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### **Sustainability and Green Jobs in the Local Brown Economy: Challenges and Contradictions**

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Environmental sustainability poses many challenges for governments, businesses, trade unions, consumers and communities. As a process of change and structural adjustment the type of challenges and conflicts it raises are not new. Nor is the fact that the adjustment process will be uneven across regions and industries. Despite the apparent failure of a global accord on addressing environmental degradation, nearly all economies and regions have their own programs in place to reduce carbon emissions and move towards “green” jobs. This paper reports on the developments and the tensions present in the Hunter Valley of Australia with respect to generating a “green” economy. Here the problems and the contradictions associated with “systems change” are clearly present with a shift towards low carbon production systems. Coal mining competes for land use with vineyards and other forms of agriculture. Local power stations are attempting to reduce coal fired emissions while at the same time coal exports to the rest of the world increase. However, local actors including employer associations and trade unions are promoting alternative energy and green jobs. The process of shifting away from a coal based economy in terms of energy, exports and supporting infrastructure is associated with jobs loss, business closure and taxation losses. However, the quest for a more “sustainable” local economy continues as the inevitability of system change is accepted by many actors. This paper draws on a local survey and case studies of the manufacturing sector in the Hunter Valley of Australia that seeks to identify the catalysts for change together with the obstacles for change. Furthermore, it identifies what type of changes is occurring in the manufacturing sector – production systems, energy use, employee skill profiles, product mix, and within the supply chains.