



Review and Public Hearings

Warkworth Continuation Project

SSD-6464

And

Mt Thorley Continuation Project

SSD-6465

Submission

Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union

(Mining and Energy Division)

Northern Mining & NSW Energy District

18 December 2014

We also note that Mount Thorley Warkworth also has a long history of good behaviour and Coal and Allied has built robust relationships with nearby communities.

This community support is clear with the vast majority of submissions in support of the mine's continuation.

It is clear that the benefits of continued mining at Mount Thorley Warkworth would vastly outweigh the costs.

If the proposed extensions at Mt Thorley Warkworth are approved, this would mean:

- long term job security for 1,300 people, who would live locally and support local businesses
- significant direct and indirect economic benefits to Local State and National economies including direct capital investment of \$715 million
- an estimated net benefit to NSW of almost \$1.5 billion dollars in (net present value) terms
- \$567 million dollars in coal royalties to the NSW Government
- An ongoing commitment to training and employment of young people in the Hunter Valley worth more than \$1.7 million per year

The CFMEU asserts that the Mt Thorley and Warkworth Continuation Project's Environmental Assessment Reports are comprehensive in detail. The report's coverage of the issues is extensive and presents the reasons for approval of the projects. These reports should address any concerns that the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) might have. The CFMEU submits that a detailed examination of the reports will lead the PAC to the conclusion to approve the projects. In submitting that, I specifically want to draw the PAC's attention to sections of the Executive Summary and Conclusions of those reports.

The report states (at page 2) of the Warkworth Executive Summary that:

- *"For the purpose of this assessment, the Department has taken a conservative approach and assumed the full range of cumulative impacts would occur."*

So in doing the assessment, the Department has assumed the worst, and have still been able to satisfy themselves that both the projects should be approved.

The report states (at page 4) of the Warkworth Executive Summary and similarly (at page 3) of the Mt Thorley report that:

- *“To effectively avoid, minimise and/or offset the predicted residual impacts of the project, the Department has recommended conditions to ensure the project complies with relevant criteria and standards, and operates consistent with current best practice for the regulation of mining projects in NSW.”*

Both the reports go on to find that:

- *“Finally, the Department has weighed the residual impacts of the project against its social and economic benefits.”* And that;
- *“This assessment has found that the project (and in the case of Mt Thorley’s report states that – is required to facilitate the neighbouring Warkworth Continuation Project) it would result in significant social and economic benefits for both the local area as well as the State as a whole.”* And that;
- *“The Department has concluded that the project would generate a number of positive benefits and that the predicted impacts can be effectively managed through the implementation of strict conditions. Consequently, the Department considers that the project is in the public interest and should be approved, subject to stringent conditions.”*

The Warkworth report states in its conclusion (at page 85) that:

- *“The extraction of a coal resource of this size and quality would result in a range of very significant benefits to the Singleton LGA, the Hunter region and the State of NSW, which must be given sufficient weight in assessing the development’s overall merits.”* And that;
- *“Based on its assessment, the Department is satisfied that Warkworth has designed the project in a manner that achieves a reasonable balance between maximising the recovery of the coal resource and minimising the potential impacts on surrounding land users and the environment.”*

Both the reports conclude in part by stating that:

- *“The Department has drafted a detailed set of conditions.... The Department believes that these conditions reflect current best practice for the regulation of coal mining in NSW and the Hunter Valley.”* And;
- *“That it is in the public interest and should be approved, subject to stringent conditions.”*

The CFMEU submit that there are no sound reasons to reject either of the projects, subject to being approved in accordance with the stringent conditions outlined in the Environmental Assessment Reports.

I also advise the PAC today, that in our written submission in July, the CFMEU asserted that it should be a requirement of the consent that the Wallaby Scrub Road be maintained but moved westward.

However, in our submission today, the CFMEU submit that we no longer assert that the Wallaby Scrub Road be maintained but moved westward. We now accept the Department's consideration as is outlined in the Environmental Assessment Report on this matter.

The report (at page 4) of the Warkworth Executive Summary states that:

- *"The Department considers that the closure of the road is a necessary consequence of the continuation of the mine. It also considers that because there are reasonable alternative routes available for the community, and because any realignment of the road would result in additional impacts on sensitive ecosystems and Aboriginal sites, there is little justification for re-constructing the road on an alternative alignment."*

The CFMEU supports the Department's view that the relocation of the Wallaby Scrub Road to the west of the proposed mining area is not a feasible alternative based on the key reasons outlined in the Environmental Assessment Report, and support the Department's recommended conditions in regards to this matter.

In closing, the CFMEU is calling for the approval of the required extensions at Mount Thorley Warkworth, with the following condition:

- That the development consent should contain a term which guarantees full time employment of 1,300 people in full time or contracted full time capacities.

This condition will ensure that full time jobs are not substituted for less secure and often less paid casual or contract positions and that job numbers are maintained.

The continuation of mining at Mount Thorley Warkworth is crucial for the future of the entire Hunter region – for the families who live here, for our local businesses, and for our young people.

I now conclude our submissions, and thank the Planning Assessment Commission for giving consideration to our submissions.

Peter Jordan
District President