

**HUNTER ENVIRONMENT LOBBY INC.
HUNTER REGION FORUM 19th AUGUST 2005
HUNTER FUTURES**

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hunter Environment Lobby Forum on 19th August 2005 had the workshop theme of 'Building a shared vision and partnerships for justice and sustainability in the Hunter'

Following on from the keynote speakers whose topics included, 'a Just Transition for a Sustainable Hunter'; 'update on the Lower Hunter Regional strategy' and 'the Catchment Action Plan', the workshops provided a place for participants to share knowledge and make recommendations.

The Panel session enabled the presenters to share their issues, visions and proposed actions to implement those themes. The Panel participants represented all sides of the community, from unionists, environmentalists, students, farmers, health and welfare workers and promoters of clean energy.

OUTCOMES and CONCERNS

Group One

- 1/ High wages in mining industry contributes to resistance to change.**
- 2/ Political voice of small communities adversely affected by the coal/power industry (?political momentum -? any).**
- 3/ Democratic rights, ways of unifying local communities.**
- 4/ Promotion of green energy, political will on core issues.**
- 5/ Conservative State and Federal Govts., e.g. EP&A Act Part 3A plus transport issues, need to claw back rights.**
- 6/ River issues - interconnectiveness, working together.**
- 7/ River lifeblood of the valley, best possible outcomes of conditions.**
- 8/ Definitions of 'just and sustainable', disenfranchisement of ordinary people, level of environmental degradation.**
- 9/ Impacts on communities, unequal access to information, wedging issues, e.g. water can be a uniting issue.**
- 10/ River gives distinction of region and strong identity, standing up against global market forces and how to link these remote areas.**

11/ Wealth generated doesn't benefit all, poverty, distress and isolation; appears that privilege is increasing.

12/ Climate change – Hunter is an opportunity to turn around CO2 emissions.

Group Two

1/ Cumulative impacts of coal industry.

2/ Need for a transition plan 'past coal'

3/ Internalise the real cost of coal – externalities are not accounted for.

4/ Realistic public transport strategy to achieve a 20% modal share by 2020 (present 5%)

5/ Loss of biodiversity in Lower Hunter.

6/ Capacity of education system to support a 'Just Transition', esp. in coal mining areas.

7/ Engaging wider audience in the strategies for 'Just Transition' so that the broader community is a part of it.

8/ Constrain urban sprawl.

9/ Access to sources of sustainable resources, e.g. solar panels – need to establish a resource centre for alternative energies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Groups One

Recommendations for Partnerships and policies

1/ Broad community campaign against expansion of coal exports and reduction in coal export. (Rising Tide)

2/ Establishment of an environmental legal aid centre available for community groups. (Uni of Newcastle – Linda)

3/ Local Government, energy conservation action formalise alliances and unified action.

- 4/ Policy around cars – five year plan of State Govt. and car industry – taxation on buying price of cars for e.g. hybrid cars and small engines advantaged and polluter pays – make green energy more accessible with R & D improvements.**
- 5/ Marine reserves – impacts of high level of clearing in Hunter – greens networkers flag unsustainable developments.**
- 6/ Regional planning does not fall over from political change.**
- 7/ Getting message out so that mainstream media respects the integrity of activists.**
- 8/ Gov't. database of cumulative impacts of homes and properties acquitted for open cut mining and more regulation of DEC staff.**
- 9/ Support convening Hunter communities for clean energy future – partnerships with LG, farmers, environmentalists, unions, etc. – convene community organising schools in Hunter.**
- 10/ (There is) no legislation recognising social justice, for e.g. in Ireland there is poverty proofing and consideration of social impacts of Gov't. decisions – ongoing dialogue between different groups.**
- 11/ Confirm support for Hunter sustainability fund - local procurement of and retraining for mine-workers.**

Group Two

- 1/ That HEL strongly consider endorsing the objective of public transport being 20% of modal transport by 2020.**
- 2/ That HEL promote transferable development rights whereby biodiversity is protected under the Lower Hunter protected lands SEPP.**
- 3/ Lobby for increased resources for education and research for a 'Just Transition'.**
- 4/ That HEL adopt the principles of urban villages incorporating good sustainable design, energy efficiency, public and personal transport and social cohesion, etc.**
- 5 That HEL recommends that Gov't. accounts for rising sea levels in its planning.**