

Submission on Glendell Continued Operations – SSD 9349 and SSD 5850 Mod 4

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1 Objection

I am a research scientist in the mathematical and physical sciences.

I OBJECT to the proposed continuation and extension of coal mine operations. The project should be refused on the grounds that it will cause unacceptable and irreversible harm by increasing global warming.

The continued expansion of the fossil fuel industry must be stopped:

- Policy or legislation that permits increased or extended fossil fuel production is *unreasonable* because it denies the *physics* that underlies the climate crisis.
- The physics says: “Global fossil fuel production must start declining immediately and steeply to be consistent with limiting long-term warming to 1.5°C.” — UNEP Production Gap Report [1].
- Even 1.5°C of global warming will be catastrophic, and demand-side NDCs alone will not get us there. Supply-side measures are needed to have any chance of meeting the Paris 1.5°C goal.
- Consent authorities that are being asked to make determinations based on *unreasonable* policy or legislation are required to act in the **public interest** and should **reject** any development application that would result in, or risk, any increase or extension of global fossil fuel production.
- This project is not consistent with Australia’s commitment to pursue the 1.5°C Paris Agreement goal.

2 Reasons

Based on best available climate science:

- The US National Intelligence Estimate on Climate Change [2], released 21 October 2021, states that:

“Global temperatures have increased 1.1°C since pre-industrial times and most likely will add 0.4°C to reach 1.5°C around 2030.”
- Even 1.5°C of global warming will be environmentally catastrophic. It risks, for instance, destruction of the Great Barrier Reef [3]. Every fraction of a degree matters, therefore every effort must be made to keep global warming as low as possible.
- Earth’s average temperature is increasing because of a radiative imbalance that results in the Earth absorbing more heat from the Sun than it radiates back into space [4]. This radiative imbalance exists primarily because the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere [5] is increasing. The most significant contribution to this increase comes from burning fossil fuels—a process that releases into the atmosphere carbon that has been trapped underground for millions of years.
- All CO₂ emissions, no matter how small in quantity, increase the atmospheric CO₂ concentration and thereby increase global warming. There is no “safe carbon budget” that allows for some quan-

tity of fossil fuel to be burned without causing harm, that is, without increasing global warming.

- The UNEP Production Gap Report [1] is an analysis of the fossil fuel supply-side of the atmospheric CO₂ problem. Key findings of the Production Gap Report include:
 - “Governments plan to produce more than twice the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C.”
 - “Global fossil fuel production must start declining immediately and steeply to be consistent with limiting long-term warming to 1.5°C.”
- With regards to the second of the above key findings: In order that fossil fuel production “start declining immediately” it is necessary that any *new* fossil fuel production must displace *existing* fossil fuel production.
- There is only one way that a proposed fossil fuel project can guarantee that the project will not increase the world’s fossil fuel production: the *net* amount of fossil fuel produced by the project (i.e., *new* production minus *existing* production) must be less than or equal to zero.
- The proposed mine extension does not satisfy the above requirement. Approval of the project would therefore be inconsistent with Australia’s commitment to pursue the 1.5°C Paris Agreement goal. The project should be refused.

References

- [1] *The 2021 Production Gap Report*, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), <https://productiongap.org>
- [2] *National Intelligence Estimate on Climate Change*, October 2021, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/reports-publications/reports-publications-2021/item/2253-national-intelligence-estimate-on-climate-change>
- [3] *The human imperative of stabilizing global climate change at 1.5°C*, Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, et al., *Science*, September 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaw6974>
Paris Agreement goals slipping away and with it Australia’s chance to save the Great Barrier Reef, Chris McGrath, (2019) 36 (1), *Environmental and Planning Law Journal*, <http://envlaw.com.au/paris-agreement-paradox>
- [4] IPCC special report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15>
- [5] <https://www.co2.earth>
<https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/carbon-dioxide>