

Dear Minister Rob Stokes,

I am writing to oppose the proposed new Kurri Kurri gas power plant in the Hunter Valley and ask you to refuse approval for the development.

The basis of my objection is two-fold: firstly, that it is harmful to the future personal and environmental health of New South Wales and Australia to continue to burn fossil fuels, particularly affecting our children; secondly, that it is harmful to the future economy of New South Wales and Australia to continue to develop and rely on fossil fuel assets when the rest of the world is already moving on to renewables.

The science is irrefutable that burning of fossil fuels is causing global warming and that global warming will lead to more extreme climate conditions in New South Wales and Australia, increasing suffering from fires, floods, droughts and sea-level rises with disastrous effects on future generations. Pollution is also an incontrovertible product of burning fossil fuels which will affect the health of surrounding communities. As the Federal Court recently found, it is incumbent on those making planning decisions to consider the effect of climate change on our children and negligent not to do so. Burning gas at the proposed Kurri Kurri plant would pump considerable greenhouse gases into our atmosphere, furthermore, the proposal is to initially run the plant on oil which would produce even greater amounts of greenhouse gases. Approving such a new project would contribute directly to global heating and be damaging to current and future citizens of New South Wales, Australia and the world.

The federal government has been unable to encourage private enterprise to open new fossil fuel power plants with good reason – the economics simply do not stack up. For you to sanction the investment of \$600million of taxpayers' money in an uneconomic project when the money could be used to create sustainable infrastructure would be a failure of responsibility to care for current and future public needs in New South Wales. By the federal government's own admission, the use of gas is only transitional to a renewable energy future - by the time the project is up and running, let alone actually running on gas, it is likely that it will be superseded resulting in an expensive white elephant.

According to the EIS, the project is expected to produce only 10 permanent jobs (which would be lost when the fossil fuel plant soon ceases operation, as it must): this is woeful when the same investment could produce so many more long-term renewable jobs for workers such as ex-coal miners in the Hunter Valley.

Experts ranging from Ross Garnault to Kerry Schott have decried unnecessary public investment in gas projects when renewable energy is cheaper to produce and where the rest of the world is heading. The recent IEA report clearly forecast the end of gas and other fossil fuels. Australia risks simply being left behind in energy technologies which will result in uncompetitive exports and penalties for carbon emissions in production as well as international political opprobrium negating our voice on the world stage. All of these potential outcomes negatively affect current and future generations in New South Wales and Australia and you have a duty to decide against the project on this basis.

The building of new greenhouse gas producing fossil fuel projects in New South Wales at a time when Australia is allegedly 'working towards' zero emissions, and New South Wales has committed to zero emissions by 2050 is untenable. It is directly contrary to this State's declared policy and you are therefore required to decide against its approval.

The public has good reason to be highly sceptical regarding the timing of, and the reasons for, the announcement of the proposed Kurri Kurri gas plant at a time when there was a State by-election occurring in the Hunter Valley and a federal election looming. The federal government's support for the archaic and damaging fossil fuel industry has become a subject of great cynicism with the voting public as well as business, who are voting with their own money and moving into the renewable sector such as solar, wind and batteries at speed. The federal government's alleged peaking power basis for the proposed plant has been stated by experts such as Kerrie Schott and the AEMO simply not to stack up especially in the current landscape of increasing availability of batteries. Don't let your government be tainted with the same scent of vested interests and dogmatism. Please look to the current and future benefit of the citizens of New South Wales and Australia and reject approval of the proposed Kurri Kurri gas power plant.

Thank you for reading this submission.

Jan Scott