Submission: Rejecting Wallarah 2 ADA (SSD-4974) PAC

Deponent:
D Williamson B.Sc., Dip.Ed., M.Env.

In opening, I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Darkinjung, their elders past, present and future and over whose land the ADA we are debating applies. This land was, has never been ceded and remains sovereign land.

As a resident of the Central Coast who drinks our reticulated water and breathes our atmosphere, I absolutely reject this amended DA SSD-4974 from the applicant, the Wyong Areas Coal Joint Venture.

The Wallarah 2 Coal Project Economic Impact Assessment Peer Review conducted by Andrew Wu of Hansen Bailey (2016) illuminated a number of issues which justify the rejection of this application:

• The I/O analysis conducted according to NSW Department of Planning and Environment requirements unacceptably admits that the employment figures used in this ADA are rubbery and only represent 'project employment' as opposed to full employment (Wu 2016).

• The supplementary I/O analysis completely ignores potential crowding out of economic activity in other sectors in the region (Wu 2016).

• No valuation has been done on adverse health outcomes (Wu 2016). A nominal valuation of admitted increased regional mortality of $1.5 million per person killed by this ADA produces a cost of: Valuation each mortality x increase in number of mortalities above background level at of PM2.5 at 10 micrograms.m⁻³ (Aust 2012) x expected operational life of project(years)(op.cit.) = 1.5 x 10⁶ x 2.069 x 28 = $86 980 000.

• Assuming a nominal cost for each hospitalisation caused by this ADA of $8 000 using the same calculation method as above produces a cost to the Central Coast Area Health System of $453 130 (Aust 2012).

• The summed social cost, totalling $87 433 129 is completely unacceptable to me specifically as a member of the Central Coast community which is disproportionately represented by these statistics. Which of the commissioners will be consoling my daughter if I or another member of this community is struck down or killed by an illness caused by PM or NOx pollution in the air where we live or the Uranium oxides in the water we drink?

• Potential direct production of export thermal coal from this ADA will be up to 5 000 000T, producing estimated total royalties to the State of NSW of $200 million at present value (Gillespie Economics 2016).

• Local income has been estimated at $7.6-12.8 million p.a. (op.cit.) and with a current population of the Central Coast at 317 000 (Gosford City Council 2014, Wyong Shire Council 2014); this means that the physical and indirect costs are proposed to be recompensed to the community of the Central Coast at a value of between $28.99 - 40.38 per person p.a. What gives the commissioners the right to trade away our health for this insignificant amount of money, less than the cost of a restaurant meal?

• There has been an inappropriate basis of valuation of greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts nationally, which will have to be offset by some other activity to enable Australia to meet its international commitments (Wu 2016) made at COP21 in December 2015.

• Notwithstanding the unreliable project nature of the work, this ADA will produce direct employment benefit of up to 300 workers or 224 - 381 direct and indirect employment, of which the net local employment of locals will be only 79 - 134 workers (Gillespie Economics 2016).
The above local job predictions of project-based employment should be evaluated against the 968 permanent local jobs predicted by the ZCA 2020 Stationary Energy Plan (Wright & Hearps 2010) in operation and maintenance of renewable energy installations as a relative proportion of a national increase of 75 000 positions (Gosford City Council 2014, Wyong Shire Council 2014, Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017). This figure for permanent renewable energy jobs represents 7 - 12 times of those on offer by this ADA.

In addition to the above issues, in the Economic Impact Assessment, Table ES1 points out that: Local surface water users shall be impacted and compensated … with water then returned back into the catchment. (ibid.) This returning of (presumably treated water) absolutely unacceptable due to contamination of surface waters with radionuclides of Uranium, a well known carcinogen in humans and other vertebrates. The impacts of this contamination are grossly underestimated at $1 000 000 (ibid.) for the Central Coast catchment.

Finally, subsidence caused through removal of longwall sections of W2 mine of this ADA poses a significant risk of undermining the Hunter-Wyong River-Mardi pipeline infrastructure which has recently cost ratepayers of the former Gosford and Wyong LGAs $125 000 000.

For each of the above impacts, encompassing unacceptable economic, social and environmental factors, the Wallarah 2 ADA (SSD-4974) must be rejected from proceeding.

References:


