



POSITION PAPER

Balancing the Impacts of Coal Mining

NATIONAL TRUST INVOLVEMENT

The coal industry has been long recognised by the National Trust as forming part of the heritage landscape of New South Wales. Many historic coal mines and their associated structures and machinery have been listed on the National Trust Register for their historic and scientific values.

Eighty-two coal mining sites in New South Wales are listed on the National Trust's Industrial Sites List and seventeen sites are listed on the National Trust Register. Coal mining has played a key role in the history of European settlement in Australia and these listings reflect this historical and technological significance.

The National Trust recognises the role that coal mining has played in the history of Australia and its economic significance at the present time. Nonetheless, this industry is well-recognised as having significant and often detrimental side effects.

In the Hunter Valley, seventeen Landscape Conservation Areas were listed on the National Trust Register for their scenic, agricultural, historic and nature conservation significance. Coal mining has threatened the heritage values of a number of these areas. The Trust's Exeter/Sutton Forest Landscape Conservation Area also contains 43 properties individually listed on the National Trust Register and is also currently under threat from coal mining operations.

In August 2013 the National Trust Board adopted a Policy on the Impacts of Coal Mining and the first part of that Policy stated:-

"The National Trust believes that sustainable development goals should be based upon the three equal pillars of 1) environmental protection; 2) social development; and 3) economic development and that the economic pillar must not be treated as paramount, to the detriment of social equity and the safeguarding of our natural world for future generations."

This Policy Statement responded to a 2013 amendment to the Mining State Environmental Planning Policy which gave preference and undue weight to economic factors over environmental protection and social development.

On 7 July 2015 it was announced that a proposed amendment to the Mining State Environmental Planning Policy would "restore the balance between economic and environmental considerations for major mining projects."

NATIONAL TRUST POSITION

- In accordance with its 2013 Policy on the Impacts of Coal Mining, the Trust will support the proposed amendment to the Mining SEPP to restore the balance between economic and environmental considerations for major mining projects.
- The Trust commends the NSW Government and the Minister for Planning on the proposed amendment.

ACTION TO PROMOTE THE TRUST'S POSITION

The Trust will promote its views on the proposed amendment in the media and invite the public to comment on the proposal in support of the amendment.