

SUBMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE PORTS BILL

from the

Hay Point Community Action Group

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Our group was formed in 2014, to enable Hay Point residents to have a voice in opposing the Mitchell Ports Transshipping Proposal for our area.

Our concerns with the concept of transshipping, and our request for the implementation of a total ban in Great Barrier Reef Marine Park waters, are as follows –

1. Plans supplied by Mitchell Ports (MP) and North Queensland Bulk Ports (NQBP), show that major environmental damage locally, will be required to enable this project to load coal onto barges at the Hay Point Tug harbour. A 5 kilometre long conveyor belt will pass through a pristine wildlife refuge lake, require the compulsory acquisition of private cattle land, pass through a local engineering firm's yard, decimate some 20 hectares of natural mangroves (which a vast colony of fruit bats call home), then end up on 500 metres of sandy beach in front of a large hotel/motel. This beach will disappear under dredged material from a basin required to be excavated, so huge barges can be positioned under a coal loading gantry, 500 metres from a residential area that has been in existence some 40 years before any coal ever came to Hay Point.
2. Major health problems will no doubt ensue, due to a severe coal dust problem, sleep deprivation caused by lights, rattling conveyors, machinery etc., operating 24/7. The present coal loading occurs some 7 kilometres from the nearest community, not 500m from our homes. No one worldwide can make a noiseless and dustless coal loading facility.
3. The concept of transshipping appears to work well in sheltered waters, ie fiords, bays, estuaries etc. where wave action is minimal and the wind factor is mitigated by higher terrain. The proposed operation off Hay Point, requires huge heavily loaded dumb barges to be towed by tugs, seaward 12-20 kilometres, to another massive barge which is equipped with 2 cranes with grab buckets. This ship loader is tied alongside an anchored coal ship and bucket by bucket, the coal is removed from barge to hopper bins, then by slewing conveyor systems, into the various ship holds. This is a delicate operation in dead calm conditions and a calamity poised to happen in open waters where 3m waves and 30 knot winds are common. The constant movement of 3 different vessels and the operation of suspended crane loads in windy conditions without a stable base, is a recipe for major coal pollution of the Great Barrier Reef waters. Who is going to be out in these conditions, monitoring how much coal is blown and spilt into our oceans? The operator will say "What Spillage!"

4. Any government approving such an environmentally dangerous scheme, should take into account a major incident that occurred in a transshipping operation that took place in the waters off the coast of Colombia in 2013. Drummond Coal, a major US coal exporter operating in many countries, spilt approx. 2,000 tons of coal when a barge being towed seaward, took on water from the large waves. To save losing the entire barge load of coal, a slurry of coal and seawater was pumped overboard. This eventually contaminated all local beachers, incurring a fine of US\$3.6 million and the subsequent banning of transshipping. Won't there be heads rolling when a similar incident occurs in identical open water conditions in the Great Barrier Reef waters off Hay Point!

Both BMA and DBCT who presently load export coal at Hay Point, looked at transshipping as an expansion option in the past, and both decided it was fraught with danger due to having to operate in local open waters.

Along with Mitchell Ports, a drilling operator with no coal exporting experience and a 2 year secret deal, have negotiated this hair brain operation with NQBP, who it appears, will agree to anything in the desperate dash for coal royalty dollars. Communities, the environment, GRMPA, all seem expendable as long as the coal empire rolls on.

5. Many of the local residents, either work at one of the 2 terminals or have worked at the mines supplying the port, so we are not anti-coal. We understand that Hay point has been classified as a "*Priority Port Development Area*", but we are up to our necks in coal stockpiles. There is no more room for additional output, unless the 1400 hectares of state owned Dudgeon Point is utilised. NQBP has no right to condone proposals that would impact on our health, quality of life and property values. Transshipping may have its place in mineral exports elsewhere, but definitely not in the Great Barrier Reef marine waters off Hay Point.

Our community group were very pleased when our approaches to all local MPs bore fruit with the pre-election promise of banning transshipping by the Labour Party. Many local voters were swayed by this promise, but are now gob-smacked by the Queensland Government's failure to include the ban in the Sustainable Ports Bill.

We respectfully request that the new state government honour the commitments given pre-election.

Peter Dallas – spokesman for the Hay Point Community Action Group.

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