

Matthew DiMaggio - Submission Opposing the Rocky Hill Coal Project - SSD5156

From: Natasha Keys <tashkeys@hotmail.com>
To: <information@planning.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 10/4/2013 7:49 AM
Subject: Submission Opposing the Rocky Hill Coal Project - SSD5156

NOTE These are Dept of Planning MANDATORY fields.

Natasha Keys 5 Lakes BLVD Wooloweyah Yamba NSW 2464

Dear Sir, I oppose the Rocky Hill Coal Mine Project.

The reasons are listed beneath me in an email I have read and agree with entirely. To add to these points I also wish to state that the day and age of coal mining must come to an end.

Coal mining in other areas within proximity to residential areas has given rise to unprecedented and complicated health issues particularly those relating to the respiratory system. Many of these illnesses have a cause unknown primarily because the Government will not invest money to uncover the root causes.

Also we are moving to a time when investment companies must move away from fossil fuels as a way to drive investment and capital growth to renewable energy and a different way of driving capital growth. Mines do drive employment, and this is in the short term great for families and looks good on paper, yet in the long term almost all mine workers suffer from some form of debilitating disease as a result of their work in mines either earlier and for a longer period of time in later life. Additionally mining families suffer from relationship breakdowns at a higher rate than the average family as the strain and stress on families is often viewed as less important than the high wages.

Working in mines is dangerous, albeit well paid. In the long term the public pays for these long resulting health issues from the mining industry while the mining industry simply moves to the next project.

Additionally for local areas the negative impacts of a transient workforce and 24 hour operations are rarely discussed. Some of these include increased crime rates including rapes, theft, drug offenses and organised crime. While mining companies do cite strict drug testing procedures, this process is fraught with technical oversights and cost factors in overcoming wide spread drug use in the workforce as some drugs have a narrow detection and high error rate. To add to this mine workers enter into a cycle of abstinence to excessive alcohol consumption when off duty – again creating a cost to society rarely discussed or factored in by the financials of mining operations.

Other negative impacts for communities include driving up residential lease costs. This results in the complete morphing of communities including driving out long standing residents due to increased rental prices, and other businesses also suffering from workforce competition resulting in tenure problems and so on.

Because mining companies are global conglomerates, no-one can actually ever know who truly owns them. This serves the purpose of allowing mining companies to dissolve if a major public health or environmental problem was to arise that would effect a compensation claim. The public is never made aware of this and there is a duty for mining companies to disclose who are the true owners of the operations. I call on the Government to ensure full disclosure is made about who the true owners

of all mining operations are so that environmental clean ups and compensations can be assured. Either that or the Government should provide this assurity itself as effectively the mining industry is protecting its own guarantee.

The following are the remainder of the issues of concern:

Proximity – The mine boundary will be situated 900metres from Forbesdale Residential Estate of 35 families. Those families will experience unacceptable levels of noise, dust, and traffic. They have already lost their peaceful, rural lifestyle with this threat. Many have chosen not to improve their homes because they no longer have any value.

No one wants to live next door to an open-cut coal mine. The only way they can sell their homes is to the mining company, GRL and they don't want them.

Noise – It is a known fact that noise is the number one complaint from residents who live near coal mines. There is the noise of the mine workings. There is the noise of the loading trains. But the most destructive noise for humans is 'infrasound'. Infrasound causes sleep disturbances and can lead to major health complaints. The Rocky Hill mine will cause high levels of noise for residents close to the mine but also unacceptable levels of noise for residents in Gloucester town.

No amount of monitoring or measuring will stop the noise impact for the residents of Gloucester.

Health – negative health impacts, which can result in serious illnesses, from the dust from open cut coal mines are well known. Most of Gloucester township (including the hospital and schools) falls within the acknowledged 5km health impact zone of the Rocky Hill mine – thus placing a large proportion of the population at risk. Those most affected by the health impacts are our children, the old and the sick. Are the people of Gloucester just collateral damage?

Impact on Tourism – Visitors come to Gloucester to experience the peaceful, country lifestyle. An open cut coal mine within 5km of Gloucester and within sight of the Bucketts Way will have a major adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area. Tourism is currently worth over \$30M to the Gloucester economy. It will be impacted with a resultant loss of jobs and income generated in the township.

Employment – Companies in town are already experiencing the negative impacts of having a mine nearby. One company lost 11 apprentices to the Stratford mine, down the valley. Mining is good for employment if you want to work in a mine. It is not good for people who want to work in other industries in a mining town.

Water – The location of the proposed Rocky Hill mine is on the Avon River floodplain, and in the water catchment area of the Manning River which supplies drinking water to over 80,000 people. The Avon River has flooded 5 times in 4 years, with 2 floods occurring in February this year. There is real potential for contamination of the water in the catchment.

Cumulative Impacts – If approved, the Rocky Hill coal mine won't be operating in isolation in the Gloucester Valley. Yancoal has requested expansion of its mine at Stratford and AGL is planning on 330 CSG wells in the Valley – many of AGL's wells are to be placed within the Rocky Hill mine and the Stratford mine area. No other area in NSW has coal and CSG companies fighting over the same piece of land. To not consider the cumulative impacts of this mining is reckless and irresponsible.

I have not made a reportable political donation.

Yours sincerely, Natasha Keys New South Wales 2464, Australia