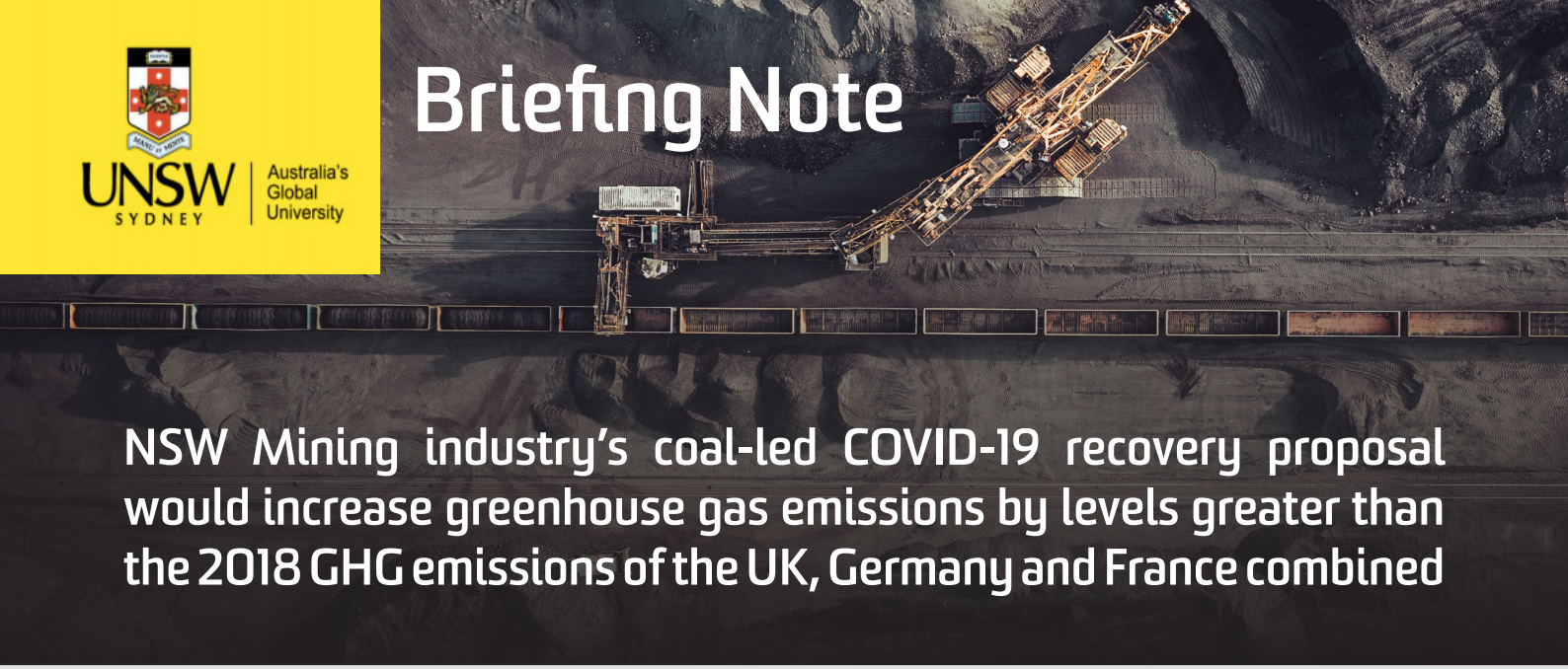


Briefing Note

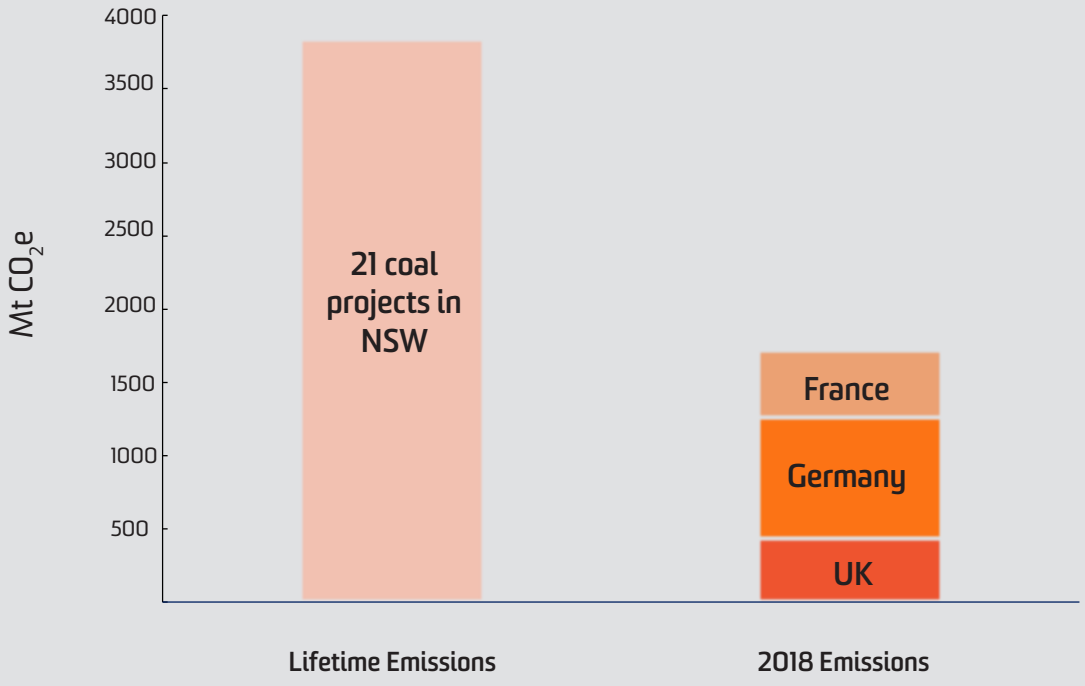
NSW Mining industry's coal-led COVID-19 recovery proposal would increase greenhouse gas emissions by levels greater than the 2018 GHG emissions of the UK, Germany and France combined

Professor Jeremy Moss | UNSW Climate Justice Project | August 2020

The NSW Minerals Council (NSWMC) has recommended that 21 new coal projects be developed as part of a state COVID-19 recovery plan (NSWMC, 2020). Its report, *Mining for the Recovery*, identifies 32 projects in various stages of approval, 21 of which are coal projects. If approved and developed, these 21 coal projects would have a huge climate change impact, contributing 3, 717 Mt CO_2-e to global emissions.

Over their lifetime, these 21 projects would collectively produce emissions at a level greater than the combined 2018 emissions of Germany, France and the United Kingdom (UNFCCC, 2019).

Emissions comparison of the proposed 21 coal projects in NSW

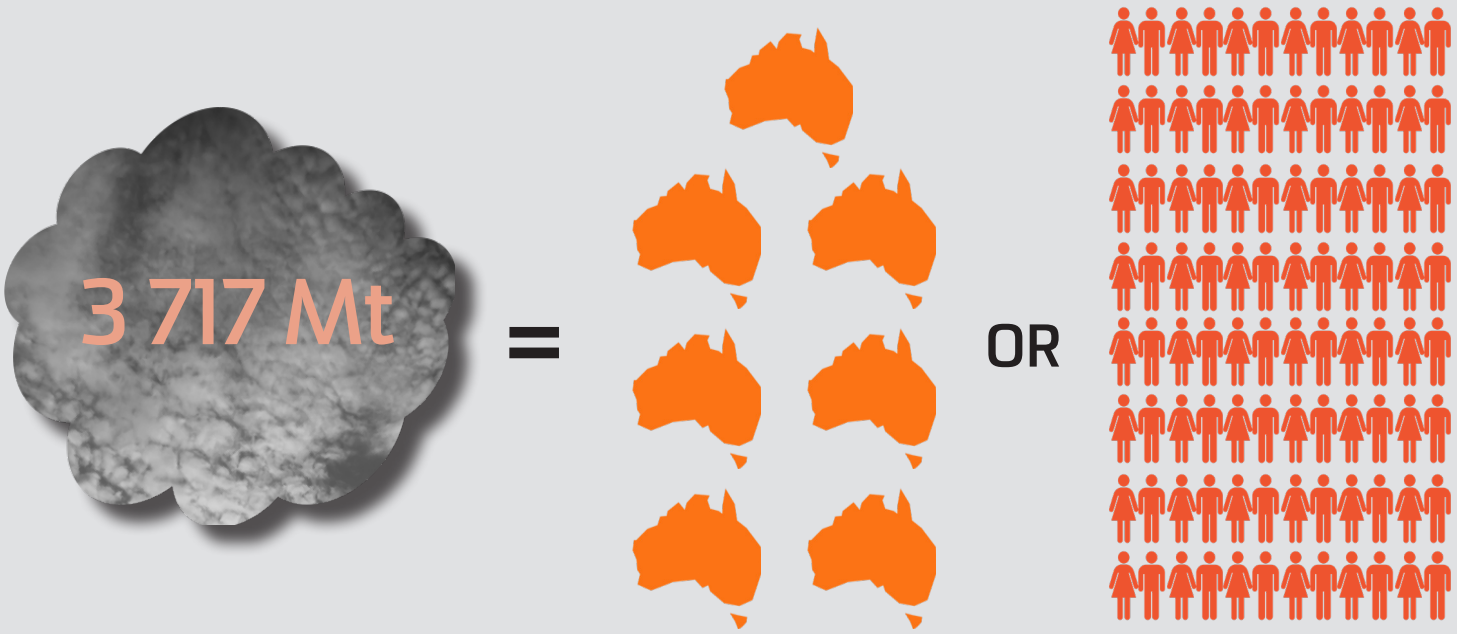


(Coal project emissions: calculated from data available on NSW Major Projects Planning Portal (DPIE, 2020) according to IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines (IPCC, 2006); Country emissions: (UNFCCC, 2019))

"The NSW Minerals Council has reccomended fast-tracking 21 new coal projects... which... over their lifetime... would collectively produce emissions at a greater level than the combined 2018 emissions of Germany, France and the United Kingdom."

To put that in perspective, it is like adding an extra 7 years of Australia's annual domestic emissions total for 2019 (532 Mt) or the annual carbon footprint of another 175 million Australians (AGDISER, 2020a).

Equivalent emissions of the proposed 21 coal projects in NSW (CO_2-e)



Lifetime emissions of 21 coal projects

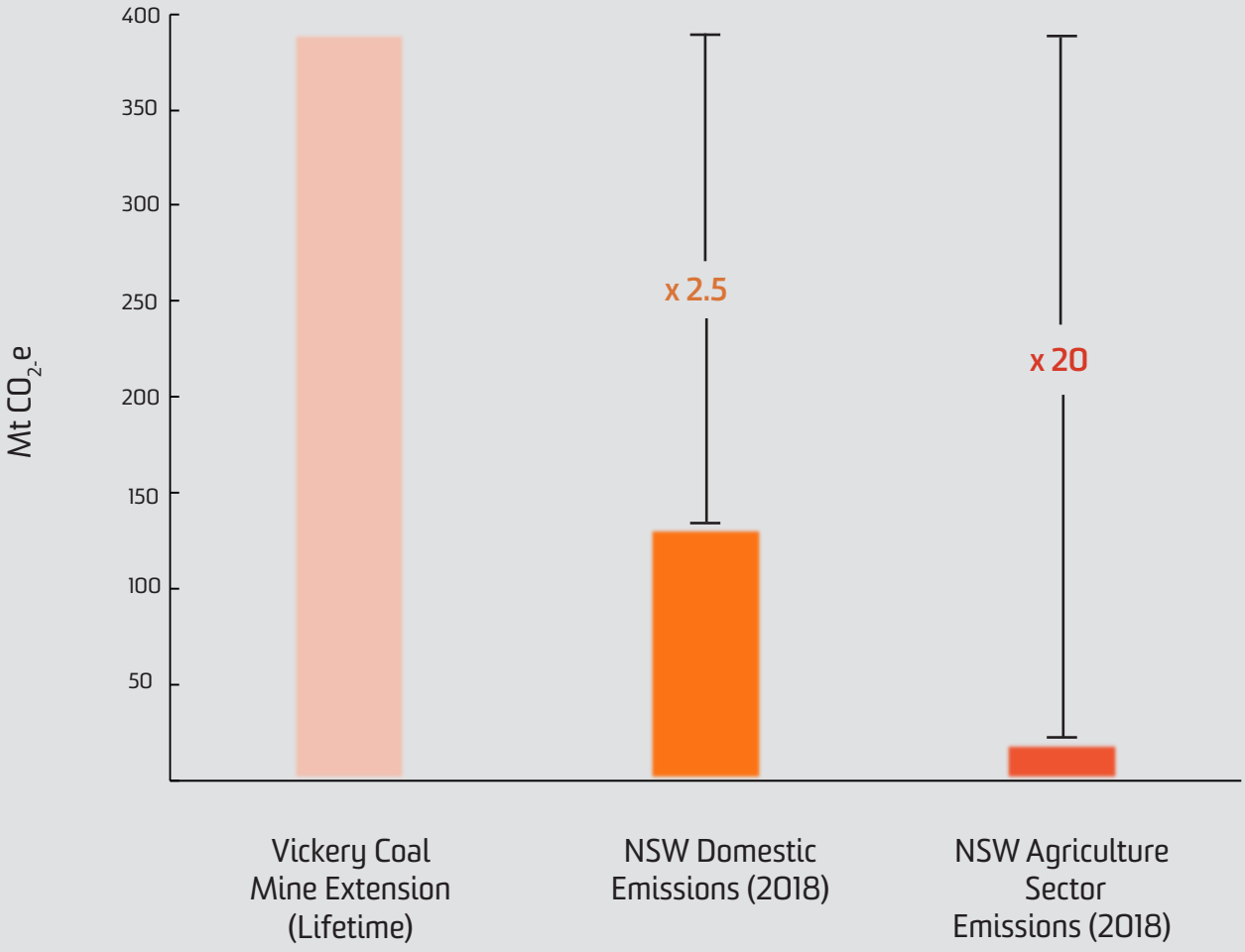
7 years of Australian domestic emissions (2019)

Additional 175 million Australians for a year

(Domestic and per capita emissions (AGDISER, 2020a))

One of the projects is the recently approved Vickery coal mine extension (approved in August 2020) which, by itself, would produce around 390 Mt CO_2-e GHG emissions over its lifetime. That's almost 20 times the emisions produced from agriculture in NSW in 2018 and around 2.5 times the entire emissions from NSW in 2018 (AGDISER, 2020b).

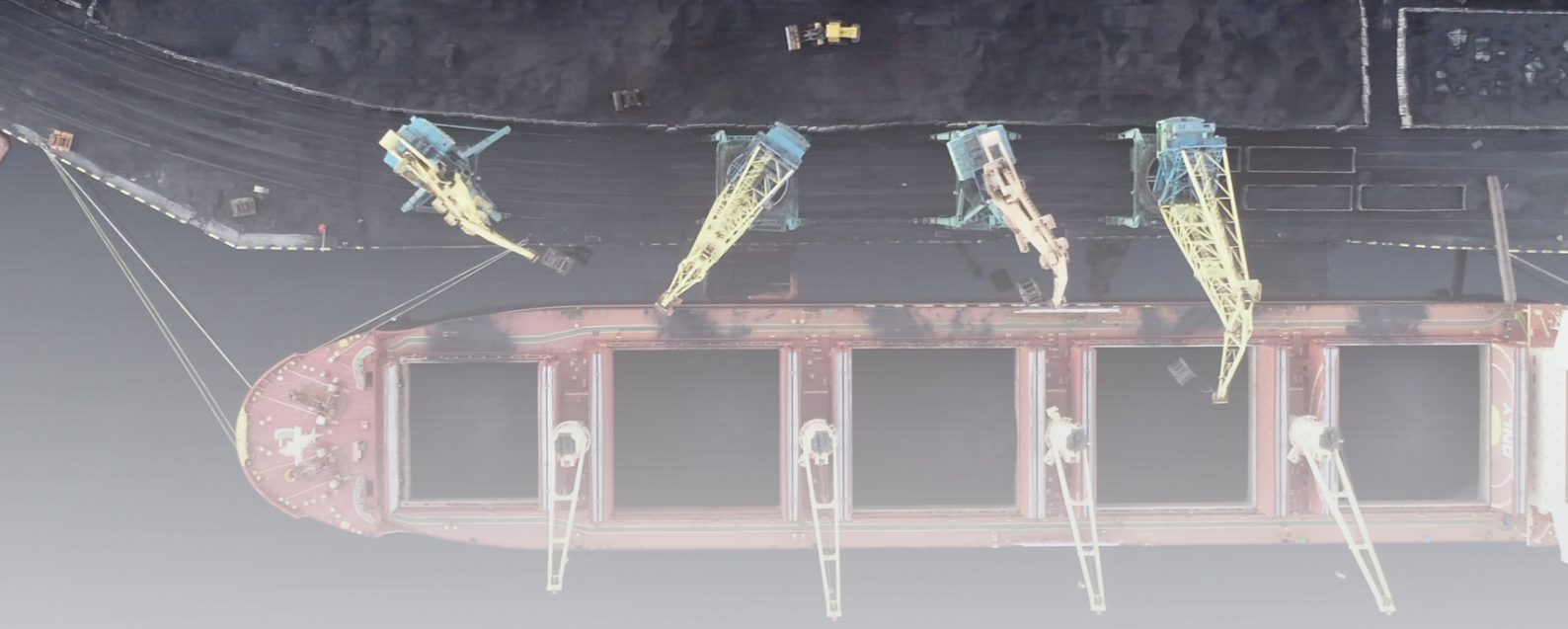
Lifetime Emissions Comparison of the Vickery Coal Mine Extension



Vickery Coal Mine Extension calculated from data available on the NSW Major Projects Planning Portal (DPIE, 2020a) according to IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines (IPCC, 2006); NSW domestic and agricultural emissions (AGDISER, 2020b)

The report's optimism on coal stands in stark contrast to the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO, 2020) report released at the same time, which says that up to 90% of energy demand may be met by renewables by 2035. It also ignores the bleak future for exported thermal coal and the significant environmental impacts that these mines may have. As a report by Carbon Brief (2020) notes, the world's fleet of coal fired power stations has just gotten smaller for the first time on record and may have already peaked.

"The report's optimism... ignores the bleak future for exported thermal coal"



Most glaringly, the NSWMC report ignores the significant increase to Australia's already immense contribution to climate change that these coal projects would add to. As it stands, Australia's annual exported emissions are double annual domestic emissions.

"Most glaringly, the NSWMC report ignores the significant increase to Australia's already immense contribution to climate change that these coal projects would add to."

At a time when Australia's domestic emissions dropped less than 1% in the last year, the emissions from fossil fuel exports have surged 4.4% in the same period (Moss, 2020).

NSW does not need 21 new coal mines to help it recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19. What the state does need is a plan that can help the state's economy, workers and communities transition away from fossil to new low-carbon industries that will be sustainable into the future.

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For more information on the research program, climate justice and discussion on Australia's fossil fuel exports, see:

https://climatejustice.co/