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Business Hunter welcomes HVO Continuation Project approval

Business Hunter has welcomed the NSW Independent Planning Commission's approval of the Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) North and South Open Cut Continuation Project, describing the decision as an important step in supporting the Hunter region's economic stability while it continues its evolution to a lower-emissions future.

Business Hunter CEO Bob Hawes said the approval followed a rigorous six-year assessment process and reflected the significant work undertaken by the proponent to respond to community, stakeholder and government feedback.

"This project has been subject to extensive scrutiny over six years, including detailed environmental assessment, public consultation and ongoing engagement with regulators and stakeholders," Mr Hawes said.

"We acknowledge the considerable effort made by HVO throughout that process to modify the proposal, reduce environmental and social impacts and address concerns raised during the assessment."

Mr Hawes said Business Hunter's support for the project had been based on three key considerations: its consistency with NSW Government policy, its economic and employment benefits, and its role in supporting the Hunter's orderly economic transformation.

"As the peak business organisation for the Hunter, representing more than 4,500 member and affiliate businesses, we have consistently advocated for a balanced and practical approach to the region's transformation," he said.

"The Hunter's transition will be most successful when new industries are developed alongside the industries that currently support jobs, investment and economic activity, not through the premature closure of major employers and supply chains."

Business Hunter noted the project aligns with the NSW Government's *NSW Coal Industry 2026-2050* strategy, which recognises the ongoing contribution of the coal industry to employment, export earnings, energy security and economic activity. The strategy supports extensions to existing operations that deliver economic benefits and satisfy the state's rigorous planning and environmental requirements.

"The approval is consistent with the NSW Government's stated policy position on mine extensions and recognises the importance of maintaining economic stability while the Hunter continues building its future industries and workforce capabilities," Mr Hawes said.

Business Hunter said the continuation project would provide certainty for workers, businesses and communities at a time of significant economic and industrial change.

"This approval helps provide the confidence, stability and time needed for governments, industry and communities to continue implementing long-term transition strategies while sustaining the jobs and businesses that currently underpin the regional economy," Mr Hawes said.

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