

To: Anthony.Ko@planning.nsw.gov.au
Subject: Objection to the planned Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Storage Proposal.

Attention The Hon. Paul Scully, MP,
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.
C/- Anthony Ko, Project Contact Planner DPE
Department of Planning and Environment,
Locked Bag 5022,
Parramatta NSW 2124

Re: Submission of Objection to the Proposed Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Storage Project,
Application Number SSI-12422997, EPBC ID Number 2020/8850.

I have been a resident of the Macleay Valley for over thirty five years and have had a keen interest in the health of the Macleay River for all of that time.

I am now retired but through my previous business, Paul Smith Building Design, I have been involved with numerous projects, both private and for Kempsey Shire Council, which are in close proximity to the Macleay River.

With all these projects a great deal of effort was involved in making sure that there was no likelihood of any pollution entering the Macleay River with a well prepared Sediment and Erosion Control Management Plan, and there were no negative impacts to the River water quality from these projects.

After reading through the relevant sections of the EIS I am deeply concerned that the work carried out in constructing the roads, tunnelling, accommodation construction and associated works are extremely prone to erosion and the effect that this eroded material will have when it is washed into the Macleay River.

Having worked with local surveyors and engineers for over thirty five years I have seen the damage that can be done to the local environment when engineering projects and road construction is carried out in very steep country along the Kempsey to Armidale Road. I have witnessed first hand the failure of sediment control fencing and sediment ponds and dams due to severe weather conditions, and the impact this has had on the water quality feeding into the Macleay River. With a project of this size and the amount of earthwork that is required it must be assumed that at some time during the six year construction period that there will be major problems containing the cut and fill batters when constructing roads that zigzag up steep mountain sides.

As noted in the EIS a large area of the construction site contains very fine soils prone to erosion and special attention needs to be introduced to try and stop the erosion. The erosion of the steep cut and fill batters is proposed to be addressed with planting of vegetation to stabilise the slope. Given the amount of revegetation required and the maintenance required to keep it all alive I can see serious problems involved with the maintenance, mainly watering in the increasingly dry weather and washout if the periods of heavy rain.

Sediment containing Arsenic and Antimony pollution from historic mining activities in the upper catchment areas can still be found along the length of the Macleay River so any major sediment or pollutants exiting from the proposed construction areas will effect a major portion of the length of the River as it is carried downriver and have a detrimental effect on all aquatic, riverbank life and residents who draw water for personal and farm usage.

My property has river frontage to the Macleay River at Mooneba, about fifteen minutes west of Kempsey, and my house overlooks the River. We are very fortunate to have a small platypus population in the River directly in front of our house. Unfortunately the number of platypuses in the River declined significantly after the serious bushfires in November 2019 and the flood event shortly afterwards when the River water quality deteriorated quickly with pollutants from burnt vegetation and buildings washing into the River. Due to the fine particle nature of the pollutants it took over a year for

the water quality to return to pre fire/ flood levels and this was the cause of the decrease in the platypus population. The platypus population has not returned to previous numbers and I note that there has generally been a decline Statewide in platypus numbers and they are now listed as an Endangered Species.

Therefore my objection to the construction of this inappropriate project in a very remote and pristine area requiring a huge amount of roadworks adjacent to the River just to get to the site, the large amount of tunnelling required, the access roads on site and the large open faced rock dam walls are all very prone to erosion and pollution issues and have not been addressed in the EIS, but are to be addressed at a later date after DA Consent is issued.

EROSION AND POLLUTION CONTROL MANAGEMENT IS A MAJOR ISSUE IN A MASSIVE PROJECT OF THIS SIZE AND LOCATION AND IT HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED SUFFICIENTLY.

As President of Save Our Macleay River Incorporated I have been involved with preparing our group's Submission of Objection and I wish to note that I fully agree with all of the points noted in that Submission and it is to be regarded as part of my own Submission of Objection.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Smith

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