

Ms Jill Hartley



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Major Planning Assessments
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
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Sydney 2001

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Premier Barry O'Farrell: office@premier.nsw.gov.au
Planning Minister Brad Hazzard: office@hazzard.minister.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: OBJECTION TO COBBORA COAL MINE.

I welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed expansion.

I am a concerned citizen of NSW & I object vehemently to the digging up of more polluting & destructive coal mines in this state.

The Cobbora coal mine, if built, will cost taxpayers more than \$3 billion, (much better to spend the money on TAFE); destroy nearly two thousand hectares of wildlife habitat, and provide half-priced coal to our state's polluting power stations for more than 20 years.

The justification for the mine is based on incorrect projections of demand for coal-fired electricity over the next 10 years. Demand for coal-fired power has dropped significantly since this project was first proposed, as part of the Keneally government's electricity privatisation deal. We need renewable energy not this greedy grab for coal exploitation.

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 The project justification is based on outdated electricity demand and coal price projections.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.
8. It will lock NSW into coal-fired electricity generation until at least 2036. We MUST move to 100% renewable energy as soon as possible to avoid the major impacts of Climate Change.
9. 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 Hunter Valley residents are already severely impacted by coal dust – now Mudgee residents may well be subjected to the same...at what cost?
10. Why is there massive subsidies to the coal & fossil fuel industries (& for that matter forest industries) when NSW is supposedly broke? This Government wants to destroy a future for the training of young people by destroying TAFE? This just makes no sense.

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 licensed 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.

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 treecreeper, 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.

This plan has not been thought through properly - the impacts to people in the region, the biodiversity & the people of NSW as a whole.

Yours Sincerely

Jill Hartley