

ATTN: New South Wales Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Dear Panellists,

I thank the panel for this opportunity to express my objection to the Hunter Power Project (a.k.a. the Kurri Kurri Power Station).

I grew up in Central West New South Wales and have been a resident of Sydney's Inner West since the early 2000s. I'm a trained educator working in the tertiary education sector. I can remember when I was at school in the 1980s and 90s that one of the biggest environmental concerns was the recently identified hole in the ozone above Antarctica, and that it was chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) that were largely responsible for this deterioration.

By 1987, just two years after the hole was discovered, an international treaty was in place that cut the use of CFCs in half. Three years later in 1990, the Montreal Protocol was strengthened to ban the use of CFCs altogether in developed countries by the year 2000 and by the year 2010 in developing countries. Today, the use of CFCs is outlawed by 197 countries around the world and scientists concur that the ozone layer is slowly recovering as a result.¹

Children at school in 2021 are faced with not a single significant environmental issue, but many: microplastics², loss of biodiversity comparable to a mass extinction event³, ocean acidification⁴, increased temperatures and increased severity of weather events collectively and appropriately described as a climate crisis⁵.

We must act immediately, wherever and whenever we can on these issues.

The International Energy Agency implores us, the Global community and specifically governments, to drastically move away from fossil fuel dependency⁶ which they assert includes "no new investments in oil, gas and coal, from now (2021)"⁷.

The proponents of the Hunter Power Project state that this proposal will begin operation between August and December 2023 and is anticipated to operate for 30 years and significantly contribute to NSW and Australia's emissions for the entire duration of its operation. This is inconsistent with the state government's plans to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and jeopardises the Federal Government's commitments under the Paris Agreement to limit warming to well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial temperatures.

I would also question why the Australian Government is not considering using the \$600million slated for this project to fund sustainable energy generation, and why the NSW State Government is not pushing for investment in transitioning away from fossil fuel energy generation.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that in 2020 New South Wales had 3,107 schools (Public, Catholic, and Independent)⁸. Installing twelve 300 watt solar panels (at \$250 each⁹) on 3,000 schools would create

¹ <https://www.rapidtransition.org/stories/back-from-the-brink-how-the-world-rapidly-sealed-a-deal-to-save-the-ozone-layer/>

² <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01143-3>

³ <https://theconversation.com/what-is-a-mass-extinction-and-are-we-in-one-now-122535>

⁴ <https://ecos.csiro.au/the-state-of-ocean-acidification/>

⁵ <http://www.bom.gov.au/state-of-the-climate/australias-changing-climate.shtml>

⁶ <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>

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<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/18/no-new-investment-in-fossil-fuels-demands-top-energy-economist>

⁸ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release>

⁹ <https://www.solarquotes.com.au/panels/comparison/compare-solar-panels/>

10.82MW capacity and cost \$9million to procure. Procuring a 10kWh domestic battery at each of these locations would cost \$37.5 million¹⁰. I'm not able to approximate the installation expenses but if we set aside \$40million for this then on paper then schools in New South Wales would match the 2% day-to-day running capacity of the project¹¹ for 17% of the government investment. With the remaining \$500million the Australian Government could invest in similar initiatives in other states and territories, or build new more energy efficient school buildings, or retrofit existing school buildings with better insulation, cooling and heating including solar hot water systems, energy efficient lighting, etc... Or install solar panels and batteries the same for hospitals, train stations, sports grounds and/or swimming pools. **There are just so many other options for the public purse to fund that could "create jobs for up to 600 construction workers and generate around \$800 million worth of investment for the local economy"**¹² instead of this project.

I recognise that I'm not an expert with regards to Australia's energy systems or markets. I recognize the above is a "back of a napkin" equation. But I do believe that others who are better informed also feel the Hunter Power Project is not value for money¹³ or a sound financial or environmental investment¹⁴.

Just like the identification of the hole in the ozone above Antarctica and global action to eliminate CFC usage I urge the Department to recognise the Climate Crisis that is upon us and heed the scientific guidance regarding fossil fuel consumption (including that of natural gas). **For the sake of future generations of Australians do not approve this application.**

I would note that this imperative is becoming more than a social expectation, it is also becoming a legal precedent. As recently described in Sharma v Minister for Environment (May 29, 2021) the state has a 'duty of care to protect children from future personal injury caused by climate change'¹⁵ But also internationally corporate entities, such as Royal Dutch Shell, are being held accountable for their emission reduction¹⁶.

The New South Wales Government has made strong commitments towards "net zero"¹⁷. Do not let this project impede on this plan's "aims to enhance the prosperity and quality of life of the people of NSW". I have been lucky enough to grow up having seen the global community overcome what could have been environmental and human catastrophe. By not approving this application, by **not going ahead with the Hunter Power Project**, you will contribute to the global community overcoming the most tangible existential threat of our current and future generations.

Thank you for considering this submission. I am happy to be contacted for further details as required.

¹⁰ <https://www.solarmarket.com.au/batteries/battery-pricing-and-sizes/>

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<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/may/18/morrison-government-to-fund-600m-gas-fired-power-plant-in-nsw-hunter-region>

¹² <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/News/2020/Critical-declaration-for-Hunter-gas-fired-power-plant>

¹³

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/may/19/labor-demands-government-release-business-case-for-600m-hunter-valley-gas-plant>

¹⁴

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/30/australian-energy-board-chair-says-gas-fired-power-plant-in-hunter-valley-doesnt-stack-up>

¹⁵

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/the-australian-government-has-a-duty-of-care-to-protect-children-from-climate-harm-court-rules>

¹⁶ <https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/shell-loses-climate-case-that-may-set-precedent-for-big-oil-20210527-p57vhe>

¹⁷ <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/climate-change/net-zero-plan>