

## “Reclaiming our Valley”

Hunter Communities Network

---

[huntercommunitynetwork@gmail.com](mailto:huntercommunitynetwork@gmail.com)

### **Submission of Objection Mod-2 Workers Accommodation Facility**

Hunter Communities Network (HCN) was established in 2011 to represent communities living near coal mines in the Hunter Region. The ongoing cumulative environmental and social impacts are a result of a major imbalance in decision-making that has increased the disadvantage to remnant communities and isolated private property owners.

HCN objects to the proposal to construct a temporary workers accommodation facility on the Wilpinjong Coal Mine near the village of Wollar. This will not provide a long-term solution to the housing crisis across NSW.

The Applicant, Peabody Energy, through an aggressive acquisition policy now owns the majority of the property and housing stock in the district. There has been a failure to maintain houses in their condition on acquisition. The Social Impact Management Plan approved to mitigate the most recent mine expansion demonstrates a failure of the process.

The consultation with the local community and interested parties has been very poor in the drafting and assessment of this proposal. The fact that Mid-Western Regional Council has gone against their own housing policy and Community Plan Towards 2040 in supporting this proposal reeks almost of some form of collusion. The Wollar community was not consulted.

This proposal is a failed opportunity to provide a permanent solution to the state and regional housing crisis. It is in the interest of the Department of Planning and the NSW Government to require Peabody Energy to invest a portion of its profits from Wilpinjong Coal Mine into new permanent housing in Wollar village.

The mining industry has been the cause of major housing loss across the entire Hunter region. This issue has not been adequately identified, assessed or mitigated.

There is an opportunity to turn the problem around in this instance by rejecting this proposal in that it doesn't meet NSW housing policy for regional NSW to 'to accelerate the delivery of social, affordable and private homes primarily in regional NSW.'<sup>1</sup>

The severe housing and accommodation crisis in the Hunter and Mudgee regions needs to be solved. This is a golden opportunity for Peabody Energy to give back to the Wollar community

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/rebuilding-essential-housing-across-nsw>

by constructing new permanent housing to solve the immediate accommodation issues for their workforce and to provide a long-term legacy to enable new people to move to the area after mining is finished.

The Wilpinjong Mine is approved to commence winding back production by 2025, reducing the workforce and focussing on mine rehabilitation. Under these conditions there is no justification for a 5 year temporary workers accommodation facility.

This proposal has no long-term public benefit or merit and should be rejected.

Tony Lonergan  
On behalf of Hunter Communities Network  
[huntercommunitynetwork@gmail.com](mailto:huntercommunitynetwork@gmail.com)