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Department of Planning and Infrastructure
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Submission of Objection

Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4
Application No: 10_0215

Mudgee District Environment Group (MDEG), based in the Mid-Western Region local government area in NSW, is working for the conservation of our natural heritage and a sustainable future for our children.

MDEG objects to the proposed fourth coal export terminal for the Port of Newcastle because of the cumulative impacts of the proposed expansion of coal production across the coal fields, on the towns and suburbs adjacent to the Hunter Valley Coal Rail Network and on the Hunter Estuary.

MDEG has witnessed major impacts on the Goulburn River from poorly designed and poorly managed and regulated coal mining operations in the Mudgee Region. The proposed expansion of the industry will cause further degradation of the Hunter River system from its headwater tributaries through to the ecologically significant estuary.

The proposal to expand coal extraction by an additional 120 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) is not sustainable and should not be considered by the NSW Government.

The current coal production and approved expansion to 211 mtpa through the Port of Newcastle is causing major cumulative impacts on the environment, community, and economies of diverse industries in the Hunter, Western and Gunnedah coalfields. Any expansion of the industry beyond this volume is untenable.

The capacity of the NSW Government to adequately regulate the existing level of coal production is challenged. The proposal to cut the NSW Public service by a significant number of officers will further diminish the capacity to manage compliance of the very complex set of conditions of approval granted to each large coal mine operation supplying the Hunter Coal Chain.

MDEG does not support the proposed fourth coal terminal proposal because it is based on speculative needs of the industry that are not based on environmentally sustainable development principles.

The ongoing costs of the coal industry on environmental and social functions in the NSW coal fields and to other industries such as agriculture have not been adequately assessed.

The long-term impacts of an expanding coal industry must be assessed in an independent costs benefits analysis that considers long term opportunities and losses to future generations.

The NSW Government undertakings to solve land use conflicts through the proposed Strategic Regional Land Use Plans will cause the proposed expansion of the coal industry to be better controlled. Therefore, the need for a fourth coal export terminal cannot be justified.

MDEG recommends that the Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4 not be approved.

Yours sincerely

B. Smiles

Bev Smiles
President
Mudgee District Environment Group