

### **Objection: Mt Pleasant Modification 3**

Since this mine was originally assessed in 1999, other open-cut coal mines have filled The Hunter Valley such that almost 20km comprises wall-to-wall pits. The Hunter Valley is pock-marked with these ugly and dangerous voids.

The EPA has shown dramatic increases in particle pollution in the area predominantly driven by coal-mining and coal-fired power stations. EPA has stated a need for a 50% reduction in these emissions. Such a reduction can only be achieved through the curtailment of open-cut mining. All open-cut coal-mining emissions pose a serious health threat to residents living near to coal mines.

It is plain that the use of coal for power generation is falling worldwide. Other nations are taking the threat of climate change, driven by greenhouse gases, very seriously indeed. If Australia is to meet its commitment to the Paris Agreement, and to be seen as a responsible global citizen extension, expansion of coal mining must end.

In previous PAC hearings dominated by presentations showing concern for climate change, PAC panels have excused themselves from using their personal intelligence by hiding behind the fact that government has no “policy” concerning climate change and risk from GHGs. Commissioners are presented as “independent” and, as such are ostensibly free to employ their personal intelligence and judgement. It is irresponsible to ignore the effects on climate change attributable to coal mining.

Ian Dunlop was formerly an international oil, gas and coal industry executive and chair of the Australian Coal Association and CEO of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Of all people, he is well-qualified to provide a balanced viewpoint on the place of coal in climate risk. He has said:

*“to ignore this threat is a fundamental breach of the fiduciary responsibility with which political, bureaucratic and corporate leaders are entrusted by the community they are supposed to serve.*

*A hotter planet has already taken us perilously close to, and in some cases over, tipping points which will cause profound changes in major climate systems: at the polar ice-caps, in the oceans, and the large permafrost carbon stores*

*Physical impacts of global warming include a hotter and more extreme climate, more frequent and severe droughts, desertification, increasing insecurity of food and water supplies, stronger storms and cyclones, and coastal inundation.*

*Climate change was a significant factor in triggering the war in Syria, the Mediterranean migrant crisis and the “Arab Spring”, albeit this aspect is rarely discussed.*

***Our current global carbon emission trajectory, if left unchecked, will drive increasingly severe humanitarian crises.”***

Can Australia seriously afford to ignore such catastrophic consequences by not moderating our approach to significantly contributing to GHG production?

The extension of this mine has significant threats to Australian citizens in terms of health and well-being. The actual economic benefits are much too small to risk such threats and, as Ian Dunlop is increasingly pointing out, such lack of will to take action is a Global Threat.

As signatories to the Paris Agreement, our emissions should be decreasing, but in fact they are increasing. Mining coal can only exacerbate that.

This project should be refused both for the well-being of Australia and the future well-being of the planet.

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