Please find my Submission Outlining My Reasons Against the Proposed Gas-Fired Power Station at Kurri Kurri. I understand that my many concerns will be addressed by Snowy Hydro.

**1. The feasibility and economic rationale for a gas fuelled power station.**

The feasibility of using gas-fired power is challenged by the scientific evidence and advice. The International Energy Agency recently published a report calling for an end to gas projects if the world is to meet the world target of non-zero emissions by 2050. The Australian government, however, has no overarching climate control policy and Mr Morrison repeatedly proclaims that the lack of response from the private industry to meet the intermittent possibility of electricity shortfall, has promoted the Federal Government (Hydro Electricity) to build this gas-fired power station. The private industry has not met his demands of working with gas because it is not economically feasible: there are more affordable and cleaner options available and gas is the most expensive option. Matt Kean, NSW Environment Minister, believes we must seize opportunities in emerging clean energy technologies and that we should be moving towards a combination of wind, solar & pumped hydrogen.

A task force set up by State & Federal governments also questions the need for 1,000 megawatts to ensure continual electricity provision, stating that the figure is closer to 154 megawatts and that that could be provided by solar and wind, backed by battery storage. The prime minister makes no mention of the recent proposal put forward by a consortium of private investors (including AGL, GE, APA Group, Idemitsu and commodities trader Trafigura,) to make the Hunter Region a centre for the production of hydrogen. It would also appear that the current government is ignoring the

facts presented by its own advisory bodies. Dr Finkel, Australia's chief scientist from 2016 to 2020, is now Special Advisor to the Commonwealth Government on the research, development transition, and application of low emissions technology. He has explained how the hydrogen network, through hydrogen-powered turbines will be able to provide green, dispatch able energy.

Angus Taylor has told the public that this power station is essential, not only for domestic overload periods but also because of the necessity to keep industries working. He uses Tomago Aluminium as his example for this. Tomago Aluminium, Australia's biggest electricity user, had had to cut back production because there was not enough "normal" power on three nights after major outages at several black coal plants. Energy market experts deny that there was a lack of available electricity because Hydro Electricity already owned the 667MW Colongra generator, which could have readily provided the required electricity. Tomago Aluminium chose not to purchase that electricity because the government price at $15,000 a megawatt hour was too high! The experts also question why another "peaking" gas-fired power station is required when Colongra has run at less than 1% of its capacity over the last year. Senate estimates heard it usually runs at between 5% and 8% capacity. Mr Taylor's assertions are not validated and we don't need another peaking power station!

Is My Taylor deliberately misleading taxpayers or does he not seek the facts from his advisors? It is disconcerting to feel that the Federal minister in charge of this area is mis-informed or deliberately presenting falsehoods.

There is currently no available gas in the area to run this power station and it will be initially running on diesel, an even worse pollutant, which will be

transported by road along the busy Hunter Expressway. There appears to be no prediction of how long this would be functioning but a $500 million gas pipeline, 833 kms long, has to proceed to ensure the plant has a stable supply of gas, so the use of diesel might not be over a short timeline.

**2. The positioning of the power station**

The Environmental Impact Statement states that the site is in "a relatively isolated location surrounded by forest and rural or semi-rural land uses".

Not true. Within a five mile radius there are at least 11 towns (Loxford, Heddon Greta, Gillieston Heights, Weston, Abermain, Kurri Kurri, Cliftleigh, Pelaw Main, Stanford Merthyr, Buchanan & Neath) that collectively comprise a population of over 20,000 residents. There have always been well-established populations in the towns in this area because of the proximity to the Hunter Valley mines and vineyards. The building of the Hunter Expressway and the closure of the smelter in 2012 have made this area a popular residential area. The area has become appealing for those wishing to move out of Newcastle, yet enjoy the proximity to it, and enjoy larger building blocks in an un-polluted environment. Since the construction of the nearby Hunter Expressway, the area has also become more attractive to those working in the Newcastle/ Lake Macquarie/ Maitland areas as well as the Hunter Valley. For example, there are 3 newish housing estates off nearby Gingers Lane (1.9 km from the projected power station site) and Gillieston Heights, another recent housing development has a population of more than 3,000 residents.

There is no mention in the report of the nearby vineyards and the effect that nitrous pollution could have on grape crops.

Currently, the government claims that this power station would only be in use for 2-10% of the time. One questions why a 660megawatt generator would be necessary for this amount of power? Could it be that there is a future plan for full usage of this installation that is not being publically stated? While the 2-10% level of usage is being suggested, people are being soothed into thinking that this will not be a problem but again, I question the necessity for a power station of this size, which could potentially be in continual use.

Lack of transparency is worrying in this proposal. Geoff McCloy, a major Liberal Party donor, along with partner, John Stevens bought the prospective site of this power station in 2020. By April 2021 a power station had been planned and an Environmental Impact Plan had been finalised. In May 2021 the government was insisting that the power station would go ahead. A surprisingly fast process given the size of the project and the time usually required for drawing up plans and undertaking the required environmental research! Revealed in a Senate Inquiry this week, however, was the fact that Snowy Hydro had been looking at sites for this power station since 2007, including the Kurri Kurri site. When did Mr McCloy, with his close affiliation with the Liberal Party and long-term friend of Paul Broad, Chief Executive of Snowy Hydro, learn that Kurri Kurri was the chosen site? It would be highly coincidental if it was indeed after he had purchased the site.

In a recent Senate estimates hearing, department secretary David Fredericks would not disclose the amount that Snowy Hydro (i.e. the government) had agreed to purchase the land from Mr McCloy and Mr Stevens for, saying "that would be, firstly, a matter for Snowy Hydro; secondly, potentially

subject to cabinet in confidence: and thirdly, potentially a matter of current commercial in confidence". It is outrageous that this information could be withheld from taxpayers. The reluctance to give this information could maybe indicate that Mr McCloy and Mr Stevens have made a huge profit on this investment, which at the time of purchase they described " as the biggest of their careers."

It would also appear that the owners of the Hunter Gas Pipeline, also major Liberal Party donors, will similarly profit handsomely from this project.

Elsewhere in the Environmental Impact Report it states that "the visual impact is considered low to negligible due to the existing industrial landscape character". An interesting statement given the previous description of the surrounding environment as being semi-rural & forested. Again, this is not a true descriptor. This is not a heavily industrialised area and the stacks and the plumes would be visible by all the surrounding towns mentioned. All fossil fuelled power stations emit pollution and this would drift over these nearby residential areas and possibly to the vineyards. Cessnock and Maitland, are also only about 12 km away and could be impacted in certain climate conditions.

Given the above issues, it is very feasible that the installation of this power station would decrease the value of surrounding properties.

While the Environmental Impact Statement is quite technical and difficult for the layperson to interpret, there are several clear conclusions in the Hazard Risk assessment that are concerning, including "the Proposal will exceed the electricity generation nominal energy output threshold and is therefore deemed as a potentially offensive industry development." On page

21 we also read that " the minimum distance of the Proposal site ... towards the western boundary is not met. Therefore, the Proposal is considered potentially hazardous (NSW2011) due to inadequate distance to the Rural Landscape-bushland."

Another major issue for the placement of this power station is that the proposed site has no ready natural water supply. Most power stations are located near a natural water supply, such as a lake, as large amounts of water are need to be cycled through their systems. This site has no natural water source and water would be provided by connection to an existing Hunter Water potable water supply pipeline. The water demand for the two stacks is estimated to be 133.1 Kl per hour. The water usage for my household for the last four months was 31Kl in total, so the proposed power station would be putting a considerable drain on a precious resource. The used water would then be ejected into the existing sewerage system. Given the crippling droughts and the severe water restrictions we encounter every few years, this aspect of the running of the power station is clearly not viable.

In summary, there would appear to be no feasible or economic reason for this gas-driven power station, and particularly not in the site proposed. Indeed, if back-up power is required in the future, a solar battery complex would be a better solution.