

Objection to the Dubbo Zirconia Project

18/11/2013

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my objection to the Alkane Resources Zirconia Project at Toongi, south of Dubbo. The high risk long term impacts of the proposal, identified by their own environmental impact assessment translate to poor outcomes for the local community and the local environment. These include radioactive substances, social impacts and crucial water issues.

The landscape of the area would change enormously with the approval of this project. The massive infrastructure will change the current agricultural landscape to an industrial one which has long term negative impacts on the community. Obley road will be inundated with trucks and the railway plans are not guaranteed and at least five years off if they do eventuate. The noise pollution from blasting and processing is further intrusion on people's lives.

There is high risk of waste water leachate and impacts on groundwater have not been clearly acknowledged. Tailing ponds often leak the acids, heavy metals and radioactive materials into groundwater. We must protect groundwater. The use of water from the Macquarie River will severely impact that waterway and the ecosystems associated with it. The impact of interrupting flows on our waterways is known and we must protect against this.

The project will disturb 170 ha and the site shelters three endangered ecological communities being a habitat for the threatened pink tailed worm lizard. Offsets are risky- threatening biodiversity in both known and unknown ways. The construction of both the gas pipeline the water pipeline will further cause damage.

Of major concern are radioactive materials associated with the project. Although Alkane do not specifically want to target these radioactive elements, they will be present, as Toongi has the largest deposit of uranium in NSW. And dilution is no guarantee of safety. To accept the current proposal is to set a dangerous precedent for the future. The proponent would need to commit responsibility for the ongoing storage of such radioactive waste for the full lifetime, which may be hundreds of years.

The impact on aboriginal heritage sites is further reason for concern. There are 14 areas of great significance to indigenous people that the project would destroy. This signals harm to past, present and future generations.

This strong objection implores those responsible to act in the long term interests of the whole community, including human and non-human stakeholders.

Sarah Kendell, Tenambit NSW, 2323.