

From: [Rupert Macgregor](#)
To: [IPCN Enquiries Mailbox](#)
Subject: Submission opposing the Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project
Date: Friday, 26 August 2022 7:32:33 PM

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for providing the opportunity for members of the public to comment on the Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project proposal which has been submitted for consideration and seeking formal approval to proceed.

This proposal is deeply concerning, both in terms of its overall destructive implications and wider negative consequences from the point of initial establishment clearing and construction and throughout its operational life and beyond – and now with even more specific and unconscionable consequences of wreaking the probable extinction of a unique and highly endangered faunal species.

At all levels and from all relevant perspectives, the implications and consequences of this proposal are utterly unacceptable; hence I firmly believe that the Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project must be opposed and refused.

In exploring these concerns further, I begin with the most immediate and specific.

A team of scientists from the Australian Museum has officially confirmed that a legless lizard from the Hunter Valley has been identified as a species previously unknown to science; now formally classified and named the Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*).

This species will now form the focus of further comprehensive scientific and ecological research projects, although all present indications are that this highly vulnerable and endangered animal is only found within a limited habitat area – and the sole identified habitat lies within the boundaries of the proposed site of the Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project.

Self-evidently, then, any approval for the clearance of the site and the construction of the mine, would have the consequence of condemning this rare and unique species to immediate extinction.

As we are all aware, Australia's unenviable and deplorable reputation as responsible for the highest number of faunal extinctions across the globe, and ever more vulnerable remnant species being classified as highly endangered, has raised national and international concerns.

These concerns underpin such major exercises and determination to prevent any such further species losses and terminal environmental degradation as the "Samuel Review report and recommendations currently before the Federal government, and the extant Senate Committee "Inquiry into Australia's Faunal Extinction Crisis", whose final report is expected shortly.

What these processes have made starkly clear is that we are right in the midst of a national (and potentially also international or global) Extinction Crisis; making it essential that we must set the absolute need to prioritise conservation and protection of biodiversity as a key criterion in the consideration of all planning and development processes.

Hence the precautionary principle must be applied; under its grave threat to condemn an endangered species to extinction, no approval can be given to this dangerous proposal.

The broader concern is one of at least similar gravity and urgency: the absolute need to hold the accelerating levels of global heating and climate within 1.5 degrees from an internationally agreed base, if we are to have any chance of avoiding the worst projected catastrophes and disasters of runaway climate change.

This proposal cannot be approved because of the consequential exacerbation of greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the level of risk of climate change disasters threatening the whole country – and the future of life on earth.

The impacts of the toxic green-house gas emissions this project would produce – from initial site clearance, construction and operation - would further jeopardise our national capacity to achieve an accelerated reduction of such emissions by 43% by 2030.

That reduction is Australia's present international commitment, one which is in process of being confirmed in legislation which has been passed by the House of Representatives, and currently the subject of review by a Committee of the Senate, to expedite its imminent passage into law.

As we know from the February 2021 Update Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - and that Report's dire scientific-research-driven prognostications - we must act to hold global heating within 1.5 degrees; or face an acceleration of irreversible destructive consequences.

Both the United Nations and the International Energy Agency have warned that, to have any hope of holding the rate of global heating within that critical 1.5 degrees limit, every nation must now cease from any further expansion beyond present level of extraction from currently operational fossil fuel resources – and desist from additional exploitation or extraction from any new resource locations.

Conclusion:

Approval must be refused to this proposal.

Yours sincerely,
Rupert Macgregor