

HVO IPC Public presentation -

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Independent Planning Panel. My name is Pauline Dunne. I've worked primarily as an Adult educator and Community development / engagement practitioner both in Australia and overseas. I am opposed to the approval of the Hunter Valley Operations Project.

Growing up in a mining community on Awabakal land in west Lake Macquarie I experienced first-hand the benefits along with the personal, community and environmental costs of mining

Almost 44 years ago I graduated as a primary school teacher from Newcastle CAE. I included classes about the green-house effect and its potential impacts as part of the kids' humans and the environment unit primary curriculum. The kids got it. The parents got it. No controversy, No need to provide the other side, because there wasn't one. **Yet here I am.**

The science is clear, basic physics indicated then and now the consequences of continuing to pollute our atmosphere with carbon emissions. But following decades of disinformation and lack of political will we are paying the price in delayed action on climate change.

What is new and constantly evolving is that forecasting climate change impacts has become more precise. The effects of accelerating climate change are proven and are being experienced right now by local communities, across NSW, across Australia and globally.

Locally in the past decade we've experienced impacts from fire, floods, East Coast Lows and coastal erosion, heat waves - millions of dollars of damage to infrastructure and homes, hundreds of people isolated, mass rescues undertaken, transport and communication links severely affected, houses collapsing into the sea, astronomical loss of biodiversity, flora and fauna, businesses and livelihoods lost, families uprooted, and a loss of life.

In fact, the Hunter region has been one of the hardest hit by wild weather in NSW over the past five years, with the NRMAs Insurance Wild Weather Tracker revealing that the Hunter recorded more than one in 10 claims.

Do we have such short memories. Where is the logic in continuing to allow emissions to increase?

The HVO project if approved will only exacerbate these impacts and it is everyday people who will be picking up the tab. People like those in Lismore, in the Manning, in Stockton, In Wollombi, On The Central Coast. Farmers across the state, health care workers, Emergency services are all being pushed to the limit now!

Home and family life

I am grateful to live in the house I grew up in, but I now need to retrofit my house to protect against the effects of extreme weather events

A financial impost that I can ill afford as a pensioner. Yet I feel that I am one of the more fortunate ones. Many women my age and other people struggling on a limited income are far more vulnerable these impacts will negatively affect them far more directly.

I have a 25-year-old daughter. She is smart, creative, resourceful, as are many of her friends. They are also very anxious and at times depressed about what the future may hold for them. It goes beyond whether they will ever enter the housing market their conversations consider how habitable their environment, their town may be. And is this a world that they want to bring a child into?

Mission Australia's 2022 report "Climate concerns and young people's mental health" found that over two thirds (67%) of young Australians were concerned about climate change. You'll agree these worries and concerns are an appropriate mental response to both the threat and direct effects of climate change, and these emotional responses may impact their mental health and wellbeing.

Jobs

People have spoken about their desire to keep their jobs. I get it. I went to work 3 years ago and found out that my work program and that of about colleagues across the state was the target of a budget cut and that we would be talking to change management soon!

Yes, jobs will be lost. And impacts will be felt within communities across the Hunter. However, far more thousands of jobs will be lost and our economy will suffer if Climate Change action is not taken.

A recent 2026 Deloitte study estimates that with a lack of action on climate change the NSW economy could be \$1.5 trillion smaller relative to the baseline over the next 50 years! Economic costs are being felt from today and rapidly will increase, with severe economic losses starting to occur in the next 25 years.

We do need to support a just transition for mining employees. That planning for this is not well underway with pathways and support in place beggars belief.

My brother was one of the thousand BHP workers retrenched when the steel mill closed. He was supported(financially and psychologically) through a retraining program and chose to become an Industrial Arts High School teacher. Other family members lost jobs as mines closed some took early retirement packages, another followed a higher ed degree, others retrained within aligned or completely different industries and sectors, an opportunity to follow a dream. It can be done, it needs industry and government support and it needs to happen now. We cannot wait until the plan is perfect

To say it's all about the workers and local communities is disingenuous Glencore / Yancoal have known for decades that this day would come. If they truly cared for their workers, a plan to transition retrain, redeploy, offer VRs would already be in place. But professing at this late hour to care about their workers is their plan!

Government Response -

Finally, the Australia Institute survey Climate of the Nation 2024 shows that while Australians continue to be underwhelmed by a lack

of tangible action by the Australian Governments to prevent and adapt to the worst impacts of climate change, they have not abandoned the expectation that government policies should protect the community, not industry profits.

If the right decisions are not made climate change will manifest as a series of disasters viewed through phones with footage that gets closer and closer to where you live until you're the one filming, it.

Remember to quote Tim Flannery we are the weathermakers