

## BACKGROUND BRIEF

1 December 2006



# The Greens Climate Futures Bill

## Summary

The Greens are stepping up their campaign to halt all new coal projects in NSW coming into the state election.

Premier Morris Iemma has wedged himself with his statement that climate change is a key issue in this campaign. At the same time his government is overseeing the biggest expansion of the coal industry ever witnessed in NSW. The Premier's credibility is on the line

New coal projects earmarked for NSW will result in an additional 136 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions every year.

The future of the coal industry is now a key electoral issue in the Hunter. The Greens stance on the coal industry is winning support across the state and especially in Hunter electorates.

Greens Upper and Lower House candidates will use the Greens Climate Futures Bill to highlight that there can be wins for the economy and the environment by stopping all new coal projects.

## Overview

The Greens have introduced a private members bill into NSW Parliament, the *Climate Futures Bill*, to substantially reduce the climate impacts of the coal industry in NSW and to fast track the development of renewable energy manufacturing industry.

At a conservative estimate, there are 13 proposals for new coal mines and 9 proposals for expansion of existing coal mines on the table (NSW Coal Industry Profile, released November 2005).

These new proposals alone would have a combined capacity of 56.9 million tonnes of coal a year. This will result in the emission of 136.56 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year (applying the formula used by the Australian Greenhouse Office).

The Stern Review put a social cost on every tonne of carbon of \$85. Applying this formula, the new proposals alone would have a social cost of over \$11.5 billion (\$11.6076 billion).

The Greens will bring the Climate Futures Bill forward for debate when Parliament resumes after the March election.

Following the ruling by the Land & Environment Court on Anvil Hill approval, the Greens have called on the Government to undertake an inquiry into the environmental and social impact of all proposed coal mines and expansions to coal mines.

## **Content of Greens Climate Futures Bill**

The Greens *Climate Futures Bill* will specifically prohibit the expansion of the coal industry by imposing a moratorium in NSW on each of the following:

1. new coal mines, starting with the rejection of the proposed Anvil Hill mine,
2. the expansion of existing coal mines beyond their current planning approvals, and
3. the expansion of the handling capacity of coal export terminals and other facilities for the export of coal.

The Bill will also direct the Government to:

1. ensure that all communities that are affected by a declining coal industry will have access to retraining and transitional financial assistance, and
2. raise NSW mandatory renewable energy targets to at least:
  - a. 20% by 2012, and
  - b. 50% by 2020

## **Greens MP Lee Rhiannon said:**

“Premier Iemma has signaled that the coming election will be a climate change election but this talk is merely window-dressing so long as his government oversees a massive expansion of the coal industry in NSW.

“Coal is the elephant in the room that the NSW government do not want mentioned. Talking about climate change without mentioning coal is like talking about obesity without mentioning junk food.

“Every tonne of coal that is extracted and exported comes back to NSW in the form of climate change.

“There are at least 22 new mining proposals on the table at the moment, which would have a combined capacity of 136.56 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year and a social cost of over \$11.5 billion every year.

“People are crying out for real action on climate change, not paper-thin commitments and PR spin from a government beholden to the coal industry.

“The Greens Climate Futures Bill is a challenge to the Iemma government to take real action on climate change.”

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