



DENMAN, ABERDEEN, MUSWELLBROOK AND SCONE

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT GROUP

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Denman Aberdeen Muswellbrook Scone Healthy Environment Group is concerned that the Draft Hunter Regional Plan is missing the opportunity to build in environmental protection and social capacity for the next 20 years and consequently beyond.

We are devastated to find the notion that “it is alright to continue devastating the Hunter Valley because its already wrecked” persists by way of nonsensical offset schemes paving the way for more coal mines. We live here. We are saddened by the ongoing destruction, but still value what we have, including rural communities, remnant bush and agriculture. We want the cumulative impacts of mining on air and water quality, noise levels and visual impact to be properly considered. These all have real consequences for community health and viability.

The severe impacts of climate change are already being felt. Fiji just took the brunt of the largest cyclone ever recorded. The previous largest devastated Vanuatu in 2015. Cyclone Haiyan, in 2013 caused immense damage and suffering in the Philippines. There is a pattern here. Burning fossil fuels has caused this. We cannot pretend our coal industry is not part of the problem. Every level of government needs to set serious targets for greenhouse gas reduction, and renewable energy uptake.

Much more stringent regulation of building codes need to be developed so that new buildings are much more energy efficient than the current Basix standard. More air conditioning cannot be the solution to the even hotter summers that are predicted.

The Upper Hunter has long been making do with a minimal public transport options. While there has been a long standing campaign to build on the rail service, this state government has reduced our service to the regional city of Newcastle. Our community has been impoverished by this decision and the plan in no way addresses the problem of our lack of access to the city or beaches.

Real, not token, sustainability must be at the heart of any planning for the future if we are to leave a viable climate and environment for our children.

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