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LEADING BUSINESS

Hunter Business Chamber

Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4

Submission May 2012

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Submission

The Hunter Business Chamber is the largest regional business chamber in Australia and is now over 126 years old. The Chamber represents approximately 900 member businesses to all levels of government.

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 has significant untapped capacity to grow in a sustainable manner and provides a highly desirable lifestyle and strong employment opportunities.

The Hunter Business Chamber welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Major Assessment process for Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4 (PWCS T4).

The Chamber is supportive of the construction and operation of a coal export terminal at Kooragang Island (including rail infrastructure and coal receipt, stockyard, conveyor system, wharves, berths and other facilities).

The Port of Newcastle is renowned as the world's largest coal export port. It is vital that the capacity of the port is expanded appropriately as part of a comprehensive long-term coal export plan.

The Hunter Region has enjoyed a period of growth in a prosperous economic environment for a considerable period of time. The export capacity of the port is the driving force behind this prosperity.

The Hunter Business Chamber was involved in the community consultation process for T4 conducted during the course of 2011.

The Chamber notes all aspects of the consultation and the subsequent Environmental Assessment (EA) lodged with the Department of Planning in February 2012. Issues surrounding air quality, social impacts, traffic, noise, ecology, heritage and the like have been considered by the Chamber.

The Hunter Business Chamber endorses the sentiments expressed in the EA regarding the potential importance of the economic contributions for the project.

Of particular importance is the acknowledgement of potential employment opportunities as a result of the construction and operation of T4. All businesses in the Hunter region have a clear responsibility for being actively involved in training and supporting staff through apprenticeships and scholarships and this is a vital component of the T4 project.

The Chamber also supports other aspects of the findings of the economic assessment for the T4 project, including, the significant direct and indirect financial benefits to the Newcastle and Hunter economy during the construction period. The strong figures in the economic assessment regarding the ongoing benefits during the operational life of T4 is also of crucial importance.

The emphasis on ensuring that local communities and businesses benefit from the project is particularly welcome by the Chamber. It is vital that major contractors support a range of local businesses both during construction and operation.

It is also important that the adequacy of infrastructure issues on Kooragang Island are addressed in a collaborative manner between industry and all levels of government as the cumulative demand on roads and rail infrastructure continue to increase.

Contact

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