

KEEP THE COAL IN THE HOLE

A TIME FOR CHANGE: We live at a very important, yet exciting time in history. Important because a looming climate crisis threatens our very survival. Exciting because we have the opportunity to address climate change and its root causes, so that our future generations will have a thriving planet to sustain them.

What is climate change?

Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases trap heat from the sun and warm our atmosphere. But as the level of greenhouse gases gets too high, we are seeing ever increasing extremes of weather, and sea-level rise. Our economy is based on burning fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas), which emit carbon dioxide. Global measurements show that average temperatures are increasing every decade and the ocean is becoming more acidic as it absorbs this excess carbon dioxide.

How is this affecting us and the natural world?

Already we are seeing more storms, floods, and droughts. The natural world is not able to adjust fast enough. By 2050 climate change will have directly led to the extinction of 30% of species, the death of 90% of coral reefs and the loss of half the Amazon rainforest.

Why target coal?

Burning coal is the dirtiest fossil fuel activity on the planet and there are huge reserves of it left worldwide. If we allow them to be burnt, we have no chance of avoiding a climate catastrophe. We need to keep the coal in the hole.

What is the Government doing about climate change?

The Government is heading in the wrong direction. They are increasing our dependence on fossil fuels, for example by supporting:

- Plans to mine billions (yes, billions) of tonnes of Southland lignite - a dirty, brown coal.
- Plans to open up conservation land at Denniston to coal mining for export.
- East Coast deep sea oil drilling.
- Increased oil and gas exploration in the Taranaki region.

The Southland Lignite proposal alone could be responsible for increasing New Zealand's carbon emissions by 20% and the Denniston mine is likely to lead to a 62% increase in New Zealand's coal exports. We need to be making reductions of this magnitude - not increases.

What are individuals doing about climate change?

Many people in New Zealand are making great efforts to live sustainably. These efforts might be large or small, from insulating a home to driving less and using more efficient light bulbs. But even if all of us become as energy efficient as possible, the savings are small compared with burning NZ's coal reserves.

Alternatives to coal

New Zealand is in a great position not to use coal. Most new coal projects are designed for export. Very little is used for electricity generation; and to replace the small amount that is, we have a huge range of renewable energy sources. Some of them, like hydro power, wind power, and geothermal power, are already used extensively. Others, like solar power and heating, have the potential to be used much more widely. The alternative to opening up a new area of mining, that of Southland lignite, is simply to leave the coal in the hole, and leave the high quality productive farmland on top of it.

AS HUMANS, OUR SPECIES IS PART OF THE NATURAL WORLD AND WE RELY ON IT FOR SURVIVAL.



WE NEED COMMUNITY ACTION

If the 6 billion tonnes of economically recoverable lignite in Southland is burnt, it will lead to between 7 and 8 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. In short, it's fantastic that we make personal changes, but to avert dangerous climate change, and leave a thriving planet and society for future generations, we need to take collective action and stop new and expanded coal mines.



Coal Action Network AOTEAROA

Now is the time for action on climate change! Let's join forces and end the use of coal!



Above: The land in the foreground is under threat from lignite mining.

Now is the time for action on climate change

It is not too late! Unlike Australia, we are not yet neck-deep in coal. We have the chance, now, to stop projects like Southland lignite and Dennison going ahead.

COAL ACTION NETWORK AOTEAROA

We are a group of climate justice campaigners. Our objectives are to:

1. Phase out coal mining and coal usage within 20 years, initially by opposing new and expanded coal mines.
2. Promote a cultural change so that mining and using coal are unacceptable.
3. Work towards a society where people and the environment are not exploited for profit.
4. Work towards a socially just transition to a coal-free Aotearoa New Zealand.

What we are doing to stop coal

- Media and education.
- Campaign against Southland lignite.
- Supporting local communities who are working to get their school / hospital / university to convert coal-fired boilers to woody biomass.
- Supporting the campaign to stop an opencast coal mine on the Denniston Plateau, West Coast.

We'd love you to be involved

Contact us at coalactionnetwork@gmail.com if you have an hour a week and can run a website, or paint banners, or do research, or distribute leaflets, or any other contribution. Let us know if you would like to join a group near you.

Summer festival in Southland

Mike Dumbar has a lovely farm in Mataura. Solid Energy bought out farms all around him, but Mike said "NO." He has welcomed us to camp on his land from Friday 20 to Monday 23 January 2012. Join us to stand alongside the people of Southland who are worried about health effects, loss of high quality farmland, noise, water pollution, and climate change. Come along for family camping, live music, fun for the kids, big cook-ups, visits to the lignite mine, workshops on strategy, and training in non-violent direct action. Email us on

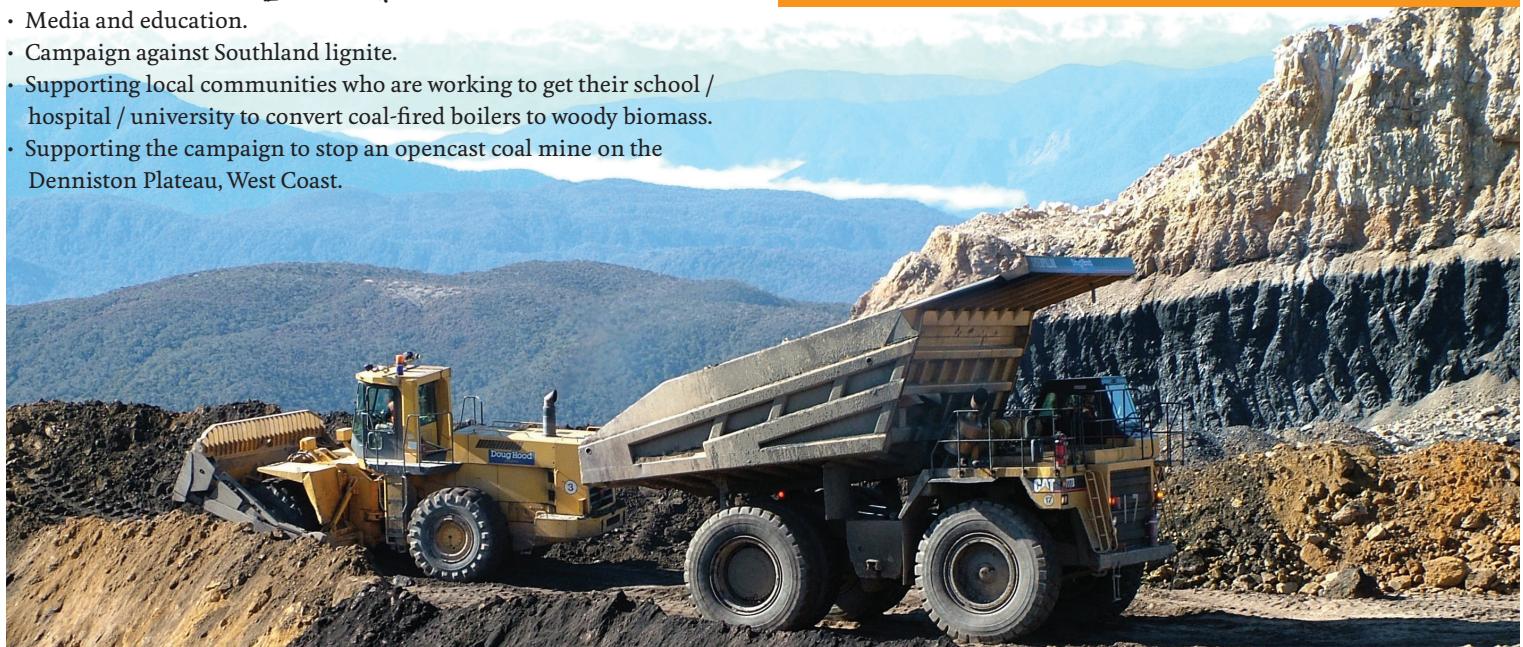
canasummerfestival@gmail.com

AUGUST 2011

Keep up to date on coal issues

Join the CAN Aotearoa supporters list to receive our monthly newsletter, filled with information, event listings and action alerts, and find out more details of how you can get involved. Email coalactionnetwork@gmail.com with 'Subscribe' in the subject line.

Find out more at: <http://coalactionnetworkaotearoa.wordpress.com/>



What about the local environment?

To see what coal mining does to the environment, we just need to take a look at Stockon, NZ's largest coal mine with over 2000 hectares of open-cast devastation. It has destroyed nationally significant ecosystems, including kiwi habitat. The planned mine on the Denniston Plateau will destroy a rare ecosystem on conservation land. PHOTO BY MARTIN TERRY.