

## **Objection to Cobbora Coal Project – state owned coal mine proposal**

**Application No: 10\_0001**

**November Deadline: Friday 16 2012**

**For the Attention of : Stephen O'Donoghue.**

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**From : R.Pinferi**  
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### **Key Points of Objection:**

#### **1. The project justification is based on outdated electricity demand and coal price projections**

It 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. It will supply 30% of their needs over 21 years.

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 to keep NSW electricity competitive in the national market.

The mine will cost the NSW tax payer approx \$3.4b. The argument for continued coal-fired electricity in comparison to the long-term benefits of renewable energy sources has not been made. The NSW State Plan has a priority action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Tax payer's money would be better invested in renewable energy sources.

The NSW Government has purchased 68 of 90 properties in the affected area. The loss of farming community and broad acre 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.

Additionally the Executive Summary indicates that the mine area is mostly agricultural and therefore sparsely inhabited leading to the assumption that the people resident in the area are expendable, does this mean city people are more important than country people!

- 2. The project will generate approx 615 million tonnes of additional greenhouse gas**
- 3. The project is in direct conflict with State and Federal policy to reduce climate change impacts**
- 4. The project will disturb approx 47km<sup>2</sup> of land with important high conservation and agricultural value**

Cobbora Coal project is proposed in central west NSW north of Mudgee and east of Dubbo.

The project has a very large footprint and will cause major environmental impacts on woodland habitat as well as groundwater and surface water sources.

- 5. The project will destroy 1,867ha of significant woodland providing habitat for 39 threatened species, including nationally listed endangered species**

The clearing of 1,867ha woodland habitat will impact on the following species listed for national protection:

- Grassy Box Woodland
- 3 endangered and vulnerable plants including 100% loss of the local population of *Tylophora linearis*
- Endangered bird species eg Australasian Bittern, Malleefowl, Superb Parrot
- Vulnerable microbat species

Also a large number of threatened woodland birds protected under the NSW Threatened Species Act were recorded in the area of impact.

Section ES3.1.3 Surface Water indicates that there will be a low area left behind after mine restoration. The environmental statement advises that this area will fill with water and will become a hypersaline lake which must be an environmental time bomb. The lake is referred to as an economic necessity to make the mine viable, Where else in the developed world is this possible?

**6. The project will destroy significant Aboriginal heritage sites**

**7. The project will compete with the Mudgee wine and tourism industry for water supply during drought conditions**

The mine will need to use up to 3,700 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.

**Specific objections to current Environment Statement.**

**Air Quality.**

- A. DUST LOADS. The measurement of the existing air quality is based on data collected from sample stations which are adjacent to existing unsealed roads.

Additionally they are all inside the project application area which means that the data they provide indicates the air quality existing at the actual mine site.

Referring to Appendix M –Air quality and associated Appendix E –Tabular Results: Table E7 page 208 please consider residence 5006 (where my family resides)

The table shows that dust created by the mine (Incremental Concentration) is less than 20% of the dust applicable to background sources plus the mine(Cumulative Concentration) I cannot believe this as my property is not on a major road and only one car a day passes by on average.

Information regarding existing mines indicate dust pollution actually occurring during mine operations vastly exceeds the original environmental statement projections in both the area effected and amount of dust generated. Accordingly assuming the EPA supervises these existing mines plans should be included in the Environmental Statement overlaying original projections against actual conditions.

**B. QUESTIONS REGARDING INFORMATION PROVISION.**

1. Figure 14.1 Air Quality Assessment Locations indicates an area of Maximum extent of Mine, does this include stockpile areas for overburden and topsoil?
2. The effected/adjacent community members require the mine layouts to be based on the applicable deposited plans with mine infrastructure superimposed, leaving lot numbers readable, thus allowing accurate analysis of the mine location and effects.
3. The mine layouts provided have a nominal north indicated I believe that is misleading and all layouts should display True North, Grid North and Magnetic North.