

Attention Ms Rebecca Newman

**Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4 Proposal
Application Number 10_0215**

I object to the construction and operation of a coal export terminal at Kooragang Island comprising of rail infrastructure and coal receipt, stockyard, conveyor system, wharves, berths and ancillary facilities the Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4 on the following grounds.

As a controlled action under the EPBC Act, I am of the opinion that the project does not meet the controlling provision sections under the EPBC Act of:

- 16 and 17B (Wetlands of international importance)
- 18 and 18A (Listed threatened species and communities), and
- 20 and 20A (Listed migratory species).

General Comments

Locally, the fourth coal terminal project would see 41 more coal trains travelling through Newcastle and Maitland *every day*, increasing dust related health problems such as asthma and other respiratory ailments.

Pollution from coal affects all major body organ systems and contributes to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality.

The proposal also carries the risk of mobilising toxic contaminants on Kooragang Island, the former BHP Steelworks site, and in the South Arm of the Hunter River, and too little is known about the risks to ensure the communities of Newcastle will be protected from toxic accidents, seepage and accidents. There is no plan to fully remediate the sites.

The coal exported would provide the capacity to feed at least 15 more large power stations around the world emitting 288 million tonnes of carbon pollution each year and fuelling climate change.

This project would damage internationally important wetlands that provide critical habitat for protected migratory bird species and nationally threatened species including the Green and Golden Bell Frog and the Australasian Bittern.

An area within the site is currently owned by the National Parks service, and provides irreplaceable habitat for migratory shore birds. The proposal will mean loss of habitat and disruption to an ecologically significant proportion of a population of four migratory shorebird species listed under international conservation conventions.

The Environmental Assessment fails to meet the requirements set out by both the State and Federal agencies, and the proposal represents an unacceptable risk to the Australasian Bittern.

After construction, the coal terminal will provide *no additional employment*. Rather, it is likely to result in the loss of other economic activities in the port, such as tourism, fishing and other shipping

The Fourth Coal Terminal would facilitate many more large coal mines (the equivalent of at least 15 'mega-pits') in the Hunter and Liverpool Plains which

threaten food and water security by destroying prime agricultural land, irreversibly damaging ground water systems and polluting waterways.

Specific Comments relating to 16 and 17B (Wetlands of international importance), 18 and 18A (Listed threatened species and communities), and 20 and 20A (Listed migratory species).

The precautionary principle should be applied in this case and the project rejected for the following reasons:

Kooragang Nature Reserve is the largest single estuarine reserve in NSW. It was registered under the National Estate in 1979 by the Australian Heritage Commission and listed under the Ramsar Treaty in 1984. It is currently the only NSW site in the Ramsar East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network (SSN). Any additional impact on the abundance and productivity of the aquatic fauna in the estuary will compromise the values of the Ramsar wetlands.

The plans of management developed for the Kooragang Reserve aims to manage water and salinity levels to maximise waterfowl habitats and to manage the natural environment of the area to the benefit of all species. A project of this size would do irreparable damage to any management program.

There are 38 migratory birds protected under the Japanese and Chinese Migratory Bird Treaties, which use the area (Appendix A). Their food sources rely on inter tidal processes. These food sources would be diminished or destroyed.

A number of species listed as endangered under the EPBC Act such as the Spotted-tailed Quoll, Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot have known habitat in the proposed inundation area (Appendix A). The risks to these species is high with the T4 Coal Loader.

Aquatic invertebrates such as worms, gastropods, molluscs and crustaceans are extremely abundant in the Kooragang Ramsar site. This is reflected by the importance of the area for migratory birds that depend upon invertebrates for food and in the value of the area as fish breeding grounds. Damage to this cycle would invariably impact on the shorebirds.

This area provides reproductive activities for oysters, prawns and fish spawning. These cycles are critical for the food chain of the area and the habitat values of the migratory birds listed for protection.

The number of migratory waders and other waterbirds recorded make this area one of the three most important wetland areas in NSW and in the top 10 in Australia.

During winter, substantial numbers of immature migratory waders remain in the area and do not return to the Northern Hemisphere. These birds mature to form future breeding stocks and thus are critical to the species' survival.

Of the thirty-eight species of migratory wader known to occur in the area, eleven are present in large numbers: pacific golden plover, eastern curlew, common greenshank, marsh sandpiper, Terek sandpiper, bar-tailed godwit, black-tailed godwit, red knot, red-necked stint, sharp-tailed sandpiper and curlew sandpiper.

Two species of migratory tern, the white winged tern and common tern occur at Kooragang Island. A small number of broad-billed sandpipers summer in the Hunter estuary; the only regular site used in NSW.

The area is an important stopover for migratory waders in the spring en route to Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand; particularly for red knot, bar-tailed godwit, Eastern curlew and red-necked stint.

More than 5% of the total world population of migratory waders such as the pacific golden plover and the curlew sandpiper visit the area. A Coal Loader would severely impact on these dwindling numbers further.

Summary

The T4 Coal Loader would have a direct and irreparable impact on this significant wetlands site.

The precautionary principle should be applied in this case and the proposal rejected.

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Appendix A

Summary of Threatened Species and Communities on western end of Kooragang Island 12/12/2005 Including birds listed under international agreements with China and Japan

Source: Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority at http://www.hcr.cma.nsw.gov.au/Kooragang11_ThreatenedSpeciesKooragang.pdf accessed on 10/8/2009

Compiled by Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project: Updated 22/10/02

Amphibians

Green and Golden Bell Frog *Litoria aurea*

Birds

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata*
Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*
Great Egret *Ardea alba*
Cattle Egret *Ardea ibis*
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus*
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*
Sanderling *Calidris alba*
Red Knot *Calidris canutus*
Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*
Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*
Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*
Greater (Large) Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*
Lesser Sand-plover, Mongolian Plover *Charadrius mongolus*
Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*
Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*
White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes*
Wandering Tattler *Heteroscelus incanus*
White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*
Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*
Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*
Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*
Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*
Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*
Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca*
Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*
Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
Blue-billed Duck *Oxyura australis*

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*
Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*
Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*
Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*
Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*
Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa*
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Greenshank, Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
Little Greenshank, Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*
Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*
Masked Owl *Tyto novaehollandiae*
Regent Honeyeater *Xanthomyza phrygia*
Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Mammals

Large-eared Pied Bat, Large Pied Bat *Chalinolobus dwyer*
Spot-tailed Quoll, Spotted-tail Quoll,
Tiger Quoll (south-east mainland and Tasmanian subspecies) *Dasyurus maculatus maculatus* (s. lat.)
Little Bentwing-bat *Miniopterus australis*
Eastern Bentwing-bat *Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis*
Eastern Freetail-bat *Mormopterus norfolkensis*
Large-footed Myotis *Myotis adversus*
Long-nosed Potoroo (SE mainland) *Potorous tridactylus tridactylus*
Grey-headed Flying fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*
Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail-bat *Saccolaimus flaviventris*
Greater Broad-nosed Bat *Scoteanax rueppellii*

Plants

White Cynanchum *Cynanchum elegans*
Zannichellia palustris

Endangered ecological communities (TSC Act)

Sydney Coastal Estuary Swamp Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion