



# Hunter Environment Lobby Inc.

PO Box 188  
EAST MAITLAND NSW 2323  
7<sup>th</sup> May 2012

## **Objection to Proposed Fourth Coal Export Terminal in Newcastle**

Project Title: Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4  
Application No: 10\_0215  
[plan\\_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au)

Hunter Environment Lobby Inc is a non-profit community group established to promote environment protection in the Hunter Valley. The group has been in existence for over fifteen years and has made many submissions in relation to coal mining and related projects, participated in committees and public enquiries and organized a number of successful public workshops.

In our response to the Scoping Paper for the Coal and Gas Strategy in March 2011, we argued that the Strategy terms of reference were too narrow. We argued that the real social, environmental and economic cost of increased exploration of fossil fuels are unknown. What we did argue for was the use of the precautionary principle in relation to ecological, community and social risk in the development of new and expanded coal extraction in the Hunter.

If the fourth coal terminal is approved it will cause a major expansion of coal mining in the Hunter and Gunnedah Basins. As conditions are now, we have an increase in tonnage to two hundred and eleven million tonnes per annum(mtpa). The proposal wants to increase coal export capacity by a further one hundred and twenty mtpa to three hundred and thirty one mtpa. This is unsustainable and cannot be justified.

The Upper Hunter environment and rural communities cannot support or survive an increase in coal production of this scale, as seen by the collapse of communities around Ulan and Wollar. The destruction of thousands of hectares by open cut coal extraction means a diminution in farming land.

The Hunter cannot afford to lose any more farmland, groundwater or biodiversity, it has many thousands of sterilized acres at present on which remediation has not been shown to be effective or sustainable. If the Strategic Regional Land Use Plans for Upper Hunter and New England North West are to be effective in preventing land use conflict, this large proposed expansion will not occur.

The Upper Hunter Strategic Land Use Plan predicted that export demand through Newcastle would stabilize at about at about two hundred and fifteen mtpa by 2015 which is close to current approved capacity - an additional one hundred and twenty mtpa capacity is not justified.

The proposal will require an additional forty one trains per day through the Hunter Valley Coal Chain. This will cause a cumulative impact of noise and dust through the major towns and suburbs along the rail line. Asthma figures have increased noticeably throughout Upper Hunter communities.

The proposal will further destroy critical habitat for migratory birds and threatened species in the Hunter estuary, this is an unacceptable impact, and cannot be mitigated if the coal loader is constructed.

The proposal and expanded coal mines needed to supply it will put additional pressure on the health of the Hunter River, the health of the Hunter people and the future viability of the Hunter Valley. Hunter Environment Lobby maintains that this development is not justifiable on any grounds.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Davis', is written over a faint, repeating background pattern of the words 'HUNTER VALLEY'.

Jan Davis  
President