

Brad Hazzard – Minister for Planning & Infrastructure.  
Bridge Street  
Sydney.

22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2013

Dear Minister,

RE: Submission the Proposal for Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4 (T4).

While I have been impressed with the integrity and professionalism of the Port Waratah Coal Services (PWCS) staff I have encountered over many years, through their quarterly community meetings, I also so realise that the real strategic decisions are made in board rooms outside Newcastle, indeed out of Australia.

I have been on the edge of the debate around the expansion of Port Waratah Coal Services expansion on Kooragang Island. My family marched with the hundreds on the streets of Newcastle to draw attention to a growing feeling of unease of people across the state. The level of mining and the destruction of the environment and prime agricultural land are out of hand. As currently the largest coal port in the world Newcastle is the destination for export coal and T4 signals further mining expansion. Both the negative and positive impacts of mining are felt across New South Wales.

The Minerals Council in a news broadcast recently drew attention to recent job losses in the Hunter. These were in direct correlation to the down turn in the coal price. Economics is the only true driver of the mining industry, but the cumulative impacts across the state of unchecked mining is the real Big Picture. This is the picture of Intergenerational Equity that all levels of government are bound to protect in the public interest.

I have been affected by the submissions of others on this expansion of PWCS with T4. Many will better point out the big issues, for example, the undoubted impacts on the health of individuals and the financial impacts on the health budget shared by the whole community. These are not the sole responsibility of PWCS, NCIG or even T4, but the movement of the coal along the coal chain from mine to port. Even the carcinogenic off-road diesel (World Health Organisation) which is used in the mine explosions, vehicles, and trains are part of the various effects of the approval for T4.

One of the most touching details from submissions is in the hidden effects beautifully exposed by the 200<sup>th</sup> submission on T4...

*“In late March a pair of tiny birds prepare a scrape in the ground in the Siberian Tundra. The female has about a month to recover from her twelve thousand-kilometre flight and build the nutrients to lay four brown speckled eggs.*

*Their line has survived at least a million years.*

*Eggs will be laid in April and on the first day of May they will hatch. The parents gather small insects and feed the brood. The days rapidly lengthen.*

*As May passes they grow from thumbnail size caramel spots of fluff to darker striped feathered chicks.*

*If wolves or owls or an arctic fox do not find them, and if there is enough food and if a hawk kills neither of the parents they grow quickly. If there is not an unseasonal blizzard or a week of freezing rain they will be fully fledged by the end of June in high summer.*

*Twenty centimetres down the ground is permanently frozen but on the surface it is alive with grasses, wildflowers, lichens, mosses and millions of insects. By July the chicks have learned to fly. They are making small hops between shallow ponds and they are filling themselves with food twenty hours every day, building up their muscles and storing fat for the journey ahead.*

*The first day of August the family rises into the air at dawn and begins to fly south. A day later they cross from the Siberian Plateau to the Gobi desert. As the sky darkens they pass the Yin mountains then in the short night the Mu Us desert. The third day they are flying over central China and the fourth day they finally land on the busy coast of Korea. They have lost 30% of their body weight during their epic flight and desperately need food and rest. The wetlands are being bulldozed and filled for expanding cities. The water is polluted and the estuary is busy with boats and fishermen.*

*They are only halfway.*

*In the next five days they eat what they can find. A cruel snare that breaks its legs catches one of the parent birds and that evening it is eaten by a clam diggers family. On the sixth day the five birds rise into the air at dawn and continue south. They sweep out over the China Sea and gain altitude and speed. As night falls they are passing between the Indonesian Archipelago and Malaysia. At dawn the weakest chick has fallen behind and is captured by a frigate bird.*

*Day rolls into night, into day, into night. They cross Irian Jaya then the Arafura Sea and the Gulf of Carpentaria. Down the inland of Australia over Cloncurry and follow the western edge of the Great Divide south without a stop until they meet the sea near Coffs Harbour. They are near the end of the journey now. Four or five more hours flying and they will find Newcastle Harbour, swing west and follow the Hunter River up to Swan Pond where they finally land.*

*They have flown for ten days and nights and travelled twelve and a half thousand kilometres. They have now lost half their body weight and are desperately in need of a safe haven with just the right mix of saline and fresh water, few predators, the right vegetation, the insects, fish and crustaceans that they eat and protection from pollution and destruction of their habitat.*

*The little family of Sharp-Tailed Sandpipers rest and begin to feed.*

*This is the only place they can survive.*

*Commissioners we are in a geological age called 'The Anthropocene' when mans impact is such that we are changing the surface of the planet. As we do that we are often destroying in the blink of an eye habitats that birds and fish, plants and animals have relied on for millions of years. They can't just move or change their habits. They become extinct.*

*The Sharp-Tailed Sandpiper only stops once between Siberia and Newcastle because there is only one place to stop and that area of the Korean Coast is being rapidly degraded. There is simply nowhere else that suits their precise needs.*

*To destroy the Swan Pond and the Deep Pond for a superfluous fourth coal loader in order to inflate the books of a multi-national mining corporation will certainly destroy these tiny miraculous birds. It would be the worst kind of environmental vandalism and stupidity.  
[by Len McCarthy of Newcastle]”*

I implore the Minister to consider the picture in its widest sense, intergenerationally.

A diverse economic base for the port of Newcastle will in the long term benefit the state economy.

Supporting our port is to all our benefits but in doing so we must consider the large and the smallest creatures that enhance our existence, and, are part of the building blocks that also support our environment across the centuries.

The ability to make a submission on this application is of great value to me.

Yours faithfully

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