

Graeme Neil Batterbury
91 Robb Road,
Lillian Rock NSW 2480
(Postal Address: PO Box 3040, Lismore NSW 2480)

9th November 2012.

Major Planning Assessments
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney 2001

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a resident of New South Wales and am concerned about the escalation of fossil fuel strategies being pursued in New South Wales. I welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed expansion of the Cobbora coal project.

Key Points of Objection:

1. Cobbora Coal project is inappropriate investment of \$3.4 billion of NSW taxpayers' money
2. The project justification is based on outdated electricity demand and coal price projections
3. The project will generate additional greenhouse gas emissions conflicting with State and Federal policy to reduce climate change impacts
4. The project will disturb approx 47km² of land with important high conservation and agricultural value
5. The project will destroy 1,867ha of significant woodland providing habitat for 39 threatened species, including nationally listed endangered species
6. The project will destroy significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites
7. The project will compete with the Mudgee wine and tourism industry for water supply during drought conditions

At this time, it is essential that the NSW government embrace Renewable Energy.

Re-powering Australia with 100% renewable energy will take commitment and resources, but with the right leadership we can make the shift to a clean energy economy quickly.

Not only will moving to a renewable energy powered economy make Australia a cleaner and better place to live, it will create hundreds of thousands of new clean jobs, ensure our energy security and contribute to the country's continued prosperity.

Cobbora Coal project is a state-owned coal-mining project tied to the sale of the power stations. It will lock NSW into coal-fired electricity generation until at least 2036.

The proposal is to mine 20mtpa (million tonnes per annum) to produce 12mtpa of usable coal – it is extremely poor quality product with high ash content. The project aims to provide cheap domestic coal to power stations in the Upper Hunter and Central Coast. The health impacts of using poor quality coal have not been assessed.

The justification for the project is based on incorrect projections of demand for coal-fired electricity over the next 10 years. Demand has dropped significantly since this project was proposed.

The price of black coal on the export market has also dropped below the projections used to justify the need to source cheaper coal for domestic use.

The mine will cost the NSW taxpayer approx \$3.4 billion and will be run at a loss. It is a direct subsidy to power generators in NSW. The argument for continued coal-fired electricity in comparison to the long-term benefits of renewable energy sources has not been made. Taxpayer's money would be better invested in renewable energy sources.

The project has a very large footprint and will cause major environmental impacts on woodland habitat as well as groundwater and surface water sources and loss of at least 79 Aboriginal cultural heritage sites.

The clearing of 1,867ha woodland habitat will impact on species listed for national protection: eg Grassy Box Woodland; endangered and vulnerable plants, including 100% loss of the local population of *Tylophora linearis*, endangered bird species including australasian bittern, malleefowl, regent honeyeater, superb parrot; and vulnerable microbat species - southern long-eared bat, large-eared pied bat.

Also a large number of threatened woodland birds protected under the NSW Threatened Species Act were recorded in the area of impact - brown tree creeper, diamond firetail, glossy black-cockatoo, grey-crowned babbler, hooded robin, speckled warbler, varied sittella, masked owl, barking owl, powerful owl.

The proposed biodiversity offset package has not been finalized and is inappropriately based on mine rehabilitation. The replacement of high conservation value habitat especially tree hollows in slow growing woodland species takes centuries.

The mine will need to use up to 3,700 ML (million litres) of water per year from surface water and groundwater interception. The use of high security licenced water from the Cudgegong River will threaten the water security of the Mudgee region wine and tourism industries. It could also threaten the long-term security of urban water supply from Windamere Dam.

The NSW Government has purchased 68 of 90 properties in the affected area. The loss of farming community and broadscale food production has not been adequately assessed.

The cost benefit analysis for the project has not taken into account the social disruption; competition for workforce with other industries, particularly the agricultural industry across western NSW; or the costs of major infrastructure upgrades, particularly rail lines, to accommodate additional coal transport.

Towns and properties along the coal chain will be impacted by additional noise and dust from increased coal train movements.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Batterbury', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Graeme Batterbury