

Demonstrating local excellence by positioning business performance in a global sustainable development context

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ABSTRACT

Port Waratah Coal Services operates the world's largest coal export terminals in close proximity to communities in the rapidly developing city of Newcastle, NSW. Although it has an industrial history, Newcastle's development since the closure of the steelworks, combined with growing community awareness of environmental impact, climate change and the role of coal has presented significant challenges to Port Waratah's social licence to operate.

The paper will present how Port Waratah is rising to this challenge by positioning its environmental, community and stakeholder programmes within a comprehensive Licence to Operate framework which is embedded at all levels of the business, from strategy to annual planning to leadership target setting and routine operational execution.

Licence to Operate goals and environmental performance objectives for four key aspects, air quality, noise, water and environmental footprint, are set within and communicated to stakeholders using the framework. The framework directly guides operational execution through an annual portfolio of projects aimed at achieving these objectives and targets.

Port Waratah annually reports its sustainability progress across operational, environmental and social performance in a Sustainable Development Report against the commitments made to stakeholders. The 2017 report (published in April 2018) was for the first time prepared in accordance with Global Reporting Initiative Standards and achieved the Core option. The report also considers how Port Waratah's activities are positioned in the framework by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This not only positions Port Waratah at the forefront amongst local industry in assessing and reporting on sustainability performance, but also demonstrates to its local stakeholders that Port Waratah is committed to perform its local activities in accordance with global community standards. It has also created opportunities for collaboration on contributing to the SGDs with other parties including Newcastle City Council and community groups.