

Hi I am Jeanette Hunter. I was born in and now live in Newcastle NSW, the lands of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

We are connected by land, by water and by air to all living things. We are all local to one another. What happens with the HVO expansion will affect everyone no matter where they live, not just its closest neighbours. The impacts of climate change are already being increasingly felt in real time. It is the vulnerable people in our community who will feel these impacts disproportionately: older people, those with chronic health conditions, people with disabilities, children, and those without safe or stable housing for example.

People like my mother. Until she died in 2025, I cared for her at home for several years. We were lucky enough to have air-conditioning (and the ability to afford to keep it on) to help her stay cool as the heat waves rolled out. We worried about power outages constantly though, not only for the issues with cooling but the continued operation of equipment we used for her care. The frequent poor air quality in Newcastle, which is at least partly attributable to the coal industry and the port that services it, also triggered her asthma and made it harder to keep her comfortable when she was unwell.

The effects of climate change go beyond life threatening heat waves. When we lived in Canberra, we almost lost our house in the 2003

regularly donate shelf stable food and grocery items to the free shop near Hamilton Station. I have noticed an increasing number of people needing help with food and basic supplies there. They and many more will struggle as climate change continues to affect the cost of living and food security. I am also concerned for coal mining communities in regions like our own which will bear the economic and social costs of inadequate government planning for and investment in transition on top of climate change impacts.

I want a better future for my nieces and for all future generations. I want us to continue to know and enjoy the Newcastle I have always loved and called home. One of the things I love best about our region is the natural environment, our beautiful coastline, bush, rivers, wetlands and all the creatures that live in it, such as the critically endangered Swift Parrot. The thought of losing more of that is unbearable. And yet, both the direct impacts of this mine expansion and its affect on climate change is setting us up for exactly that, at great cost, both emotionally and financially.

It is for these reasons I'm opposed to the Hunter Valley Operations Project being granted approval. Thank you for your time, Commissioners.

bushfires. As I evacuated mum to where I was then living (5 minutes away but still under ember attack), I saw houses burning on the hill above and a long line of cars evacuating people from the nearby suburb of Duffy. We were lucky that a change in conditions on the day halted the fire about 5 houses away (as the crow flies). Over 500 Canberrans were not so lucky, including 4 who lost their lives in the fire. Climate change is likely to have contributed to the intensity of this fire. I don't want anyone else to have to go through this.

However, over the last 2 decades, Australia has continued to clock up devastating losses from natural disasters. If the mining of fossil fuels continues unabated, the pace of climate change will only increase the frequency and intensity of floods, fires, storms, and coastal inundation. The compounding nature of these events will strain if not overwhelm the capacity of first responders, insurance companies, and even governments.

I'm also feeling the effects of cost of living increases which stem from climate change impacts right now. The grocery money doesn't stretch as far as it used to. It's harder to pay bills. And my home insurance costs have still increased significantly, almost 80 per cent over 6 years, despite raising the excess and renegotiating coverage, even though I don't live in a flood or bushfire prone area. My mum and I used to