

“Reclaiming our Valley”

Hunter Communities Network

PO Box 14 Singleton 2330

Friday 22 November 2013

**Submission of Objection
Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4
Preferred Project
Application No: 10_0215**

The Hunter Communities Network (HCN) is an alliance of community based groups and individuals impacted by the current coal industry and concerned about the ongoing rapid expansion of coal and coal seam gas exploration and mining in the region.

HCN submitted an objection to the original proposal to develop a fourth coal terminal (T4) at the Port of Newcastle (the Port) and appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Preferred Project Report (PPR).

The PPR does not adequately address the initial issues and objections raised in relation to the development of T4. The proposed reduction in capacity from 120 Mtpa to 70 Mtpa merely provides a stage 1 assessment approach with similar environmental impacts.

HCN considers that there is no economic justification for T4 because of the drop in demand for thermal coal and coal prices and the associated downturn in the coal industry. The current approved capacity of 211 Mtpa at the Port will be adequate for the predicted level of coal production along the Hunter Valley Coal Rail Network.

The cumulative impacts of the proposed increase in coal extraction from the 141 Mt exported through the Port in 2012 to the projected 281 Mtpa (a doubling of current extraction, transport and handling) will be catastrophic and not acceptable to the Hunter community.

A doubling of coal production from the Upper Hunter, Gunnedah Basin and western coalfields through the Port will cause significant untenable and irreversible environmental and social damage.

These cumulative impacts have not been addressed in the PPR, the Strategic Land Use Plans for Upper Hunter and New England North West or any other planning process undertaken by the NSW Government.

The long term cumulative impacts on community health, water sources, agricultural land, biodiversity, other industries, social amenity and viability of towns and villages in the region caused by a doubling of coal extraction has not been assessed.

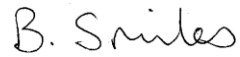
The ongoing loss of diversity in economic opportunity in the Hunter region will cause a long term threat to the viability of the region, along with the destruction of valuable water sources, alluvial lands and agricultural productivity.

The current threat to other large employers in the region such as the thoroughbred horse industry, the wine and tourism industry and other agricultural enterprises including beef, dairy and olive production will be exacerbated by increased coal mining pressures.

Towns and villages in the Upper Hunter are already suffering a decline in population due to property acquisition by mining companies. The proposed doubling of coal extraction rates will cause further fracturing of social cohesion, increased air pollution, increased pressure on existing infrastructure and a range of other environmental, social and economic impacts.

HCN strongly recommends that T4 not be approved.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "B. Smiles".

Bev Smiles
Convenor
Hunter Communities Network