

Re: BlueScope Steel Blast Furnace 6 Reline Project:

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am providing this submission to support the proposed BlueScope Blast Furnace 6 Reline Project. My personal thoughts on this topic are expressed by my written words below.

Background:

I came to the Illawarra as an Electrical Engineering Trainee at the steelworks in the late 70's and have since put down deep roots in the wonderful city of Wollongong. Over the years, I have worked in the steelworks both as an employee and a contractor and have witnessed the evolution of this critical industry through all the ups and downs to now become a prosperous and forward-looking business that reinforces its role within the industrial manufacturing backbone of our country.

More specifically, I was involved in the last Blast Furnace 5 Reline and gained a first-hand understanding of the process, expectations and hard work involved with such a large critical project. At that time, Blast Furnace 6 was under care and maintenance awaiting its future and I am pleased that this key asset is to be refurbished and brought back into service for another campaign.

Pathway to the Future:

As I am sure that many would agree, I would have preferred this investment to be for innovative green steel technology, but such technology is clearly still a way off from successful and practical large-scale implementation. The reline project is really a good step in the right direction – one step, but a very important big step nonetheless.

Some may ask if we can we keep Blast Furnace 5 going for longer and hold back the reline until the necessary green steel technology is available, practical and proven ? I believe that the answer that question is no.

By undertaking this reline project, the projected life of iron production in the Illawarra and in Australia will be extended and this will undoubtedly assist BlueScope to fund the next steps along the path to decarbonised iron and steel production.

Sovereign Capability:

The vital sovereign ability to produce such an important commodity onshore cannot be overstated. This capability will become more secure after this project has been completed and Blast Furnace 6 starts earning its keep to deliver a return on the large investment made by BlueScope and the community in which it operates.

Regional Benefits:

Apart from the obvious benefits to employment, facilities and lifestyle in the Illawarra, the associated spin-offs from future responsible / green steel developments with renewables and new technologies will undoubtedly bring many associated benefits, both tangible and intangible, to the people in our region. Some such benefits may be envisaged now, but many will only be realised as we move further down this pathway. Our children and grandchildren would be the most like beneficiaries and that makes me pleased.

Conversely, if we look at this from the other end, a future that includes no iron production at Port Kembla will undoubtedly leave a huge hole in our region and the need to drastically reinvent ourselves to fill the gap.

Coal and the Ironmaking Process:

I believe that coal will still be a part of the ironmaking process for the near future but the transition away from coal is gaining momentum across the board. Love it or hate it, the writing is on the wall for coal but we all know that this transition won't happen overnight and needs to be properly funded and

carefully managed to happen at all. We cannot suddenly go cold-turkey on coal and expect the have an unchanged standard of living and lifestyle. We are really at the “working towards” stage here and there is much to do before we get to “mission accomplished”.

Renewable Energy Resources:

The overall transition of heavy industrial processes, such as iron and steel making, to renewable energy sources will be further boosted as BlueScope works toward their plans for iron and steel making. The successful reline and subsequent production life of Blast Furnace 6 is a key early component to this plan as it has been described to me.

Emissions:

In the context of emissions, I feel that BlueScope has demonstrated a sense of community obligation to be a good neighbour as also expected by the Illawarra community at large. Such obligations and expectations will provide strong positive motivation to mitigate all forms of emissions / pollution coming over their fence. As with all such industries, this is always challenging and success may fluctuate at times.

Certainly, we can legislate, monitor, prosecute and penalise for non-compliance but the underlying intent to be a good community citizen and neighbour is a far more powerful factor. I feel that this is the BlueScope approach.

This reline project is a great opportunity for BlueScope to take their good neighbour / community citizen approach to the next level with a strong focus to deliver reduced emissions as Blast Furnace 6 takes over production from Blast Furnace 5 and the new / better ways of reducing / controlling emissions can be proven in practice.

Thank You.

Roger Tindall,
20th April, 2022.