

Submission Objecting to Wilpinjong CM Workers Camp Proposal:

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission objecting to the proposal by Peabody CML (application number SSD-6764-Mod 2)

I request that the current application by Peabody (Wilpinjong Coal PL) be rejected and the NSW Government require Peabody restore and upgrade existing houses as well as build permanent dwellings for accommodation in Wollar village and surrounds. This would be a small gesture to return just some of the wealth Peabody's have extracted from this district and support the development of this area as an emerging renewable energy hub.

I support the NSW Government undertaking to do something about the chronic housing shortage throughout our State. This requirement on Peabody Energy would exemplify and support the NSW Government's commitment to urgently address the housing crisis.

My concerns about housing relate to how coal mining companies historically have made vast wealth and how this has been to our detriment in this area surrounding Ulan/Wollar NSW. Approvals of multiple coal mining developments and expansions have significantly contributed to the Mudgee Region's current shortage of permanent housing and rental accommodation. For example the region being unable to provide housing for workers on renewable energy projects thus endangering project viability.

I have lived in the Ulan/Wollar area since the 1970s and in my time here I have witnessed cumulative effects from industrial scale coal mining. Landscape-wide damaging effects from all three coal mines have been exacerbated by long-standing policies to pull down or allow falling into ruin what must be hundreds of homes by now. Over decades this has occurred with multiple approvals by the NSW Department of Planning while local residents were forced out by these ever-expanding open cut or underground mines and associated infrastructure. For us still living here, this means everyone we used to know for kilometres around in every direction has gone. When I now travel to the surrounds of Ulan, the Moolarben Valley or the lovely village of Wollar and nearby Barigan or Mogo Roads previous homes are no longer there, uninhabitable, deserted or only sporadically occupied.

Due to relentless mining expansion approvals, Peabody is now the largest landowner and housing property manager in Wollar area. Although they should, under any evidence-based planning regime, be winding down their operations, Peabody claim a new need to build a complex for workers accommodation that is temporary but nevertheless will remain until "no longer needed". Peabody's reasons for wanting to provide new onsite accommodation for mine workers are not clear or convincing. An obvious conclusion is that this application for workers accommodation is to facilitate further expansion of open cut coal mining beyond existing mining approvals.

The evidence is unequivocal, there is a worldwide existential threat going to affect all life if further expansion of coal mining proceeds. We need as soon as possible a credible mine closure plan for all three mines in Ulan/Wollar, renewable energy must be prioritised if this countryside in the future is to be capable of supporting permanent habitation and viable communities.

Re-establishing community will be more likely while there remains a legacy of sufficient public and private infrastructure on which to rebuild. Don't put off the decision and make the housing crisis worse by allowing Peabody to build cheap throw-away accommodation that is useless for any other purpose at the same time as they are tearing down houses in Wollar.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Imrie BA
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