

Bev Smiles
3483 Ringwood Rd
Wollar 2850

0428 817 282
bevsmiles85@gmail.com

Project Planner
DPHI

<https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/mod-8-ulan-west-continued-operations>

Monday 17 November 2025

Objection to Mod 8 – Ulan West Continued Operations

I have been a member of the Ulan Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee (CCC) since its inception in 1998. My initial position on the CCC was as a representative of the Hunter Catchment Management Trust. The Trust had key concerns about the impact of the Ulan Coal Mine on the health of the Goulburn River and the condition of the 3 km river diversion. My experience on the CCC has given me a solid background on the management issues of the mine overtime, particularly in regard to water management and the failings of the predictive modelling process as a decision-making tool.

I am a long term resident of the Wollar district suffering significant social, economic and health impacts from the cumulative impacts of three large coal mining operations in the region. I am a landholder downstream on the Goulburn River and have experienced major changes to flow and water quality due to mine water discharges over time.

I am also impacted by the large number of coal train movements on the Sandy Hollow rail line, with approval across the three mines for up to 31 trains per day. The night-time noise of trains with over 80 coal wagons causes sleep disturbance and anxiety. There is also the inconvenience of regular travel delays at the Ringwood Rd rail crossing. The proposed continuation of coal train movements from Ulan Mine until 2041 is an unacceptable continuation of this disturbance.

This mine expansion proposal (Mod 8) is substantially different to the current Ulan West project approved in 2012 and should not be assessed as a Modification. This proposed large expansion of mining that straddles the Great Dividing Range across two catchments must be assessed as a new project.

Mod 8 is directly connected to the Ulan Modification 6 (Mod 6) expansion both for the extension of life of mine and for the extension of longwall panels to the west. The recent Land and Environment Court order to set aside the approval of Mod 6 has major implications for Mod 8. This application should be rendered null and void.

The proposal under Mod 8 to extend the life of mine to 2041 to extract an additional 43 million tonnes of coal fails to address NSW and Australia's global responsibilities to limit carbon emissions.

Poor Water Assessment

The ongoing cumulative impact on the Upper Goulburn River catchment combining water interception and discharge from the three large coal mining operations is not clearly identified or adequately assessed.

As a downstream landowner with basic rights on the Goulburn River I have been significantly impacted by changes to the river since large scale mining commenced upstream over the past 40 years. The increasing salt loads and mine water discharges are having a significant impact on the water quality, ecology and flow heights of the river. This is particularly impactful at times of medium flood levels or receding high levels of floodwaters. The three mines have been granted Environment Protection Licence (EPL) variations after flood events allowing higher levels of mine discharge. This causes river levels to remain higher than natural recession rates and prolongs loss of access to public road users at O'Briens Crossing. As this is my main direct route to Mudgee the additional periods of road closure due to flooding causes economic disadvantage because the alternative route is a 1.5 hr trip via the Golden Highway to the east.

The lack of flow gauges above the Coggan Creek gauge is a significant issue for understanding flow impacts on water users, internal property access and public road access.

The salt load from the combined mine discharges has been substantial impacting water quality for stock and domestic use and for the river ecosystem.

Mod 8 proposes to continue releasing up to 30 ML/d until 2041 which will contribute at least an additional 30,000 tonnes of salt to the riverine environment. The cumulative impact of mine water discharge on the Goulburn River from the three mining operations has not been assessed.

Cumulative Impact Assessment

The Mod 8 assessment fails to adequately consider the cumulative social, environmental and economic impact of the proposed extension of coal mining until 2041 releasing an additional 105 million tonnes of Greenhouse Gases into the atmosphere.

The Wilpinjong Coal Mine has a proposed extension before the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) that is part of a much larger proposed expansion. The Moolarben Coal Mine has approval to mine up until 2038 including the proposed extension to Open Cut 3.

The Cumulative Impact Scoping Summary (Appendix 19) fails to recognise that the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from the three Mudgee Region coal mines are significant and should warrant detailed assessment. Similarly the water assessment should include detailed assessment of the Wilpinjong Coal Mine impacts, including the proposed Mod 3 expansion.

The assessment fails to recognise any cumulative social and economic impacts. This ignores the extent of these impacts in the region that will be increased by Mod 8, including the impacts

on private property, property acquisition in the region by the mining industry, depopulation, increased risks through more extreme weather events with a decreasing volunteer pool.

The impacts of increased GHG emissions until 2041 have not been assessed in terms of costs to the local area.

The Mod 8 proposal has no merit and should be rejected on social, environmental and economic grounds.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "B. Smiles".

Bev Smiles