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SUBMISSION IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED T4 PROJECT

I am a lifelong Newcastle resident who is actively involved in local environment groups (such as Hunter Community Environment Centre, Climate Action Newcastle and the Wilderness Society Newcastle); and I am the Environmental Representative on the recently established Newcastle Consultative Committee for the Environment (NCCCE). I, like thousands of Newcastle and Hunter residents, am strongly opposed to a fourth coal loader being built in Newcastle. There are many very good reasons why T4 should not be built; these are summarised under the following subheadings.

Climate Change

T4 will have a peak capacity of 120 megatonnes per year; this is approximately double the current peak export capacity in the port of Newcastle, and will double NSW's contribution to global climate change when the coal is burnt in overseas power stations. More than 288 million tonnes of carbon dioxide will be emitted from the coal exported from T4 at peak capacity; this is a significant contribution to global climate change.

The EA has adopted the 'business as usual' trajectory with minimal or no global mitigation, resulting in six degrees of warming by 2050, to make the contribution of T4 to seem lesser; this is grossly irresponsible and does not take into consideration the mitigation that is already happening in Australia and overseas, including in the countries that we currently export coal to. I note that the Republic of Korea has recently established an emissions trading scheme, which will help expedite its transition to renewable energy as it moves away from coal.

The severity and consequences of accelerating climate change is very well documented by the CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology, the International Panel for Climate Change and countless science academies and centres of learning worldwide. Many of these organisations are in concurrence that it is happening faster than previously predicted and the impacts will be far more serious than most people realise - potentially threatening the capacity of the planet to sustain human civilisation in its current form. To further contribute to climate change by approving - nay, actively encouraging - a development such as T4 - is grossly irresponsible act of governance and will be met with censure and dismay by everyone who thinks about the sustainability and future of our society.

Health Impacts of the Coal Loader, Stockpiles and Trains

Dust emissions from coal trains, coal stockpiles and coal loading operations have serious health impacts, particularly the fine particles (PM2.5 and finer). The EA only considers coal dust generated within 20 m each side of the rail corridor - this disregards the dispersal of fine particulates far beyond 20m. I have many friends who live in Tighes Hill, Maryville, Carrington and Mayfield East and

they almost constantly have fine coal dust on their houses, in their backyards and by inference in their children's lungs. The amount of dust generated by the existing three coal loaders is already too much; and there are already far too many coal trains travelling through port-side suburbs. To double coal train movements, and to double the amount of dust emissions that would occur at peak T4 capacity is totally unthinkable and the proposal should be rejected on these grounds alone, let alone all the other key reasons briefly outlined in this submission.

Environmental Health Impacts of the Development

The dredging and dumping of contaminant-laden sediment from the sites of the two swing basins is potentially an environmental disaster and will certainly have negative impacts on the endangered fauna species that are found on the development site and in the Ramsar listed wetlands adjacent to it. The fauna impact assessment in the EA has no grounds to dismiss the likely impacts as being 'not significant' - it is obvious that the report's authors have come to such a conclusion because, as consultants to PWCS, they do not wish to bite the hand that feeds them. Biodiversity offsetting is totally inappropriate for this site because it is habitat for migratory birds that land there year after year - they can't be told to go elsewhere for their foraging, roosting and nesting habitats.

The site has been a dumping ground for a cocktail of highly toxic contaminants for many decades. These contaminants are in the soil and groundwater and will almost certainly be release during dredging, earthworks and construction; and furthermore the colossal weight of the infrastructure will effectively 'squeeze' the soil and sediments beneath it, exacerbating the leaching of contaminants into the groundwater and subsequently into the Hunter River estuary. This is a ludicrously risky thing to do and port-side communities will not stand for it. It is now the 21st century, and citizens of a wealthy, first-world country such as ours demand first class environmental management which does not include contamination of groundwater or off-shore dumping of contaminated dredge spoil. I will continue to raise this issue in my role on the NCCCE.

Coal will not be economically viable in the very near future

Finally, there is no need for this piece of infrastructure, as the existing three coal loaders are currently operating 40% below capacity, and global demand for coal will shortly peak and begin to decline. It is obvious that the multinational giants Xstrata and Rio Tinto, who own PWCS, are trying to rush this development through so they can rip as much coal out of the ground while it is still profitable. They have seen the writing on the wall and know that coal will be dead within a few decades; the NSW government knows this too but wants to rake in what coal royalties it can. I urge the decision-makers in government and industry to think of the future of their children and grandchildren, and to put their future livelihoods above short-term greed.

Expansion of Mining in NSW

120 million tonnes of coal is the equivalent of 15 new mega pit coal mines in NSW, the majority or all of which will be located in the Hunter Valley and the Liverpool Plains. These communities are already feeling the negative health and environmental impacts of excess levels of open-cut coal mining. The extent of irreparable destruction wrought by open-cut coal mining is already becoming too much for human and ecological communities in the Upper Hunter; another 120 million tonnes worth of new mining activity is almost inconceivable and any government that could countenance this is grossly

irresponsible and thinking only of very short-term and short-lived economic gains at the expense of future generations and other species.

The devastating environmental impacts of open-cut mining has been well documented in recent years; and despite the mining industries' claims of 'best practice' remediation and rehabilitation of mine sites, the depth of extraction, total removal of living flora and fauna years of stockpiling soils means that no site can ever be the same again. Coal mining uses vast quantities of water for coal processing, dust suppression and equipment wash-down, sourced from local river systems such as the Hunter River in the Hunter Valley. Furthermore, open-cut mining substantially disrupts and contaminates regional groundwater systems, which are relied upon for ecosystem health as well as indirect and direct agricultural supply.

Enough is enough - the community of NSW has spoken and we demand that our elected government really listens to us on this issue and does not give T4 the green light.

Yours sincerely,

Zoe Rogers