



Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm sure you are exhausted.

I'm a doctoral student at the Climate Change Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, studying climate change adaptation finance in the Pacific. I am also involved in the Hunter Community Environment Centre, but I'm speaking today as an individual – and primarily about the climate change implications of this project.

The world has defined a global goal to guide emissions reduction efforts. At Copenhagen (2009), it was agreed that holding any temperature increases to below 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels was needed to prevent dangerous climate change.

As you may well know at the international climate change negotiations in 2009, countries party to the UNFCCC (including Australia) affirmed that holding any temperature increases to below 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels is needed to prevent dangerous climate change.

The time window is closing for global emissions to peak and decline. The science indicates that global emissions need to peak in this decade if the world is to limit global warming to below 2 degrees and avoid the most significant impacts of climate change.

COMPARISON OF ANNUAL SCOPE 3 GHG EMISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE T4 PROJECT

GHG emissions (Mt CO ₂ -e/yr) by jurisdiction	NSW	Australia	Global
Current emissions	162.7	564.5	49,000
T4 emissions relative to current	107%	30.8%	0.35%
2020, 2 degree warming limit			50,000
T4 emissions relative to global total at 2020 under 2 degree limit			0.34%
Total allowable increase in emissions by 2020			1,000
T4 emissions as a percentage of total allowable increase by 2020			<u>17.4%</u>

The proposed T4 project would make an enormous contribution to future allowable emissions, if we were to meet a 2-degree target. As is stated in the Preferred Project Report (PPR), current global emissions are **49,000** Mtpa. The PPR states that Scope 3 emissions of T4 would contribute 0.35% of current global emissions. This figure may sound relatively small, but what the PPR does not point out, is that if the world were to meet a 2-degree target – which is necessary for avoiding dangerous climate change – **T4 would contribute 17.4% of the allowable increase in emissions.** This is an enormous contribution. The Scope 3 emissions from T4 would contribute more than the domestic emissions of NSW from all sources, and roughly 30% of Australia’s national emissions. If T4 were a country, it would be ranked 30th in the world in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

“The effects of global climate change represent the singular most important long term challenge for Kiribati.” Kiribati Development plan 2012 - 2015



But this is not just about numbers. Let me take you to a country where climate change is causing serious impacts. My research investigates climate change adaptation finance in the Republic of Kiribati, a nation that straddles the equator in the central Pacific Ocean. Kiribati is on average 2-3 meters above sea level. Climate change and inundation events from sea level rise threaten land and the freshwater lens, which is the main source of drinking water for the country. The President of the country, Anote Tong, has predicted that Kiribati will become uninhabitable in 30-60 years, due predominantly to contamination of the freshwater lens from rising sea levels.

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Research participant from Marakei, Kiribati

When I was interviewing research participants on the outer islands of Kiribati, one of my questions pertained to perceptions of the causes of climate change. One man told me that:

I think all of this [climate change] is because of the human activity, you know? Like Imatang [white people] activities that they have done to the earth. Like weapons, war and greed, and all those energies that have been exposed to the atmosphere outside. And maybe this is making the sun come closer to earth.

Although some of the details of this explanation may not be 100% scientifically correct, I think that broadly, he is right on the money. Global warming is caused by greed.

Australia has the second highest Human Development Index in the world.

HDI is a measurement of life expectancy, literacy, education, standards of living (level of material wealth) and quality of life.

Do we want to use our privileged position to pursue a development trajectory that is economically unsustainable and environmentally and socially harmful?

Australia's Human Development Index (HDI), according to the United Nations Human Development Reports, is second highest in the world (just below Norway). We are in a privileged and advantaged position globally, with an abundance of development pathways and options to choose from. Yet we continue to take the easiest route – and to pursue economically unsustainable, and environmentally and socially damaging development.

Approving T4 will be locking us into coal dependence – not only the port of Newcastle but the State, Australia, and the Globe.

The opportunity costs are particularly high, considering that PWCS does not seem sure about whether or not T4 will go ahead (as demonstrated in their refusal to commit to manning hours at T4 in the enterprise bargaining agreements currently being negotiated with workers).

There are many industries incompatible with coal expansion in the Hunter Valley, so approval of T4 will influence these industries to shut down, or not develop and expand.

The costs of this project are even greater when you factor in that PWCS does not seem to be sure about whether or not T4 will go ahead. I have heard just today that PWCS is refusing to commit to manning hours at T4 in the enterprise bargaining agreements that are currently being negotiated with workers, because PWCS is not sure when, or if, the terminal will be built.

PWCS want to secure an approval while they can, but if the global seaborne coal trade does not recover soon, the project may become too costly to pursue. This would present an enormous opportunity cost for Newcastle and the State, because if approval is granted, it would mean that other industries, which are incompatible with coal expansion in Newcastle and the Hunter Valley, would be forced to shut down in the coming years, or would not be able to develop.



But I want to emphasise that this decision is bigger than all that. It's bigger than PWCS, and bigger than the community of Newcastle. This decision speaks to questions such as:

What kind of people do we want to be? What kind of country do we want to live in? What principles and values do we stand by?

When you are making the choice about whether or not to recommend that this project be approved, I ask you to please keep in mind that you are choosing a particular kind of future on behalf of many people - not just for the community of Newcastle, whose opposition to this project you have heard loud and clear over the past two days, but you are choosing a future for Australia, and a great many people and species around the world.