

**Submission
No 31**

INQUIRY INTO 2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NET ZERO COMMISSION

Organisation: Bathurst Community Climate Action Network (BCCAN)

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The Bathurst Community Climate Action Network (BCCAN) is a group of citizens acutely aware of the dangers of global warming. It agrees with one of the guiding principles of the NSW Net Zero Commission: “There is a critical need to act to address climate change, which is a serious threat to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of NSW.”

We welcome their first annual report. Quoting the online home webpage: ‘Meeting the 2030, 2035 and 2050 emissions targets is not guaranteed. NSW will need to increase and accelerate its efforts to remain on track.’

It also points out there: a ‘Key takeaway’ is

‘Potential emission increases associated with extended or expanded coal projects may require other sectors to make greater emissions reductions to meet the state’s emissions target.’

In its report, (Point 1.5, page 13): under ‘Areas requiring specific attention’ it states:

‘The Commission is concerned about the risks to the state’s targets from increased emissions in the resources sector. There are pressures for increased emissions associated with new coal mining projects (extensions and expansions of existing mines), with a sizeable pipeline of projects that have been submitted for consideration and determination through the planning process. Any emissions increases associated with extended or expanded projects would require all other sectors to make greater emissions reductions if the state is to meet its emissions reduction targets. The emissions increases pose a major challenge for the state’s regulatory arrangements.’

Further down, on page 46 is:

‘At the time of preparing this report, 33 planning applications for existing coal operations were being considered by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. Of these, the Commission has been advised that 22 would have potential impacts on the state’s emissions.’

Some of our members have seen the regular, fully loaded coal trains travelling to the Port of Newcastle, apparently at the rate of one every eight minutes.

We found a few statistics: In 2023, the Port of Newcastle exported 144.5 million tonnes (Mt) of coal¹. The emissions from each tonne of coal is approximately 2.6 tonnes for every tonne burnt², which calculates as having released about 375.7 Mt of GHG emissions.

The Federal Government's DCCEEW report³ shows Australia's total emissions were 465.9 Mt of carbon dioxide equivalent in the year to March 2023. So, when the 144.5 Mt of coal exported from Newcastle were burnt, it gave the equivalent of about 80.6% of Australia's full emissions for that same year.⁴

This is a huge contribution to GHG emissions, and underscores the big contribution coal being burnt gives to GHG, in turn fuelling further climate change. Although legally NSW is not obliged to take emissions of coal sold and burnt overseas into account, weather systems continuously travel around the globe, interacting and forming; hence we experience its effects.

BCCAN urges the NSW Government to:

- heed their Net Zero Commission's report;
- place extreme importance on the emissions burning coal releases and;
- not allow any new expansions and extensions to coal mines.

¹ <https://thecoalface.net.au/coal-exports-surpass-recent-years/> dated 7 November 2024.

² <https://climate.mit.edu/ask-mit/how-can-burning-one-ton-fuel-create-more-one-ton-co2#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20says%20Yogesh%20Surendranath%2C%20Paul%20M,of%20CO2%20for%20every%20ton%20of%20coal.&text=The%20m ath%20tells%20you%20that%20for%20every,about%203.66%20tons%20of%20CO2%20is%20created.>

³ Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water: Australia's greenhouse gas emissions: March 2023 quarterly update

⁴ Similarly, Pg. 48 of the NSW Net Zero Commission report notes that:

'Value chain emissions from the domestic and international use of thermal and metallurgical coal produced in NSW were estimated to be approximately 56.5 Mt CO₂-e (domestic) and 379.5 Mt CO₂-e (export) in 2022.'