

INQUIRY INTO GENTRADER TRANSACTIONS

Organisation: Wollongong Climate Action Network (WCAN)

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SUBMISSION TO GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE #1 – GENTRADER ENQUIRY.

This is a submission by Rowan Huxtable on behalf of Wollongong Climate Action Network(WCAN)

WCAN has over 90 members and is not associated with any political party.

WE NEED TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CUTS IN GHG EMISSIONS NOW

The recent floods and fires in Australia, Pakistan, Brazil and highlight the very real effect that the climate has on our life. While the causes of these events are complex and statistical, it is generally agreed that our CO2 emissions increase the amount of energy trapped in the biosphere. And reputable scientific opinion is that the extra energy increases the chance of extreme weather “events” – as well as putting our food production capability at risk through changes in evaporation rates, sea temperature and acidity, snow melt rates, sea level rise, rainfall patterns....

World population is growing. We cannot afford to risk food and water supplies. It is clear that we are exposing ourself to unacceptable risk by continuing to emit CO2 at the current rate.

Australia should lead the world in reducing per capita GHG emissions because we are a wealthy, high GHG emitter and because as a country we stand to lose.

WE OPPOSE THE SALE OF PUBLICLY OWNED COAL POWER STATIONS BECAUSE SUCH A SALE WOULD MAKE IT HARDER FOR US TO CUT GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

It is impossible to make significant emission reductions in Australia without significant cuts in our dirty coal power generation. It would be disastrous for the NSW government to enter into any arrangements which create a legal right for the power station owners to generate and sell dirty coal power. Even if such a legal right were not created, the new power station owners would become a powerful vested interest opposing further cuts to GHG emissions.

It is a deceptive to claim that somehow or other this problem can be avoided by moving to “clean coal” at some unspecified time in the future. It is physically impossible to produce energy from coal without creating CO2. To reduce the emissions to the air would require a combination of major modifications to the power stations with a huge pump and pipe infrastructure. This would be totally uneconomical and far more expensive than renewable energy. That is why renewable energy production is expanding rapidly while there are NO commercial coal plants in operation with geosequestration. Governments that promote the “clean coal” concept – in spite of its obvious cost problems – are guilty of negligence to their constituents.

WE OBJECT TO THE UNDEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND POOR STEWARDSHIP

The NSW government has no mandate to sell these power stations. While politicians are usually on hand to publicise construction of new roads and hospitals, no MP is on the news promoting this sale. The indecent haste and lack of publicity with which the government is proceeding indicates that the

government knows that people do not want these assets sold . It defeats the stated purpose of the sale which is to get a good cash price.