



Submission to NSW Department of Planning and Environment

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RE: Wilpinjong MOD 3 - Pit 8 Extension

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed extension and expansion of Peabody Energy's Wilpinjong coal mine in mid-western NSW.

Parents for Climate represents over 25,000 parents, grandparents and carers from across Australia, **including 2,000 from regional NSW**. We strongly oppose the proposed MOD 3 expansion due to its detrimental impacts on our climate, environment, community and economy, both directly and also by delaying the transition towards clean energy.

1. More coal mining will greatly harm our climate

As Australia's leading organisation for parents advocating for a safe climate, Parents for Climate is deeply concerned by Peabody Energy's proposed extraction of an additional 14 million tonnes of coal. This expansion alone is expected to release an estimated **25-68 Mt CO₂-e of additional greenhouse gas emissions**.¹

It is well established and acknowledged at all levels of government in Australia that the burning of fossil fuels is causing the climate to change at an historically unprecedented rate. Climate change is destabilising our life support systems and is already having massive negative ramifications on health, well-being and lifestyles.

Peabody's proposal will significantly increase NSW greenhouse gas emissions, which were 111 Mt CO₂-e in 2022.² This will strain our already devastated climate, and by extending Peabody's coal mining operations until 2034, severely undermines both state and federal government targets of reducing emissions by 62-70% on 2005 levels by 2035, and achieving Net Zero by 2050.

¹ Mudgee District Environment Group (2025), '[Wilpinjong Modification 3](#)'; Lock the Gate (2024), '[NSW Coal Watch](#)'.

² NSW EPA (2025), '[State of the Environment](#)'.

2. Degradation of Wollar Creek, groundwater and biodiversity

The Wilpinjong Coal Mine currently spans over 30km² of farmland and high biodiversity values between Goulburn River National Park and Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve. The proposed expansion will impact an additional 155 hectares, ***to the detriment of local wildlife and farmland***. The endangered large-eared pied bat, eastern cave bat and the critically endangered regent honeyeater species are particularly threatened by the removal of important breeding habitats in the area.

Healthy, biodiverse ecosystems are natural carbon sinks that are critical to mitigating climate change. But despite various government commitments and programmes of work over the years, Australian biodiversity is in decline. Our children and our environment deserve better. We cannot allow multinationals to continue to exploit Australian ecosystems for financial gain.

3. Social impacts on the Wollar community

The Wollar community has suffered greatly since Peabody Energy opened its Wilpinjong mine in 2006. While the company boasts of having created 605 jobs, many of these workers are short-term residents who are housed in temporary accommodation.³

In reality, census data shows that Wollar's population has fallen from more than 300 to 52 in 2021. ***Local families have been driven out of the area by air pollution, noise, and Peabody's acquisition of local houses and businesses***, ultimately resulting in the closure of Wollar Public School in 2023.⁴ In the words of Mudgee nursery manager and grandmother Alison Smiles-Schmidt: "Our school is empty because the state and federal governments put coal above the needs of our children ... 350 people once lived in Wollar, before Peabody's Wilpinjong coalmine was allowed to destroy the countryside and our town."⁵

Peabody's proposed expansion brings open-cut mining right up to the northern boundary of Wollar Village, and is a slap in the face for residents who have spent the past 20 years working to protect and rebuild their community. Hundreds of Aboriginal sites also would be destroyed, representing a profound loss for Wiradjuri and Australia's cultural heritage.

4. No economic justification for destruction

While Parents for Climate understands that the Department must consider community concerns alongside Australia's broader economic interests, we assert that there is no **economic justification for Peabody Energy's proposed Wilpinjong MOD 3 expansion**.

³ Peabody Energy (2025), '[Wilpinjong Mine](#)'; ABC News (2024), '[Wollar residents fear for town's future with temporary accommodation bid for coal mine workers](#)'.

⁴ Mudgee Guardian (2023), '[Wollar Public School says final goodbye](#)'.

⁵ The Guardian (2019), '[It was an ideal place for our children to grow up — but the coalmine has silenced our schoolyard](#)'.

With Australia shifting towards renewable energy, we do not need more Wilpinjong coal on shore. As of 2022, Wilpinjong supplied 70 per cent of its coal to the Bayswater and Liddell Power Stations.⁶ Liddell has since shut down, and Bayswater will close by 2030-2033.

There is no need for new coal in Australia nor overseas. As clearly stated by the traditionally conservative International Energy Agency in 2021: “Beyond projects already committed as of 2021, there are no new oil and gas fields approved for development in our pathway, and no new coal mines or mine extensions are required.”⁷

Besides the multinational Peabody Energy and its shareholders, no one gains from the extension and expansion of Wilpinjong mine: not Australian workers, nor industry, taxpayers, and the global population who all suffer the impacts of economic uncertainty and a worsening climate crisis.

With the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWOREZ) works now underway in the region, Peabody’s proposed MOD 3 expansion puts unnecessary additional strain on the local workforce, which is already in the early stages of pivoting towards the opportunities and demands of a clean energy industry. MOD 3 and any further **coal mining expansions in Wilpinjong must be rejected** to provide economic certainty around Australia’s Net Zero transition.

For all the above reasons, with the interests of Australian families and children at heart, Parents for Climate submits that **the NSW Government must not approve Peabody Energy’s Wilpinjong MOD 3 - Pit 8 Extension proposal**. We would be pleased to provide further information, including input from our supporter base and trusted experts in our network.

About Parents for Climate

Parents for Climate is Australia’s leading voice for families advocating climate solutions that safeguard our children’s future. We represent tens of thousands of parents and carers from across the country from across the political spectrum, across all Australian electorates, and from varied socio-economic positions.

We seek non-partisan responses to climate change and its impacts, and want smart, equitable and future-focused reforms that improve economic wellbeing and protect the next generation from escalating climate harms. We advocate for Australian governments and businesses to take urgent action to cut Australia’s carbon emissions to net zero as quickly as possible. We encourage Australia to take a leadership role on the world stage, leading by example and calling for other nations to take the necessary action to protect our children’s futures.

For more information, visit www.parentsforclimate.org or email info@parentsforclimate.org
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⁶ Wilpinjong Coal Community Consultative Committee (2022), ‘[Annual Report](#)’.

⁷ International Energy Agency (2021), ‘[Net Zero by 2050. A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector](#)’.