

Re: Ulan Coal Mine Mod 8 – Ulan West Continued Operations

Dear Sir or Madam,

Orange Field Naturalist and Conservation Society (OFNCS) strongly opposes the Ulan Coal Mine Mod 8 – Ulan West Continued Operations. It is not a modification as it falls completely outside the current mining lease and therefore its environmental and heritage impacts have not been assessed. It differs considerably from the current approved mine. These assessments are critical as the proposal will further threaten already threatened species, the Box Gum Woodland Endangered Ecological Community and other fauna and habitat. The proposal would also be a greenhouse gas generating project, so the local climate impacts need to be considered.

Orange Field Nats is composed of community members, conservationists, and scientists. Since its formation in 1974 it has been an advocate for the environment in the Central West. Our members have an interest in the environment now, but also into the future for their children, grandchildren, and future generations.

This proposal will impact a Critically Endangered Ecological Community (CEEC) and species that have been assessed as being at an extremely high risk of extinction. Species of greatest concern are the nationally listed critically endangered Regent Honeyeater and Box Gum Woodland. Other nationally threatened species that will be affected are the Long-eared Pied Bat, the Eastern Cave Bat, two owl species and Koalas. The habitats for these bats are the sandstone escarpments, overhangs and caves that will be disturbed by this mine expansion. These landscape features cannot be offset. The full impact of the proposal on threatened species and the environment has not been fully assessed as the final layout of mine infrastructure on the surface has not been outlined. It also seems contradictory to destroy 132 hectares of the revegetated and rehabilitated old open cut mine site for the construction of a new tailings dam.

As the proposed mine is west of the Great Dividing Range it will impact water flows into the Talbragar River, then into the Macquarie River. The loss of flow into these rivers will impact the Macquarie Marshes, an internationally significant RAMSAR wetland. This wetland supports many migratory and threatened species. The Goulburn River, which flows into the Hunter, will also be affected by extended water releases containing salt. These eastern flowing rivers may also be affected if leakage of toxic chemicals occurs from the proposed tailings dam and coal waste storage area. It is a worry that no details of how this area will be managed and monitored have been outlined. Groundwater in the local catchment will be reduced and affected, especially by land collapse and subsidence. These impacts on water will not just be for the 10-year life of the mine but **permanently**.

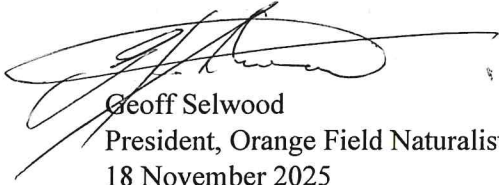
While the Society's focus is on protecting the environment the loss of Aboriginal cultural and spiritual heritage for the Wiradjuri people is of significant concern. Impacts on 71 know sites, including rock art sites, should not occur. The direct impact of the underground mine on properties above the mine and the social impact on the Wollar community is also a real concern.

This proposed coal mine will result in the release of over 105Mt of Greenhouse gases. As the Society has voiced before it is quite contradictory to have a significant coal mine expansion in the Central West Renewable Energy Zone (CWREZ). Declaration of the CWREZ recognises that there is a need to move to alternative forms of clean power generation and to help mitigate the effects of climate change. Any net public benefit and income from the expansion will be small compared to the impacts of climate change

generated extreme weather events, like we have experienced at Eugowra. The impacts of climate change on biodiversity and communities will also come at a cost.

These are all reasons why this proposal should be assessed as a new proposal and not as a modification. Thank you for the opportunity to voice our objections.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Selwood', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Geoff Selwood
President, Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society
18 November 2025