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Business Hunter urges support for HVO Continuation Project

Business Hunter has reaffirmed its support for the Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) North and South Open Cut Continuation Project, describing the project as critical to the Hunter region's economic stability and orderly transition to a lower-emissions future.

Speaking at yesterday's Independent Planning Commission IPC public hearing in Branxton, CEO Bob Hawes said the project aligned with Business Hunter's longstanding position that the Hunter's economic transformation must be managed in a balanced and pragmatic way, ensuring existing industries, businesses and communities are supported while the region builds its future economy.

"As the peak business organisation for the Hunter, representing more than 4,500 member and affiliate businesses across virtually every sector of the regional economy, we believe the project provides important certainty and stability for the region at a time of significant change," Mr Hawes said.

"The energy transition and economic transformation facing the Hunter must occur alongside our existing economic strengths, not at their expense. Our region is still in the process of building the industries, investment and workforce capabilities that will underpin its future prosperity."

Mr Hawes told the commission the continuation project would support jobs, local businesses and economic activity across the Hunter while providing valuable time for governments, industry and communities to implement long-term net zero strategies.

Business Hunter noted that its position was consistent with the NSW Government's Coal Strategy 2026-2050, which recognises the ongoing importance of the coal industry to the state's economy, energy security and export trade, while supporting extensions of existing mining operations that deliver economic benefits, sustain employment and meet environmental and regulatory requirements.

"Importantly, this project does meet environmental requirements, and the proponents have worked hard, in response to feedback received, to amend the project to address concerns and reduce impacts," Mr Hawes said.

"Projects of this scale rightly undergo rigorous scrutiny, including detailed environmental assessment, public consultation and consideration of economic and social impacts. It is important that applications are assessed fairly, transparently and consistently against the relevant planning framework."

Mr Hawes highlighted the significance of HVO not only as a major employer, but also as a key customer for a broad network of contractors, suppliers and service providers throughout the region.

"We recognise that the proposed extension will sustain employment for workers at HVO and support the many businesses and families that rely on mining-related supply chains," Mr Hawes said.

"Our region is making great strides in our net zero journey and this project is consistent with the pathway we are on. Business Hunter supports the continuation because of its capacity to continue contributing to economic and social activity across the Hunter while the region advances its energy transition and economic transformation."

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