

Submission re Restart of Redbank Power Station proposal

I refer to Verdant Earth Technologies proposal to repurpose the closed Redbank power station (near Singleton) for the burning of plant matter.

I applaud that they are now saying they will not include native forest logging materials in their incinerator. This is surprising considering that other Biomass burning plants in NSW do, e.g. the Tarkeeth native forest was woodchipped and burned at Broadwater, and other Biomass facilities in the USA and Europe are known to burn native timber.

Water and Fertiliser

Verdant Earth Technologies now propose to use weeds and purpose-grown crops on degraded ex mining land and low grade farmland. Questions remain about how they will obtain weeds exclusively and to what extent water and fertiliser will be used to grow these crops. Endangered native plants can exist amongst the weeds. With our experience in Coffs Harbour, the blueberry farmers have needed to be allocated water at the expense of the community and their runoff has poisoned local lakes and probably the ocean.

Verdant's proposal would need to have an allocation of water from the local river. Surely this will be at the expense of the wildlife in the river and water quality for other users. We are a dry continent and Singleton area may well have extended periods of drought as we head into Climate Change.

Climate Change Abatement

Burning biomass is inconsistent with the objectives of the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000 in that it produces more emissions than coal per equivalent amount of energy generated and thus does not reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the electricity sector or make a genuine contribution to the achievement of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

The large amount of **diesel-fuelled** trucks on the road required to collect and supply the materials for burning, will inevitably add to the speed of climate change.

Impacts on health of local citizens

Local citizens in the Hunter region have long been exposed to particulates in the air from coal mining and their health has suffered as a result. From this proposal, the health of local citizens will be impacted further in that “wood smoke contains tiny particles and gases that can have serious health effects when breathed.”

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/publications/91br023.pdf>

Replacing genuine renewable energy

This project would dominate the grid so when there is too much energy produced at any one time, biomass can't be stopped, but wind and solar can. Surely support for genuine renewable energy plants supplying cheaper energy (including that the fact there is no need for trucks to supply the energy to be used) is a far better goal.

Jobs

This project may create a few jobs. Again this will be at the expense of renewable, non-polluting jobs. Surely we don't need more jobs in the world that lack Moral Ambition (Rutger Bregman, 2025, Moral Ambition, Bloomberry Publishing, Great Britain). At this stage of human existence, we need to be working together to make a positive difference, and stop creating jobs that damage our environment and our future.

Sincerely

Susan Coleman

