

IRONSTONE COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP Inc.

16 November 2012

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

stephen.o'donoghue@planning.nsw.gov.au
http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=3695

RE: Objection to Cobbora Coal Project – (state owned coal mine proposal) – Application No: 10_0001

Dear Sir/Madam,

ICAG Inc. is writing to lodge our objection to the Cobbora Mine in the Macquarie River system (west of Goulburn River) affecting the Murray Darling Basin and in the catchment of the Talbragar River (tributary of Macquarie River).

ICAG Inc. Objects to any natural water sources or river systems being impacted. Haven't enough river systems been destroyed already?

Regardless of whether it's a State run coal mine or not is irrelevant to the environmental impacts caused. And its not worth it any more. We don't need more coal mines, we need less coalmines and look at solar as a way forward in a cleaner and greener future. Based on outdated electricity demands and being used as the main reason for need for this proposal, we need less coal-powered power stations NOT MORE.

Of course ICAG Inc. is very aware of the state run coal mine and the dreadful impacts, environmental destruction and Government cover-ups in Lake Munmorah and Chain Valley Bay and do not believe this one would be any different. These areas are still subsiding todote. People are being harassed and now rather than the Government apologising to the people of that areas and "we the people" on mass of your approvals causing this dreadful subsidence around Lake Macquarie and Lake Munmorah, you have enlisted the help of the National Parks and Wildlife to harass and threaten people that they are the ones responsible for the damage that occurred after the subsidence killed bird habitat areas as being their fault. Stand up and be the men and women who authorise these approvals, and when things go wrong and they always will, have the backbone to apologise, compensate and accept and acknowledge fault, NOT turn it onto the people living the nightmare they are left with as their properties continue to subside through to this day.

Evoke the precautionary principle and don't authorise the mine to proceed in any fashion. The coal is not going anywhere in the ground, so why the rush to have it blasted out and all at once around NSW, QLD and elsewhere?

There is no guarantee that the electricity generated by the coal will be needed or that the coal produced can be sold on the export markets. To get the coal mined anywhere is going to need new significant infrastructure that is not there already. Our Country will end up dead zones due to mining and rail corridors, toxic dams and voids.

This application is taking out more productive farmland and will remove water from the natural water flow of rivers and cause toxic discharge and toxic waste water voids that cannot be fixed back "as good as new if not better" as so many government departments falsely sprukey!

Madness! to anyone that approves any part of this project whether for the state owned coal mine or an overseas company or country.

Any mining jobs will NOT compensate for the loss of farming and agricultural land and will leave the area like so many other areas a "mining wasteland forever".

No more coal mines should and MUST be the new mantra of the State Government Departments replacing their "if there is a resource we'll dig it up regardless of where it is" Ian McDonald & Co. or "yes its illegal to discharge into a river system, until its approved then its no longer illegal" David Kitto. Both men are misguided in their belief, when in reality you can't put back what you did not create and it will always be water pollution regardless of whether the planning dept. or other government departments authorise water pollution to happen at the expense of the environment and ticking all the boxes for the mining companies.

What about groundwater drawdown and the loss of low flows during drought. This will have a significant impact on aquatic ecology in Laheys Creek, Sandy Creek and the Talbragar River?

What about the impacts on streams? What about the endangered Lowland Darling River aquatic ecological community?. Altering hydrology will cause increased fragmentation of this EEC through loss of semi-permanent pools and reduced connectivity of aquatic habitats?.

What about the aquatic ecology survey identified that the threatened Freshwater Catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*) was recorded in a number of sites impacted by flows being altered? How many other species is the Government happy to KILL in areas of Government approved mining?

What about the impacts on the naturally occurring deep pools as drought refugia in ephemeral streams, degradation of riparian vegetation and other groundwater dependent ecosystems cannot EVER BE mitigated. The impact of loss of water availability in local streams as they crack and drain will kill flora/fauna species and ANY impact this project will have, means A TOTAL REJECTION OF THIS MINING PROJECT.

The mine will use up to 3,700 ML (million litres) of water per year from surface water and groundwater from the Cudgegong River AND WILL IMPACT Mudgee.

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 and shame on the Government if they do approve this mining venture to proceed, for removing farming land for mining. A short-term gain, leaving your legacy of permanent and irreparable destruction. 47 Km2 of land to be

destroyed along with 1,867 ha of bushland providing 39 threatened species including listed endangered species. Who in Government thinks to approve such a coal mine in this area is alright?

Aboriginal areas are being destroyed from mining and government approvals. Enough is enough keep these 79 intact and not tampered with at all!

Why should the Mudgee wine and tourism industry have to compete with a coal mine for water supply during drought or not. So much of the Mudgee surrounding areas are already gone, don't keep adding areas.

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. People are expendable to the Government around Australia, which is obvious by the suffering being forced on people who live in an area free of mining, until the Government approves mining companies to move into an area. Therefore the Government is responsible for poisoning people, which is not something to be proud 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.

Is this for real that the mine will cost the NSW taxpayer approx \$3.4b and will run at a loss? Just because the coal is there doesn't mean it should be mined out!

No justification for approving this mining project and clearing 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.

No justification for authorizing and clearing this land for mining as there are 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.

Offsetting is an ugly terminology to cover up Government, mining and their consultants into a false belief that they can compensate or put back what they have taken out. You can't. There is NO such thing as offsetting for wildlife. Just leave the area alone and don't impact it in the first place. Mitigation, repatriation are also UGLY words used by the above as a way of 'feel good' and 'justifying ugly deeds on the environment'.

There are NO lasting benefits to further coal mining, so reject the project entirely.

Amanda Albury
A. Albury
ICAG Inc. Secretary
151 Forest Glenn Road
Limeburners Creek NSW 2324
Ph: 4997-5979