

### **Submission Regarding Wilpinjong Coal Mine Modification 3**

To Whom It May Concern,

I write today to formally lodge my strong objection to the proposed **Wilpinjong Coal Mine Modification 3**.

Recently, I visited the village of Wollar to witness firsthand the profound impacts of the Wilpinjong Coal Mine and to assess why the proposed Modification 3 should not proceed. It quickly became evident that the proposal would cause further harm to a community and environment already under severe stress.

Wollar is located approximately 47.9 km northeast of Mudgee, near the Goulburn River (into which Wollar Creek flows) and Munghorn Gap National Park. It is the ancestral and spiritual home of the Wiradjuri people and is an area well-suited to livestock and mixed farming. The village is rich in natural beauty, featuring expansive skies, green pastures, quintessential Australian vegetation, critical groundwater systems, and habitats for endangered species such as the Regent Honeyeater, the Large-eared Pied Bat, and the Eastern Cave Bat.

Open-cut mining commenced at Wilpinjong in 2006. At that time, the population of Wollar and its surrounds was 304. By the 2016 census, following continued mining activity, the population had fallen to approximately 69, with local estimates suggesting it has since decreased to around 40. In just 19 years, Wollar has lost roughly 87% of its population, a direct consequence of mining activity.

Wollar was once a thriving community, with a school, general store, two churches, a public medical service, a park, community hall, public toilets, and privately-owned homes. By 2018, the medical service was withdrawn due to lack of demand, and the school closed the same year. In 2022, the general store ceased operations, leaving residents to travel over 100 km round-trip to Mudgee for basic supplies. Both churches have not held services for many years.

Walking through Wollar village, one cannot help but be moved by the degradation of a once thriving community. The public park is overgrown with grass and weeds, and the play equipment is in a very poor state. Houses, which were once maintained with well-kept gardens and facades, are now shadows of their former selves. Even a traveller seeking a rest stop or picnic would find nowhere suitable to do so. The community hall, cared for by local residents, continues to serve as the village's central point, but it is evident that Wilpinjong provides only token attention to the community, while extracting substantial resources.

Many residents have been forced to leave Wollar due to the impacts of the Wilpinjong Mine, including noise, frequent blasting, dust, night-time lighting, water contamination, and spontaneous coal combustion. The stress and health impacts on those who remain are substantial. The proposed Modification 3 expansion, which would encircle the village, would only exacerbate these mental, physical, and environmental harms.

Peabody Energy may argue that the Modification 3 expansion is necessary to secure coal production, energy security, and employment. However, this argument is inconsistent with the broader direction of the state. The **Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone**, covering 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>, is a key part of NSW's transition to clean energy. Expanding coal

mining in the same region contradicts the state's clean energy objectives. By comparison, the **Wollar Solar Farm**, located approximately 7 km south of Wollar village, is expected to generate up to 320 construction jobs, while the mine expansion anticipates only 50 additional operational jobs.

Having observed Wollar, spoken with residents, and considered the extensive social, environmental, and health impacts, I urge the Department of Planning to **reconsider the approval of Wilpinjong Coal Mine Modification 3** and make a determination against this expansion. Approving this modification would further devastate a vulnerable community and compromise the state's commitment to renewable energy and environmental stewardship.

Yours faithfully,  
Kim Michelle Hansen  
17 Butler Circle, BOMBIRA NSW 2850  
28<sup>th</sup> October 2025

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