

Mount Owen Mod. 2 Submission Judith Leslie

Impacts on private citizens living close to the mine

- Air pollution levels in the Hunter are regularly exceeding safe levels and the cumulative impact upon Camberwell of several open-cut mining complexes and two coal-fired power stations is particularly severe. It is time the NSW government took its' fiduciary "Duty of Care" to citizen's health seriously and put that ahead of the relatively small financial gains (less than 2% of State revenue is derived from royalties from all sources). The financial burden of extra health care directly attributable to PM 2.5 and 10 particulates largely caused by mining and coal-power is estimated at \$600 million annually. This dollar cost does not include the emotional cost of people seeing their much-loved homes becoming inhospitable and unsaleable (Stranded assets) at the same time as their health deteriorates.

These costs are "externalised" and not included in any EIS but the dollar costs for healthcare come from the same coffers that receive to royalties and the emotional costs are simply counted as "collateral damage"

The major prize of course is the profit made on an Australian resource. Those profits generally accrue to the multi-national company offshore.

Camberwell has been decimated by coal-mining and the few remaining residents have not even been granted acquisition rights which would, at least, give them an opportunity to move to a healthier environment.

Permanent harm done to Australian land by an unsustainable industry

- Australia continues to accept the "inevitability" of final voids and to falsely point to other areas in the world where void regeneration has worked.

Such a simplistic view ignores the huge differences between Australian climate and that of those countries which have temperate climates and significant rainfall. Australia has a hot (and getting hotter) climate with little rainfall (and getting less) Such an environment results in "toxic sinks" unsuitable for any use and a permanent blight on the landscape.

This simplistic comparison also ignores that the area and depth of these voids in Australia vastly exceeds those being compared elsewhere.

It is a fact, as highlighted in statements given by previous mine proponents that were the cost of even simple backfilling included in EIS the project (s) would be financially unsustainable.

Thus, the major monies derived from mining leave Australia but Australia and future generations of Australians are left with a toxic legacy and desecrated land that can never be reclaimed.

Climate Change and Australia's Role and 'The Paris Agreement'

- Climate change is a fact and the majority of Australians have concerns related to climate change and want to see governments at every level take measure to address it.
- Australia has been ranked as the worst-performing country in the world on climate action, according to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Index.
- In addition to having one of the world's highest per capita domestic carbon emissions, the main reason Australia has fallen to dead last is that the SDG Index now factors in Australia's colossal fossil fuel export footprint.
- As the world's largest coal exporter and 4th largest liquid 'natural' gas exporter, Australia's annual exported CO₂ emissions are 44 tonnes per person, greater than even Saudi Arabia's 35.5 tonnes per person, and much larger than the US' 710kg per person.
- Despite this, Australia plans to add billions of tons of new fossil fuel production to the mix.
- The rest of the world is committing to and acting upon climate change with the notable exception of Trump's America.
- Countries such as China and India have committed and are already taking specific action (s)
- As this trend progresses much of Australia's fossil fuel projects will end up becoming stranded assets, thus leaving Australian communities and workers worse off.
- Australia expanding its coal exports is not economically efficient. As research in the journal *Nature* shows, for the world to efficiently meet even a weak 2°C target, Australia would have to leave 90% of coal reserves in the ground. This is because winding down coal burning is one the most cost-effective forms of climate action
- Following the economics of supply and demand, increasing coal supply simply reduces the global price of coal.
- China and Germany have created a virtuous cycle by deploying solar and wind and bringing down the costs of the technology for everyone, Australia is putting pressure in the opposite direction.
- Australia expanding its coal is inequitable.

As a rich developed nation that has benefitted disproportionately from fossil fuel burning and extraction, and who can most afford the transition away from them, Australia has a moral responsibility to lead other, less prosperous countries by leaving fossil fuels in the ground.

Emerging improved technologies and knowledge of harm has led to the modification or transition from many industries and history shows this can be achieved without harmful side effects

Transition from Coal mining and coal-fired power in The Hunter

- There are jobs in mining and coal-power but jobs in renewable power technologies have been shown elsewhere to exceed jobs in coal-associated industry.
- The Hunter is in an enviable position to be a “Renewable Industry Hub” creating jobs and ultimately exports for Australian Companies where the profits and taxes stay in Australia.
- Newcastle University among a number of notable innovations including solar paint, has pioneered revolutionary printed photovoltaics with the potential to slash the cost of solar power and create an export industry with huge potential for jobs. See attach.2.
- CSIRO Mayfield leads the world on the generation of super-critical steam from solar power See attach.3
- Newcastle TAFE offers an Associate Degree of Applied Engineering (Renewable Energy Technologies) attach.4

Instead of expanding a harmful and unsustainable coal industry for the profit of Multinationals and Royalties that are such a small part of the NSW Government’s revenue The Hunter could lead the world in sustainable technology AND create jobs.

For all of the above reasons I submit this Mount Owen Modification 2 should be rejected

J Leslie

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