

“Reclaiming our Valley”

Hunter Communities Network

PO Box 14 Singleton 2330

Major Project Assessment
Mining
Department of Planning & Infrastructure

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Submission of Objection Warkworth Modification 6 (DA 300-9-2002-i)

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 objects very strongly to the proposed Warkworth Modification 6 (mod 6) because there is no adequate justification for the disturbance of 350 m of Saddle Ridge.

The mine has a current approval to continue mining for a further 8 years. The threat that 1300 jobs will be lost if mod 6 is not approved is unfounded.

The ongoing pressure from the proponent to expand the Warkworth Mine exposes the inadequacy of the economic analysis provided for the original approval of an 18 year open cut mining operation in 2003.

HCN considers that the ongoing incorrect economic analysis provided by the mining industry needs to be independently assessed. The new Mining SEPP does not indicate that consideration of the economic value of the resource includes an increase in company profits.

The continuation of open cut mining as proposed in mod 6 will have significant cumulative impacts on the surrounding environment including:

- Loss of 16 ha endangered ecological communities previously protected under a Deed of Agreement to offset vegetation clearing for the current mining operations
- Increased dust emissions
- Increased noise emissions closer to neighbouring residents
- Ongoing impacts on groundwater, particularly the perched aquifers supporting Warkworth Sands Woodlands

HCN considers that the economic value of the resource should enable the proponent to extract it through underground mining methods that would prevent the level of surface disturbance caused by open cut operations.

If the provision of current economic and social benefits of the Warkworth Mine is the key consideration for approval, it could be achieved through an underground mine. This would eliminate the cumulative surface impacts and receive greater support from the community.

The ongoing loss of biodiversity, villages and diverse economic opportunities in the Hunter Valley can be mitigated by an improved planning process that considers all options.

HCN does not believe that mod 6 is justified because all feasible options have not been adequately considered or assessed.

The independent review of the approvals process by the Land and Environment Court demonstrated key failings in the planning system in NSW. HCN deplores that fact that the NSW Government and the mining industry have no intention of adequately identifying the impacts of large open cut operations that continue over decades.

A review of the predictions approved in 2003 is essential to place mod 6 within a long term planning context.

Yours sincerely

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

Bev Smiles
Convenor