

PWCS Terminal 4 PAC Submission

Good evening,

My name is Michael Forrest and I have to say upfront that I have never fought a war, and I don't have a puppet or any magic tricks and I don't sing very well, and I'm probably not as articulate as some of the earlier speakers, but I care just as much about this region as anyone else in this room.

1. My Involvement with the Coal Industry

- I have lived and worked in the Newcastle and Hunter Valley regions for over 25 years, having first moved to Newcastle from Melbourne in the mid 1980's to work in the coal industry.
- At that time, the Hunter Valley coal fields were already considered to be a highly valued natural resource, offering an abundant supply of high quality coal, able to be readily extracted and transported to port for export.
- In 1990 I found new opportunities in the world of industrial services and joined Brambles Industries. Brambles serviced many mining and industrial clients in the Newcastle region and it was during this period that I got to know the people that worked at these sites including BHP Steel and Port Waratah Coal Services.
- Following the closure of the steelworks in 1999, I was able to join the state government rail operator, FreightCorp, now known as Pacific National, and found myself again working directly within the Hunter Valley coal industry.
- For the past 10 years, I have continued to work in industrial services and further developed my relationship with the coal chain, initially in the Hunter Valley and more recently in Newcastle.

2. What the Coal Industry Means to Me Personally

- I was married in 1989 and by 1998 was the father of four mostly wonderful daughters.
- My family represent my BIG 5 – the five most important reasons I get up and go to work each day.
- Over the past 20 years, I have enjoyed watching the girls grow up, attend school, play sport, perform at countless ballet concerts and more recently bring the occasional boyfriend home to meet the parents. This has been a wonderful and very fortunate life so far.
- All these things have been made possible through my continuing involvement in the coal industry. As far as I am concerned, the coal industry has afforded my family a standard of living that would not otherwise be available to me.
- As a service provider to the coal industry, my ongoing employment and resulting lifestyle is dependent on the strength of the coal industry and its ability to meet the expectations of the global marketplace.

3. The need for another Export Coal Terminal – T4

- The Hunter Valley has enjoyed many years of continuous growth.
- I recognise, however, that the coal industry has had its ups and downs and often little notice is given for an upsurge or a downturn in demand.
- Whilst Newcastle and the Hunter Valley may be in the midst of a significant downturn at present, we have been there before and no-one denies the world will continue to demand coal for decades to come.
- Like many of you, I can recall the sea of ships waiting off shore to be loaded and the damage done to our reputation as a reliable provider by our inability to plan for future demand.

- We cannot afford to let this happen again.
- Whilst we may not be able to prevent the current downturn, we can do much to prepare for the next upsurge and a key part of that is to be ready to boost our capacity.
- The recent expansion of the rail network and the number of coal trains now servicing the Hunter Valley has done much to address our current and future demands, but these improvements will be for nothing if we are not able to grow our export coal loading capacity at Newcastle port at the same rate.
- With the existing Newcastle export coal terminals now built to capacity, it is vital to have the necessary planning approval to construct a fourth terminal so that construction can be fast tracked as soon as the need is triggered.
- I have been directly associated with the expansion of our export coal loading facilities over the past 5 years and truly appreciate the size of the investment required and the time taken to obtain approval, complete design and then construct the necessary infrastructure to build the additional capacity.
- Infrastructure projects such as our coal export facilities do not get built overnight, and require considerable effort and resources to bring to fruition.
- The planning approval process is not only a necessary stage in the development of a project, it is also critical to the overall success of that project, and requires considerable time and effort to complete. The efforts of the past three years should not be wasted.
- By obtaining planning approval now, detailed design work can be undertaken so we are able to respond quickly to the next upsurge in demand.

4. Benefit to the Community

- Whilst some may think that the “big miners” take all the profits from our coal sales, we should not forget the wages paid to all the workers directly employed by the coal industry including the various mining companies, the rail haulage operators, and the employees at the export coal loading terminals such as PWCS.
- On top of that, there are many more workers employed by organisations, such as my current employer, that provide support services to the coal chain and depend on its success for their continued prosperity.
- But the coal chain does not simply benefit its direct participants.
- Every tonne of coal exported delivers income to the NSW state government to help build our roads and rail lines, hospitals and schools.
- Whether we work directly in the coal industry or not, we all benefit from it in some way.

5. Why PWCS

- Other groups have proposed the construction of an export coal terminal in this region in recent years but none have progressed.
- PWCS has been established as a terminal operator for nearly 40 years and has a record unsurpassed for safety and environmental compliance in this region and amongst its peers.
- I have personally had many dealings with PWCS managers and employees as a supplier and co-service provider over the past 20 years and found them to be a highly professional dedicated group of people committed to the success of the region.
- PWCS has a proven ability to operate a safe, environmentally compliant business and understands the importance of ongoing community engagement.

- PWCS is also actively involved in supporting many programs that benefit the wider community

I therefore recommend that PAC approval be given for PWCS to construct a fourth export coal terminal in Newcastle. Thanks You