

This was a submission sent in October 2008 by Martin Laird (UOW Student). The Wollongong University Student Association (WUSA) voted in a meeting to support the submission. Many of the students are still on campus today and share the concerns this submission raises.

PO Box 20
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17th October 2008

Submission to Department of Planning
From Wollongong University Students Association

Re: Major project application 08-2009

University students living near the main campus are concerned at proposals for the increased road haulage of coal on local highways to the Port Kembla Coal Terminal (PKCT) and twenty four hour seven day a week road access for coal trucks to this Coal Terminal.

Coal truck drivers are generally good drivers; however driving 24 hours day and night may cause problems for other drivers. An increase in Coal Truck numbers combined with the start up of car imports through Port Kembla will also cause problems for other road users and increase the risk of collisions.

Looking at the Environmental Assessment report, and not the official description of the proposal reveals plans to haul up to 10 mega tonnes per annum (mtpa) of coal by trucks over public roads.

This would be unthinkable for any other export coal terminal in Australia – either at Newcastle in NSW or any of the Queensland Coal Loaders where all of the coal arrives at the port by rail.

So when road haulage of coal is currently running at about 5 mtpa – which means a lot of coal trucks, more than one a minute at times on roads converging on the coal loader, why would the PKCT be wanting consent to double this amount ?

This is at a time that the Mt Ousley Road and the Picton Road is under stress during peak hours. In one months time, on 17 November 2008, on most days, a big ship will arrive carrying about 1000 cars mostly bound for Sydney. The Illawarra Mercury reported recently that this is will result up to an extra 24 trucks per hour on these and other highways.

We should be getting fewer and not more coal trucks on our major highways in and near Wollongong. The application for 10 mtpa is counter to previous assurances by the proponent (PKCT) in the Illawarra Mercury and on WIN TV that lifting the coal truck curfew would not increase the total number of trucks.

Also of concern is the high number of university student drivers coming from Sydney and Campbelltown who are through the Mt Ousley Road. Many of these drivers are on their red and green P plates, and are not fully confident drivers. Unfortunately a young woman when recently driving home from lectures at the University Of Wollongong and travelling North was killed when her car reportedly ran in to a coal truck.

We are frequently told that Australia as a nation should be reducing Greenhouse gas emissions, and that the NSW Government supports this approach. It is well known that in moving freight, trucks use three times the diesel fuel than a train to move freight. So the use of trucks, instead of trains, to move coal to Port Kembla means more greenhouse gas emissions or Carbon Pollution.

Some of the coal on road is from the Appin area. As an alternative to coal trucks, the Maldon Dombarton rail link

should be completed and the coal companies be required to use it. Until then, there should be production limits imposed on the mines near Appin.

WUSA understands that people near the mine near Bellambi are also concerned about more coal trucks on the roads and extended hours of coal trucking. Many University students live in the Northern Suburbs of Wollongong and those that drive to Uni would also be concerned to learn of the prospect of more coal trucks on their roads.

Accordingly WUSA objects to the present proposals of the Port Kembla Coal Terminal.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Laird