

Personal Submission on the PWCS T4 Project

In response to submissions & the preferred Project report (RS/PPR)

By John L Hayes, with the support of his wife, Rosie Hayes

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....nobody told us the dirty little secret about all the particulates in the air resulting from this activity.

Personal backgrounds

We provide some background information of our activities to demonstrate our connection with the Communities of Newcastle and the Hunter.

Rosie and I are both very well informed about, and attuned with, the thinking of the residents of Mayfield and nearby suburbs, and we will set out below why this is so.

John has been very active in Community organisations since we came to Newcastle in April 2004, & in many cases has been supported by Rosie including:

1. Throsby Community Forum (TCF)

Over 5 years from 2004, and at various times holding all the executive positions of that Forum; which represented the interests of the residents of the 5 Inner City Throsby suburbs of Islington, Wickham, Maryville, Carrington & Tighes Hill, to all 3 levels of Government – Local, State & Federal.

2. Climate Action Newcastle (CAN)

Playing an active role in its activities, including:

Involvement in writing submissions;

Representing CAN at a Commissioners' Hearing in Newcastle on the NCIG Application to build the Kooragang 3rd Coal Loader (T3);

Media spokesman for some of the events for Expert Guest Speakers we invited, which commonly attracted audiences of 300 – 400 at City Hall;

Active part in the roll out of 500 roof top solar PV arrays in Newcastle and nearby. At the time this was the biggest mass installation of Solar PV anywhere in Australia;

Assisting with the CAN Smart Energy Expo held in Newcastle over 2 or 3 days; for about 4 or 5 years;

And many other matters.

3. Transition Newcastle (TN)

Working with the group on projects to develop in the Community a resilience and capacity to be more self sufficient with Community Gardens and home grown food production; more efficient use of our Planet's scarce resources; and simpler and less consumptive life styles

4. Permaculture Hunter

Involvement with complementary activities to many of those of CAN and TN

5. For a while both of us worked in the Fr Chris Riley Youth Off The Streets (YOTS) Opp shop when it first opened in Hunter St Newcastle, about 9 years ago.

I left that volunteering as I got busier with other Community activities;

Rosie has continued that volunteering role up to the present day.

The opp shop in Newcastle closed about 2 years ago; so she, and other Newcastle volunteers, travel to Maitland to staff that YOTS opp shop once a week.

6. For several years Rosie has volunteered with the Cancer Council of NSW to staff the Cancer information Kiosk at the Newcastle Mater Hospital one day a week. The Mater is the Primary Cancer Treatment Hospital in the Hunter.

7. Since about 2004 I have been a member of the Catholic Newcastle Inner City Social Justice Group. We meet monthly and consider a wide range of Social Justice issues, including those to do with the Environment, Climate Change, and Global warming. We have organised a number of Forums and seminars.

I was the main organiser in 2008 (with the support of the SJ Group), of a Climate Change and Global Warming seminar held in the Catholic Cathedral in Newcastle (I think the first and only Seminar ever actually held in the Cathedral).

This brought together experts from the CSIRO;

And a highly qualified Australian speaker who lectures at Oxford University, and who works with Refugees at some of the climate change hot spots including Darfur in the Sudan; & the drowning Pacific Islands including Kiribati.

More than 100 attended that seminar - from all faiths and no faiths.

8. For about the last 3 or 4 years I have been a member of the Maitland Newcastle Catholic Diocesan Social Justice Council, which exists to consider S Justice issues, and to provide advice to the Bishop of M Newcastle.

The Good Stewardship of our Earth, including Environment and Climate matters, are included in our work.

9. In 2010 I was the Co Convenor of a meeting in Mayfield to consider planning issues associated with a new concept plan lodged with NSW Planning by the Newcastle Port Corp. About 100 attended that meeting and in a follow up meeting 2 weeks later, more than 200 attended; and a new group was formed to represent the interests of residents of Mayfield and nearby suburbs.

This group was called Correct Planning & Consultation for Mayfield Group (CPCFM)

I was elected its Chair and Media Spokesman & I have held both positions ever since.

CPCFM was a single issue group on formation – issues around Port Development and new wharves; but as we were the only active Mayfield Community Group, we were soon called upon to look at, become involved with, and to take action on other issues & Industries affecting residents of Mayfield and nearby suburbs.

They included several Chemical spills at Orica on nearby Kooragang Island;

Other Port Planning and Goods Transport issues;

Attending Community Consultative Meetings run by Orica, Port Waratah Coal Services (PWCS), and many others.

CPCFM holds 3 or 4 public meetings each year, and the attendance by local residents is usually around 200. We have about 500 members and supporters.

10. CPCFM has affiliated with Coal Terminal Action Group (CTAG) since CTAG's inception.

I have been a very active member of CTAG, and its working groups and committees – Including the Dust and Health Committee;

and also very active in the CTAG meetings held with State and Federal Politicians and senior Government officials.

11. CPCFM has also affiliated with the Better Planning Network (BPN), and we are a founding member of the Hunter Chapter of the Better Planning Network.

This affiliation is particularly relevant to this submission, because of the proposed changes to NSW Planning laws and approval processes which many in the Community see as having very negative impacts on the rights of citizens; and on the Environment and Climate.

Our Submission

We oppose T4

We have read the 12 page CTAG Submission being lodged this week; and we agree with its contents, reasoning, and conclusions.

We were cheated when we retired and moved from Sydney to Newcastle in 2004.
We had done much homework, before deciding on Newcastle as a destination, and for us it ticked many boxes.

We knew that the smoking dragon that breaths fire (The BHP) had been slain; so we confidentially expected that, from an environmental viewpoint, we would be moving to an area with Clean Air.

We knew that a lot of coal was shipped out of Newcastle, but nobody told us the dirty little secret about all the particulates in the air resulting from this activity.

We naively thought that no government agencies that were set up to protect our health and the environment, were so biased in favour of BIG Coal exports, which generated large royalties for the State; nor did we think that they would not be doing their jobs properly.

We found it hard to believe that The EPA, The Health Department, The Planning Department and some departments and agencies could all fail us.

Was this a conspiracy?

Were the departments and agencies bowing in compliance to their Political Masters?

Were their Political Masters bowing in compliance to the large Political donors – King Coal and its supporters?

We didn't know, and how could we?

Well, the lessons have been hard since we came to The Hunter in 2004; and all is not yet revealed.

But we think there are all active elements at work in the Conspiracy and Bowing activities that we refer to above.

I have worked closely with the CTAG crew on many of the projects described in their submission - the survey of more than 500 households; the Citizen Science in Monitoring around coal lines and coal stacks, and a myriad other things.

I have worked very hard to educate myself about:

The PM10s – the Coarse fraction; the PM2.5s; the PM 0.1s;

The health impacts of same.

I have attended countless Seminars and workshops on these issues organised by the EPA and other Government agencies and departments;

One of which, in 2013, had such luminaries on Dust and Health issues from the USA, The UK, Europe and Australia, that the Panel was collectively described by the Health Organisers as “ The Rock Stars of Dust and Health”.

We know, and the Government knows, and their agencies all know, that there is enough bad stuff in the air now to compromise our health; and that to approve T4 would only add massively to those problems.

We also know of a probable Cancer Cluster in the workers at PWCS T2 Kooragang Coal Loader; and many health professionals doubt that it has been fully explained and accounted for.

What sense does it make to massively increase Coal Exports to further expose the same workforce, and their colleagues – let alone thinking of exposing the wider public to the same problems?

Money, and exports is one thing. Good health and the environment is another.

We think it is now time for the balance to tip from the former to the latter.

We ask that NSW Planning Minister and his Department, and The Commissioners who make up a PAC Panel – if it is formed, to reject T4.