

Knitting Nannas Hunter Loop are a group of older women from around the Hunter who are concerned about the degradation of our environment and what we will leave for future generations.

We have many concerns about this project:

On health grounds. The Hunter Valley has suffered an appalling health record compared to the National average due to its poor air quality from pollution from mines and power stations. We were hoping that with the transition to cleaner technologies we could finally hope for an improvement. The cavalier statement that the existing pollution levels are so bad that the additions from this power plant will not need to be taken into account is a gut punch to those hopes.

The Feedstock: Growing energy crops will directly compete with feed crops. If the proposal is to grow energy crops on degraded mine land how does that square with commitments to rehabilitate mine land to as close to its original state as possible? *Coppiced fuel crops is not rehabilitation*

The so called agricultural waste they want to burn is increasingly being valued by farmers as a product that can be incorporated in their practise to improve soil condition, drainage, fertility and carbon content. Removing it off site to be burnt is a retrograde step.

Sourcing fuel from so called Invasive Native Species clearing is even more problematic. We already have a habitat loss rate due to clearing in NSW worse than Indonesia. Our regulations around clearing are woefully inadequate, poorly enforced and under review. We hope that the outcome will be a strengthening of those laws and a more rigorous enforcement regime. Either way sourcing the volumes stated in this proposal seems fanciful. The last thing we need is to incentivise farmers further to clear land that is valuable habitat for many of our native species.

Taken as a whole the feedstock plan is a flimsy veil to hide the large scale felling and burning of trees which will be the inevitable result if this plant goes ahead.

NF needs to be specifically excluded in conditions

The value of vegetation!

It is claimed that burning biomass in a power plant is better than burning it in the field. This is true, but nowhere is the analysis done with the scenario of not clearing the land in the first place. A standing tree not only provides a carbon sink but a whole host of other benefits, including shade, water retention, erosion prevention, improved air quality, drought prevention and habitat. The highest order use of all is to leave the trees standing. We are hopeful that new legislation in the pipeline will reduce the current rate of land clearing. This power station with its huge appetite for wood has the capacity to make that harder and to distort the market, encouraging harmful land clearing.

The IPCC, when it included biomass as a possible renewable energy source, did not envisage land clearing and destruction of mature trees as the source of that biomass.

*baseline
firming*
Wrong technology. The documentation repeatedly makes the point that this is an improvement on a coal fired power station but no-one is proposing to build a new coal fired power station. The comparison should have been with newer technology, wind, solar and battery, not last century's solution. It claims to be dispatchable – it runs 24/7 and cannot respond to the fluctuating demands of a contemporary power grid. That does not meet the definition of a dispatchable energy source. Any investment in this project is a diversion of resources from better solutions.

We were delighted to hear about the **Hunter Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone with all it promised.**

But we did not foresee it being used to justify restarting an old power station as a wood incinerator.

On the grounds of environmental protection and intergenerational equity we strongly object to this project as the harms greatly out way any minimal benefits.