

Climate Change Australia Hastings (CCA) is a community climate action group, based in Port Macquarie, NSW and works at the community level to address climate change issues at the local, state and national level.

CCA objects to the Glendell Continuation Project.

The review of this one project must not be carried out in isolation - as if it were the only coal mine - but in the context of the industry as a whole and the known consequences. Coal is extracted only for one purpose - to burn it. And the consequences of burning coal are well documented. The Glendell Continuation Project will result in an additional 230.8 million tonnes of greenhouse gases over the life of the project - and this is in addition to the greenhouse pollution from the rest of the Mount Owen complex. Approval to the continuation of this mine is approval for the increase in pollution, including global greenhouse gas emissions. You cannot have one without the other.

We object to this project on its own lack of merit, but more importantly, we object to it because it is fundamentally at odds with protecting Australians from the impacts of climate change. It undermines other industries such as tourism and agriculture and relies heavily on substantial government subsidies. It impedes the development of alternative renewable energy options, its core product - coal - is harmful to human health costing Australian taxpayers an estimated \$2.6 billion every year. It is a risky financial investment — banks, insurance companies, institutional investors, etc are either not supporting or actively disengaging from fossil fuel projects. For details of these comments, see the Climate Council Report “Risky Business: Health, Climate and Economic Risks of the Carmichael Mine”.

Even as this submission is being written, the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis has drawn attention to the global capital flight from thermal coal including Black Rock and Aegon. <https://ieefa.org/ieefa-update-capital-flight-from-thermal-coal-is-accelerating> It points out that “As one of the three largest fossil fuel export nations globally, Australia’s economy is exceptionally exposed. Australia can continue “investing” in yet more coal and liquefied natural gas capacity and can build more and more stranded assets (along with the harm to regional communities involved).”

The proponent asserts that the project will benefit the local community with jobs and local expenditure as well as contribute significantly to the State and National finances. This may or may not be true in the short term, but in the longer term, the financial and social consequences of burning the extracted coal are well known - see reports of United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Reserve Bank of Australia, etc. The local communities who will supposedly benefit from this project will be adversely affected by the disastrous impacts of climate change such as the extreme droughts and bushfires we are all enduring. The local community would benefit far more from a planned transition from the existing Glendell coal mine to the industries of the future such as the renewable energy industry, that would provide a far greater number of safe and sustainable jobs.

The Climate Council in its report “Ageing and Unprepared: Energy in New South Wales” found that NSW was once a world leader on climate action but over the past five years it has become a laggard. It found that NSW is responsible for greater greenhouse gas pollution than any other state or territory and continues to rely heavily on polluting coal and unreliable gas power stations. It also found that although local councils are beginning to step up in the face of state government inaction, current climate policies in NSW are inadequate and the state is highly exposed to the impacts of climate change.”

On 25 October 2019 the New South Wales Government introduced the draft Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Territorial Limits) Bill 2019. This proposed amendment aims to prevent the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions from Australian coal burned overseas. The Environmental Defenders Office CEO David Morris responded that because we are part of one climate system, burning NSW coal overseas impacts communities here at home. He continued that it defies logic that in a time of severe drought and bushfires, a (government) claiming to be for and from the bush would legislate against consideration of climate impacts from Australian coal on our communities.

This proposed legislation is currently under review by a Parliamentary Committee and accordingly, the existing legislation is in force.

We conclude that the proposed extension of the Glendell project is financially, socially and environmentally unacceptable. We do not accept that the project is consistent with NSW’s climate change policy, the principle of intergenerational equity, nor the public interest. By proposing to burn more coal, significantly adding to greenhouse gas emissions, it clearly fails to meet the Paris Agreement temperature goals and worsens climate change impacts for the local community and for the people of New South Wales and Australia.