

Sara Wilson - Save The Drip and Hands on the Wall

From: "Diane Simmonds" <dzsimmonds@bigpond.com>
To: <plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 2/24/2012 2:02 PM
Subject: Save The Drip and Hands on the Wall
CC: <savethedrip@mdeg.org.au>

To : Dept Planning - Mining and Major Projects

RE: Moolarben Coal Complex Stage 2 _ Preferred Project Report: Project No: 08_0135

The Moolarben Coal Mine has just released its revised STAGE 2 plans for open cut and underground mine expansion. I strongly object to Moolarben Coal Mine buying Crown Land, namely The Drip and Hands on the Rocks, in secret to minimise complaints against their ruin. Where is transparency in government? How does a coal mine get to buy Crown Land that is the corner stone of most complaints against their coal mining expansions? Who gave permission for this sale and why was it done in secret? What other Crown Lands have been sold to coal mines and other big money enterprises?

The Mudgee community requested the Moolarben Stage 2 include The Drip and Corner Gorges being transferred into the adjoining Goulburn River National Park to ensure ongoing public access and to protect this magnificent river corridor and important Aboriginal Cultural Heritage place. But The Drip and walking track and southern cliff of the Corner Gorge was converted to freehold title and is now fully owned by the Moolarben Coal Mine. It was formerly a Crown lease.

How can this happen in a country like Australia that values its national beauty and cultural heritage?

The company was asked by community, council and government (OEH & Planning) to include The Drip and Corner Gorges in its proposed "offset package" as partial compensation for loss of biodiversity, riparian habitat and community amenity but rejected the proposal.

The Mudgee community is fearful they will lose a major tourist attraction and local national park area that is of World Heritage standard. This is criminal that a coal company should be able to buy this place and ultimately destroy it.

I am asking the Department of Planning to appoint an independent expert panel to fully scrutinise the strategies, assumptions and actions of Moolarben Coal and to also report to the public how this magnificent national gem was sold to a private mining company and what other Crown Lands have been sold to private entities.

Additional Notes:

The coal mining boom has caused major devastation to the catchment with the Ulan, Wilpinjong and Moolarben Stage 1 mega

mines. But they are still planning more....

Full project description is at: www.Moolarbencoal.com.au or

<http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/page/development-categories/mining--petroleum--extractive-industries/mining/>

Summary of impacts: Moolarben Coal Complex Stage 2 _ Preferred Project Report

- The offset package does not include the culturally and scenically significant river corridor known as The Drip and Corner Gorges securing its long term protection, appropriate management and on going public access.
- The permanent damage (at least 100 years) to the Goulburn River and connected groundwater system is unacceptable
- Estimated cumulative water use by the three coal mines approximately 30-40ML/day (10-12 Gigalitre/annum)
- Water use for just the Moolarben Mine estimated to be 10.55ML/day (3850 ML/annum).
- Water deficit for 23 of 24 years (up to 1990ML extra water required)
- No confidence that the groundwater modelling accurately predicts water impacts - there are significant disparities between Moolarben and Ulan Coal Mines groundwater assessments.
- Water for coal washing should be first sourced from Ulan Coal Mine surplus groundwater before any extraction from the Northern Borefield (adjacent to the Goulburn River).
- Clearing of additional 900 has of native forest (123ha EEC Box Woodland)
- Disturbance footprint of 1546 has of native vegetation including 4.1 kms of Murragamba creek, 4.1 kms of eastern creek and a direct impact on over 148 archaeological sites (from scatters to rock shelters).
- Biodiversity offsets are located outside the Hunter Valley catchment, do not represent “like for like’ nor replace the net loss to the bio-region or the east west vegetation corridor connecting the coastal forest to the western woodlands.
- Production 17Mt coal or 23.7 Million tonnes (co₂^e) year of Greenhouse Gases fuelling further climate instability
- Excessive noise levels e.g location of the conveyor on top of ridge (must be sound attenuated and set lowered on landscape to minimise noise dispersal)

Yours sincerely,

Diane Simmonds

www.mudgeehistory.com.au