

G Butler Public Access Submission to HVO North & South Continuation Hearing

To the Commissioners, thank you for allowing me to address you today.

My name is Greg Butler and with my children & grandchildren I am part of six generations of our family to live in Singleton and the surrounding areas.

I was fortunate to work at the Hunter Valley Operation mine complex for 45 ½ years before retiring in the middle of 2025.

I started as an apprentice electrician in January 1980 and retired as an Engineering Officer in 2025 from HVO having worked there for my entire working life.

This mine has allowed me to support, raise and educate my family and support them into adulthood with one of my sons now employed at Hunter Valley Operation. I am just one of thousands that Hunter Valley Operations has allowed to live and support our families in this community through employment there.

This mine has many families with multiple members of the family having worked or still working there, Husbands & Wife's, Sons and Daughters, Brothers and Sisters.

My former colleague Peter Constable couldn't be here today because he is looking after his grandson, but he wanted you to know this. He worked at HVO for more than 53 years. His two brothers, his son, his nephew and niece all worked at HVO, and other family members worked for various other mines in the Valley

Families like mine and Peter's, with multiple generations of mine workers, we choose to work for HVO because they look after us, our extended families and our community. , There are many employees with 10, 20 ,30 or 40 plus years of service at Hunter Valley Operations.

People say we should close mines and focus on renewables, but I don't know of any renewable energy project that would be able to support multiple people in a family, over generations. This mine is part of the history of many families in the Hunter and we want it to stay that way.

If a decision was made not to approve this mine, it would have a significant impact on my family. It would not just affect my son who works there, but my other children and their partners, as the companies they work for are dependent on Hunter Valley Operations for part of their business income. The social and economic effect would spread throughout the whole Hunter Valley if this mine were not approved.

In January 1980 when I started my apprenticeship the big employers of apprentices were BHP steelworks in Newcastle, Aluminium Smelters at Kurri & Tomago, Liddell & Bayswater power stations and the mines in the Singleton/Muswellbrook area. The apprentices trained in the early 1980's are all retired or approaching retirement. Of these industries now only the mines and Tomago survive with a future. We are not training enough trades people. Where are our young people going to be able to gain apprenticeships?

Hunter Valley Operations has trained hundreds of apprentices over the years. At any time, there is between 40 and 50 apprentices in training at Hunter Valley operations.

I was privileged to gain my trade and engineering training through this company. This has allowed me to raise my family in the area I grew up in and close to our wider family network and gain skills that I can use even now in retirement.

Over the years I was employed at Hunter Valley Operations I was involved in the training of both apprentices and graduate engineers and without this mine many will miss out on the opportunity to gain a trade or experience in their chosen field. Hunter Valley Operations has always been a strong performer in this regard. Many of the apprentices and engineers are part of this community still, choosing to live and be part of the local community, contributing both to their profession and the community.

Hunter Valley Operations has supported financially much in our community over the many years that I was employed. The church I am part of New Vine Vineyard church based here in Branxton was fortunate to be a recipient of grant to help build a foodbank in this community to help those that are struggling in our current economic climate.

Projects such as this would not be possible without the support of Hunter Valley Operations.

Hunter Valley Operations are important and vital part of our community both economically and socially. Been such a large employer in this area their impact is great and the loss of them will be felt.

I fully support this project. I believe Hunter Valley Operations to be a responsible corporate citizen to our region and without it this area and the state of NSW will suffer.

Thankyou