

Rebecca Newman - Submission Details for [REDACTED]

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X Department of Planning

Disclosable Political Donation: no

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Dudley, NSW
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Content:

Port Waratah Coal Service's 4th Coal Terminal (T4) is a proposal for a massive new coal terminal in Newcastle, NSW. If approved, T4 would allow an additional 120 million tonnes per annum of coal to be shipped out of Newcastle. This would boost existing coal export capacity by 84%, in what is already the world's biggest coal port.

Impacts on Habitat, Endangered and Threatened Species, and Migratory Birds

An area within the 4th terminal site is currently National Park. The National Park lands provide critical habitat for migratory shore birds. National Park lands must not be included in the proposed development. The 312ha project site includes 91ha of valuable native vegetation and 24ha of open water habitat. The project site is home to 18.8ha of saltmarsh (an endangered ecological community under the Threatened Species Conservation Act (TSC)), 28.9ha of mangrove and 27.3ha of freshwater wetland, 4ha of which are listed as an endangered community under the TSC Act.

Loss of habitat for 23 threatened fauna species including the Australasian bittern (listed as endangered under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity

Conservation (EPBC) Act), and the Green and Golden Bell frog (also listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act).

Loss of habitat and disruption to an ecologically significant proportion of a population of four migratory shorebird species listed under international conservation conventions. At least 11 species of migratory birds recognised by international

treaties rely on the habitat of deep pond and its proximity to the RAMSAR listed wetland.

Offsets cannot hope to compensate for loss of habitat at the site. The proposed offset site at Ellalong has already been identified as critical for conservation in its own right.

Furthermore, the offset site fails to compensate for the loss of Deep Pond because it is over 50km away from Kooragang Island. Deep Pond is critical because it provides key foraging and roosting habitat due to its proximity to RAMSAR listed wetlands in the Hunter estuary.

- Deep Pond is the only freshwater drought refuge in the Lower Hunter Estuary system. It is relied upon by at least 15 species of waterfowl, three of which are listed as threatened under the TSC Act.

Because of the valuable habitat that Deep Pond provides to numerous threatened and protected species and its critical function to the nearby RAMSAR listed wetlands, Deep Pond should be protected and its management should be coordinated with the ongoing conservation efforts in the Hunter Estuary

Air Quality

The Environmental Assessment of T4 downplays impacts on air quality stating: "The T4 project is not expected to result in any criterion exceedences on any additional days of the year"¹. It defies belief that extra, uncovered coal stockpiles will not increase the amount of coal dust affecting Newcastle suburbs.

The EA only considers the impact of increased coal train movements on residences within 20m of the rail line.

However, the impacts of coal dust are likely to extend far beyond this area.

The current guidelines are out-dated and fail to account for the findings of recent health studies which demonstrate that total suspended particles (coal dust) are of greater detriment to human health than when the T4 guidelines were

put in place.

- The precautionary principle should be applied to potential health impacts of the T4 proposal. Approval should not be allowed until a more conclusive health and air quality study is undertaken for the Newcastle LGA.

Dredging and Water Pollution

There is no plan to fully remediate the heavily contaminated T4 site. The T4 proposal will therefore cause the leaching of existing toxic material into groundwater and surrounding surface waters via a 'squeezing effect'. The result will be pollution of both the neighbouring (National Park and RAMSAR listed) wetlands and the Hunter River.

An increase in shipping will negatively impact harbour water quality with sediment disturbance (some of it contaminated), release of bilge water, more antifouling agents, chemicals and oil spills, and dumping of debris. It will also reduce access for other harbour users and increase the risk of introduced species.

The T4 proposal requires the realignment of the banks of the South Arm of the Hunter River and construction of a 'turning circle' or 'swing basin' to accommodate the world's largest ships. The proposal also requires dredging of the South Arm of the river from its natural depth of 2-4m to 16.2m with 17.8m deep shipping berths along each bank.

The dredging will have massive impacts including the removal of aquatic habitats and impacts on estuarine habitats via changes to tidal hydrodynamics and salinity. Also, it

has the potential of creating stagnant deep holes, altering currents, causing riverbed erosion and releasing pollutants that are currently trapped within the bottom sediments.

The area that will be dredged has changed significantly after the State Government gave the dredging approval. PWCS should apply for a new license for dredging, given that the proposal for dredging has changed significantly.

Social and Economic Impacts on Newcastle and Lower Hunter

After construction, T4 will provide no additional long-term employment. Rather, T4 is likely to result in the loss of other economic activities in the port, such as tourism, fishing and other shipping.

T4 would facilitate an increase of at least 41 additional coal trains per day through the suburbs of Maitland and into Newcastle. This would increase congestion on the rail lines as well as increasing noise and dust.

T4 will increase noise and light pollution. Noise, vibrations and light pollution from onsite operations will occur 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

T4 will cause increased traffic congestion during the construction period.

T4 is likely to have impacts on commercial fishing due to the loss of habitat and the increased contamination caused by the dredging.

Impacts of Increased Coal Mining in NSW

When completed, T4 would facilitate the development of at least 15 more large coalmines in the Hunter Valley and Liverpool plains.

The costs of more mining to the State include: greenhouse gas generation at mines, loss of agricultural lands, blasting, noise, air quality, loss of aboriginal and nonaboriginal heritage, visual impacts, loss and pollution of surface water and groundwater, damage to aquatic ecology, flora and fauna loss.

Research shows the health impacts of the coal industry are estimated to be around \$2.6 billion across Australia.

Pollution from coal affects all major body organ systems and contributes to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality. In the Hunter Valley this impact is all the more prevalent due to the proximity to communities of coal mining, transport and infrastructure. The 4th terminal project would increase negative health impacts in the region. For this reason alone, the negative contribution of the project far outweighs any merits.

T4 will mean 22 more coal ships would visit Newcastle every week, pushing out other port users.

T4 would provide coal for the equivalent of 15 more large power stations around the world, generating an extra 288 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year and fuelling the global climate crisis.

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Submission: Online Submission from [REDACTED] (object)

https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com?action=view_diary&id=28250

Submission for Job: #4399 Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4

https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com?action=view_job&id=4399

Site: #2406 PWCS Terminal 4

https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com?action=view_site&id=2406