

8 June 2021

Submitted via online portal

To the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment,

Submission to Hunter Power Project (Kurri Kurri Power Station)

350.org Australia is a registered charity, and our charitable purpose is to inform and educate the general public about climate change and its impact on the natural environment, and encourage research into climate change. We are building a grassroots movement to stand up to the fossil fuel industry, and support a just transition from coal, oil and gas to a renewable-energy future for all. We have 60,000 supporters across the country.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. We have a number of significant concerns about the project and strongly object to the Hunter Power Project proposal.

A new gas power plant is inconsistent with the NSW Government's climate commitments. The Environmental Impact Statement shows the project will be responsible for 14.8 million tonnes of greenhouse gases over its operating life. NSW has a commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050.¹ The International Energy Agency recently released a report that sets out the pathway to reach net zero by 2050. It states that investment in new fossil fuel supply is inconsistent with the pathway to net zero emissions.² The report effectively sets a phase-out date for gas-fired power by requiring electricity generation to have net zero emissions by 2035 for OECD countries.³ The proponents are indicating that the plant would have a thirty year lifespan, stretching well beyond 2035. It is worth noting that this plant is not "hydrogen ready" with the EIS stating that use of hydrogen would require modification to the power station and gas turbines.⁴ This proposal is clearly inconsistent with the NSW Government policies and should be rejected.

A new gas power plant is not needed for our energy system. This proposal is a political intervention by the Morrison Government, designed to help fix their political problems, not to benefit NSW. The EIS presents no information to support the claim that this power station is needed. Multiple energy experts have dismissed its need.⁵ Snowy Hydro's Colongra gas power station is an hour away from the proposed Kurri Kurri power station and has operated on average less than 1% of its total capacity in the last three years.

¹ NSW Net Zero Plan, available [here](#).

² International Energy Agency, 2021, "Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector", p 21.

³ Ibid, p 20.

⁴ EIS, p 24.

⁵ The Guardian, "'No coherent plan': experts reject Coalition rationale for taxpayer funded gas power plant", available [here](#).

Table: Colongra Power Station utilisation rates

Year	Facility name	Nameplate capacity (MW) ⁶	Electricity production (MWh)	Utilization rate (%) ⁷
May 2020-April 2021	Colongra Power Station	667	43605.8	0.7%
2019-2020 ⁸	Colongra Power Station	667	33,198	0.6%
2018-2019	Colongra Power Station	667	28,864	0.5%

The site location raises integrity concerns. The proposed site at the former Kurri Kurri aluminium smelter is owned by Hydro Aluminium Kurri Kurri but they have an agreement to sell the land to a joint venture of the McCloy Group and Stevens Group. The chairman of the McCloy Group is Jeff McCloy, a former Liberal party donor who was found by ICAC Operation Spicer to have acted with the intention of evading NSW bans on political donations from property developers.⁹

This gas-fired power station is inconsistent with NSW policy objectives, polluting and unnecessary and we urge the department to reject the application.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Manne,
CEO, 350.org Australia

⁶ Nameplate capacity from Snowy Hydro.

⁷ Calculated by 350.org using data from the National Electricity Market.

⁸ Including leap year day in 2020.

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<https://www.icac.nsw.gov.au/investigations/past-investigations/2016/nsw-public-officials-and-members-of-parliament-operation-spicer>