

Who's da Boss?

Impact Assessment and Strategic Assessment

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The Questions

- How do Impact and Strategic Assessments interact?
- Does Strategic Assessment drive Impact Assessment?



A Grab of Strategic Assessments

- Mount Peter Master Planned Area (QLD)
- Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary Program (VIC)
- Common-user liquefied natural gas hub in the West Kimberley (WA)
- Molonglo and North Weston Structure Plan (ACT)
- Sydney Growth Centres in Western Sydney (NSW)
- Coal Mining Potential in the Upper Hunter Valley (NSW)
- Fire Management Policy (SA)
- Management of priority groundwater systems
- Petroleum industry in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area (WA)
- Kwinana Quay proposal (WA)
- Fremantle Ports Outer Harbour project : strategic assessment (WA)

A Grab of Strategic Assessments

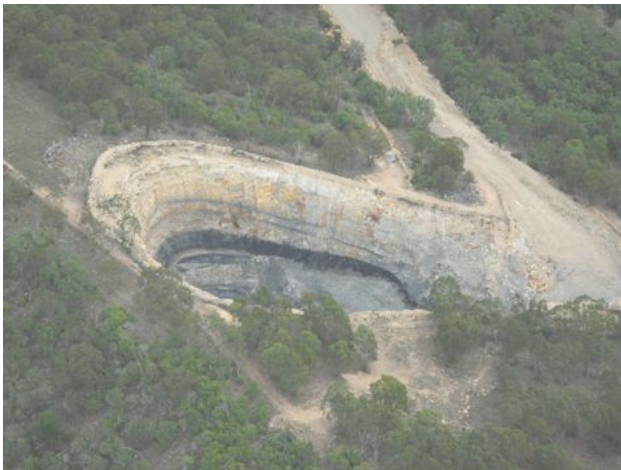
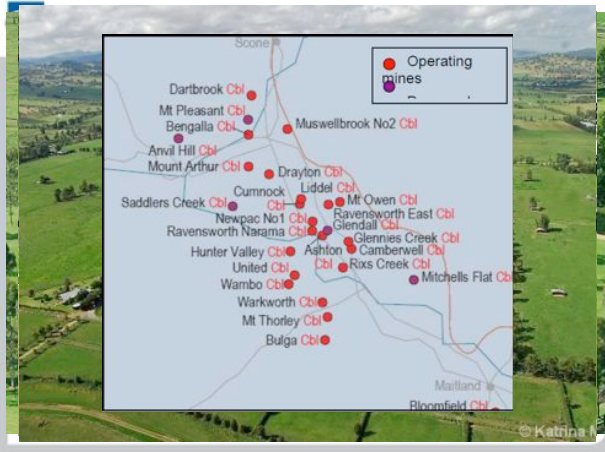
- Mount Peter Master Planned Area (QLD)
- Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary Program (VIC)
- the common-user liquefied natural gas hub in the West Kimberley (WA)
- the Molonglo and North Weston Structure Plan (ACT)
- Sydney Growth Centres in Western Sydney (NSW)
- **Coal Mining Potential in the Upper Hunter Valley (NSW)**
- Fire Management Policy (SA)
- Management of priority groundwater systems
- Browse Basin liquefied natural gas precinct (WA)
- Compatibility of petroleum industry in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area (WA)
- Kwinana Quay proposal (WA)
- Fremantle Ports Outer Harbour project : strategic assessment (WA)

Bickham Coal Project



Bickham Coal Project

- Exploration Licence 1999
- 2002 Review of Environmental Factors – 25,000 t bulk sample
- Bulk Sample approved 2004
- Extraction 2004/05
- Considerable Community Concern
 - Water
 - No current mining in Shire



Coal Mining Potential in the Upper Hunter Valley - Strategic Assessment

- NSW Government recognised community concerns
- Initiated Strategic Assessment
- Short and Long Term impacts on water resources
- Covers whole of Upper Hunter Valley Shire (4,973 km²)
- Assessment released in December 2005

Strategic Assessment

Strategic Assessment considered:

- Coal resources and development potential
- Economic and social benefits
- Water values and management
 - Saline water
 - Connectivity of mine groundwater and river
- Alluvial aquifers and agriculture
- Heritage
- Vegetation remnants
- Amenity



Strategic Assessment

Recommendations

- Any impact assessment include full groundwater and surface water assessment and Water Management Plan
- Community consultation
- Independent expert panel to review findings
- Any new mine to maintain long term integrity of streams, aquifers and ecosystem values
- Dept of Planning develop formal policy to avoid or minimise impacts on streams and aquifers

Strategic Assessment

Recommendations (con't)

- Any future proponents need to:
 - Consider local and regional context for vegetation impacts
 - Consider local and regional significant ecological communities and species
 - Make contribution to the Hunter Valley Aboriginal Heritage Trust
 - Avoid road as the primary means of coal transport
 - Adequately protect key transport corridors

The Impact Assessment

- Proponent advised of requirements from the SA in January 2006
- Proponent submitted revised Water Plan in March 2009
- Minister referred project to Planning Assessment Commission
 - Advise on water related risks (with regard to Strategic Assessment)
 - Adequacy of water plans
 - Significance of issues raised in submissions
 - Should process proceed to impact assessment
- Public Review October to December 2009

State Government rejects Bickham coal mine

15 May, 2010 04:00 AM

THE State Government's decision to put foals before coal and reject the controversial Bickham open-cut mine near Scone could halt the advance of the coalmining industry in the Hunter.

Planning Minister Tony Kelly yesterday said the decision heralded "a more strategic approach" to planning in the region and the interests of the thoroughbred industry would be put first in any future decisions on mining.

For the time being at least, the Upper Hunter Shire will remain a coalmine-free zone.

The screenshot shows the website for the Bickham Coal-Mine Action Group. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, History, Billboards, Coal, FAQ, News, Feature Articles, Resources, and Contact. A prominent banner reads "WE WON!" above the group's name. Below this, there is a link to "Click here to read numerous submissions" and a list of key submissions: "Worley Parsons for Upper Hunter Progress Association Submission", "Gilbert & Sutherland for BCAG Submission", and "Froggitch for Water Keepers Bickham Coal Water Assessment". A central image shows a large, deep crater next to a river. To the right, there is a "NEWS" section with several articles from various media outlets, including the Daily Telegraph, Newcastle Herald, and Sydney Morning Herald, all reporting on the government's decision to reject the mine. A red button at the bottom left says "Save Australia's Horse Capital".

PAC Findings

- Unacceptable level of hydrogeological risk
- Assessment of links to Pages River not credible
- 100+ year post mine recovery
- No assessment of downstream risks
- Coal mining and equine industry are incompatible land uses
- **Current regulations have no capacity to adequately deal with cumulative emission impacts**
- May result in net loss of local employment
- Project was creating local investment uncertainty

PAC Conclusions

- Did not recommend prohibition of open-cut mining in Upper Hunter
- Sufficient concern from water related risk not to be recommended for further assessment
- Strong evidence from non-water related submissions that project would have significant effects on other industries
- **Merit assessment unlikely to be capable of assessing or resolving competing land use issues**
- Noted significant bias in economic data presented

Conclusions – Strategic Assessment

- Has the capacity to 'filter' project suitability
- Can consider competing land uses which impact assessment may not be able fully address
- Can better address cumulative land use issues
- Was not referred to in numerous coal proposals to the south
- Impact assessment will ultimately provide the technical inputs on which to base decisions
- Requires planning and approvals frameworks
- Requires political will to implement

Strategic Assessment should be a base level assessment for precinct and sector development

Lack of political will to tackle hard issues (mining, ports, industrial precincts)

Private sector may fund assessment for multiple development

Recent movement between Federal and States through EPBC Act

Questions?