

# **Cobbora Coal Project – Preferred Project Report**

***Application No: 10-0001***

## **Submission to the Planning Assessment Commission**

Submitted by:  
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NSW 2042  
7<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Major Planning Assessments  
Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney 2001

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

As a resident of New South Wales, I wish to **object** in the strongest possible terms to this appalling proposal for a number of reasons.

## **RENEWABLE ENERGY AND GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION**

Extracting and burning this amount of coal flies in the face of any attempts to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.

It is now well-established that burning coal at the current rate is resulting in a steadily increasing amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and this in turn is leading to global warming and climate instability. Scientific predictions made in increasing detail over the past decades are now being confirmed by actual observations as well as our experiences of extreme weather events. These are already costing governments millions (billions, world-wide) of dollars in assistance and rebuilding costs, as well as losses to the economy.

Predictions of the demand for electricity in NSW over the next ten years are significantly overstated. Demand has dropped significantly since this project was proposed. Even if demand were to rise, there is no reason for it to be met with coal-fired energy, and every reason why alternative energy sources should be sought.

Coal-fired power is no longer acceptable technology. Wind power has already been shown to be cost-compatible with coal power, and installation of wind generators will only get cheaper as the technology is taken up and refined even further. Additionally, domestic solar PV installations are already providing a significant contribution to the state's power needs, especially at peak demand times.

## **ECONOMIC ISSUES**

The project would be heavily subsidized by the NSW taxpayer, to an estimated total of \$3.4 billion over the lifetime of the project. It is quite unacceptable that the people of NSW should be forced to subsidise an operation that will cause so much

environmental damage, and do nothing whatsoever to reduce the state's ongoing dependence on coal-fired power, or to advance alternative, clean, renewable technologies.

This money would be better spent managing a transition away from this sunset industry, and developing the state's clean energy resources. While coal is still abundant in NSW, solar and wind energy are also in plentiful supply, and the technology to utilize them is well-developed now. With strong leadership, NSW could exploit the potential employment opportunities in the renewable energy sector, and achieve a transition to a vibrant renewable energy economy in a few years.

## **REGIONAL HEALTH AND RESOURCES ISSUES**

This proposal is to mine 20 million tonnes per year, but only just over half of the material extracted will be useable coal. The health impacts of extracting this poor quality material have not been fully researched.

Mining on this scale in this area will significantly impact the established local industries of wine growing and tourism, especially in times of drought as the coal extraction will compete for water with other users.

## **EXPORT ISSUES**

While it is envisioned that this poor-quality coal will be used for domestic purposes to allow export of higher-value black coal, this presumes an ongoing world demand for NSW coal exports. However, the price of black coal on the export market has also dropped below the projections used in this proposal, and trends in power generation by Australia's major customers suggest that demand will continue to fall in coming years.

## **SUMMARY**

Coal is yesterday's technology. Whilst our economy and way of life has prospered in the past on the plentiful supplies in NSW, we now know that this has come, and continues to come, at a dramatic cost to our future economy and way of life. **It is no longer acceptable to continue to mine or burn fossil fuels.**

If the commission recommends in favour of this proposal, it will lock NSW into decades more of yesterday's expensive, damaging, and polluting technology. It will deny NSW the opportunity to embrace modern power generation technology with its significant opportunities for employment, and commit us to rising greenhouse gas emissions and falling employment in the energy sector.

I urge the Commission to **reject** this proposal outright.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Dominic Case**  
**East Balmain**  
**7<sup>th</sup> March 2013**