

*“Reclaiming our Valley”*

Hunter Communities Network

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PO Box 14 Singleton 2330

Attention Sara Wilson  
Mining and Major Industry Projects  
Dept of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney 2001

Thursday 23 February 2012

Dear Ms Wilson,

**Re: Objection to Moolarben Coal Complex Stage 2 \_ Preferred Project Report:  
No. 08\_0135**

The Hunter Communities Network (HCN) is an alliance of community based groups and individuals impacted by the current coal industry and concerned about the ongoing rapid expansion of coal and coal seam gas exploration and mining in the region.

HCN does not support the proposal to expand the existing operations of the Moolarben Mine, near Ulan in the Upper Hunter and wishes to lodge a strong objection to the development application as exhibited.

The social and environmental impacts of current mining activities are far greater than predicted in the development application for Moolarben Stage 1. The company, Yancoal and predecessors, Felix Resources, have proven to be poor environmental managers and should not be given approval to increase operations on the scale proposed by the Moolarben Stage 2 Preferred Project.

HCN has no confidence in the quality of the ground water modelling and predictions of the impacts on the water sources that supply base flows to the Goulburn River. The community in the area have been calling for an independent Regional Water Study, as was conducted in the Upper Hunter LGA, relating to the impacts of the proposed Bickham Coal Project.

HCN supports this proposal and calls on the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to initiate a comprehensive independent groundwater and surface water study of existing cumulative impacts of the operations under current approval.

The cumulative impacts of the mega mining operations approved in this northern end of the Western Coalfields have had a devastating effect on the social fabric of the area. Both Ulan and Wollar villages and localities have been socially destroyed, with the Cooks Gap rural community now experiencing untenable dust and noise problems.

The increased traffic and train movements have not been adequately planned for. The local road and regional road conditions have deteriorated significantly while access through rail-crossings on local roads can be blocked for long periods of time.

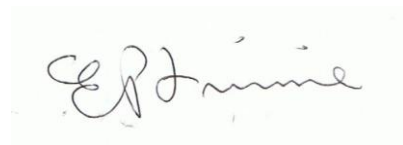
The overheated housing market in the larger towns of Mudgee and Gulgong has caused economic disadvantage to local people employed in other industries. Health and social services have been heavily impacted by increased demand without corresponding investment from Government agencies.

The economic benefits predicted in the Moolarben Stage 2 proposal are highly questionable and need to be independently reviewed.

Finally, HCN wishes to lodge a major objection to the conversion to freehold title of LOT 30 DP755439 & LOT 45 DP750750 which contain The Drip and Corner Gorge on the Goulburn River.

This area is a significant and popular natural icon, visited by thousands of people annually. The scenic beauty and environmental values of the groundwater fed sandstone escarpments should be afforded permanent protection as an addition to Goulburn River National Park.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ted Finnie', is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Ted Finnie

On behalf of Hunter Communities Network