

Matthew Sprott

From:
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To: Matthew Sprott
Subject: Submission Details for

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Categories: Mount Owen Submission

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Name:
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Submission: Objection to Mount Owen Mine Expansion

I am a resident of the Hunter Valley and strongly object to the expansion of the Upper Hunter Mt Owen Mine. I believe any further increase in coal mining to be negligent when considering health of all living things. Instead of expanding we need to be decreasing our reliance on fossil fuels; almost the entire population of natural scientists around the planet agree on this crucial need for change so why are we continuing to ignore the facts surrounding Climate Change. Money is less important than the health of our planet.

For more than 20 years the mine has operated to the detriment of the flora and fauna of the region. Significant environmental impacts have occurred. Huge areas, including over half of the Ravensworth State Forest have been cleared without adequate offset areas being maintained. In 2004 an extra 35 ha was granted to mining, adding to the already 238ha of state forest already being mined. Previously an offset, the 35 ha was crucial in linking the remaining forest. This action has no doubt had negative effects for remaining wildlife in the forest regions.

The current proposal for expansion would disturb 485 ha of land. Within this area exists many endangered species, including a significant number of threatened fauna such as the spotted tail quoll and swift parrot. Numerous species of fauna are also present, particularly numerous types of native gums. The proposed biodiversity offset areas are inadequate adding to the already dire environmental impact of the existing mine. It has been estimated that an 84.6 ha deficit exists regarding environmental offset areas in this latest proposal. This is an appalling oversight!

Air pollution is already a concern for the Hunter Valley. This mine expansion will only add to the existing problems having immediate and long term effects on the health of local residents. Higher than average rates of asthma, allergies and lung cancer already exist in our region. I live near the Maitland Rail Station and am deeply disturbed by the increasing number of coal trucks travelling by rail between mine and harbour throughout the day and night. Indeed the night trains have contributed to my insomnia due to incessant noise pollution as well! At times my house shakes and it feels like a tremor! The fumes are regularly very strong and should not be allowed to increase! More Mines means More Coal means More Health problems!

By expanding the Mt Owen Mine, direct noise levels for over 20 nearby properties would increase. Noise levels down the line for thousands more would increase as more coal trucks continue their almost incessant journey. Cumulative impacts on water and tributary systems including Glennies Creek and the Hunter River would result in ever increasing pollution.

We deserve the right to preserve our land, The Mines are destroying it. The Hunter Valley was once beautiful. Some bits remain intact..let's keep them that way. The only way to preserve and re-establish biodiversity is to STOP Coal Mine Expansion.