas areas, thereby reducing potential safety and emissions risks.
- Reducing the annual coal extraction rate at HVO South, further limiting the intensity of mining compared to the original proposal.
- Taken together, these amendments represent a material scaling back of the project, in both its overall footprint and its operating life.

Although the MEU would support the original longer timelines seeing mining at HVO continue until 2050, we acknowledge that these amendments are well-considered, responsive to NSW Government requests and strike a balance between economic and social benefits and environmental concerns.

The HVO Continuation Project exemplifies how coal mining in the Hunter can continue responsibly, providing much needed certainty at a time of rapid change. Its approval will help maintain the energy security of our global trading partners, support ongoing well-paid jobs and regional economic activity, deliver ongoing coal royalties to fund NSW essential services and economic transformation, while also complying with national and NSW emissions-reduction requirements.

Yours sincerely,



Robin Williams
District President