

“Reclaiming our Valley”

Hunter Communities Network

PO Box 14 Singleton 2330

Secretary
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Sunday 19 July 2015

Submission of support for Mining SEPP Amendment 2015

Dear Secretary,

The Hunter Communities Network (HCN) is an alliance of community based groups and individuals impacted by the current coal industry and concerned about the ongoing rapid expansion of coal and coal seam gas exploration and mining in the region.

HCN supports the proposed *State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) Amendment (Significance of Resource) 2015* (the proposed SEPP).

Clause 12AA of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007* (the Mining SEPP) has caused an imbalance in the NSW planning system for the approval of major mining developments that is contradictory to the principles of ecologically sustainable development. The removal of clause 12AA in the proposed SEPP will address the anomaly with the objects of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The proposed SEPP will reinstate the balance so that economic, social and environmental considerations are given equal weighting in the decision-making process for major mining developments. Part 3 of the Mining SEPP provides that the significance of the resource is to be the consent authority’s principal consideration. This has resulted in poor planning decisions with major social and environmental impacts.

The restoration of a balanced planning system will improve community confidence that a fair decision-making process is undertaken giving equal consideration to the triple bottom line.

The cumulative impacts of large scale open cut coal mining operations in the Hunter region have long lasting and un-costed environmental and social impacts.

An independent costs benefits analysis of the cumulative impacts of mining in the Hunter is needed to adequately inform all current decision-making on mine expansion proposals.

HCN supports the proposed SEPP as the first stage of a series of important reforms needed to adequately manage and mitigate the cumulative impact of coal mining on the social fabric, environmental integrity and a diverse economy in the Hunter region.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Smiles". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Bev Smiles
Convenor