

Objection to the Cobbora Coal Mine

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Major Planning Assessments
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney 2001
Email : plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: OBJECTION to Cobbora Coal Project – Preferred Project Report
Application No: 10-0001**

We are residents of Kootingal NSW, near Tamworth, however Andrew grew up in the Mudgee district and has a deep interest in the area.

We object strongly to any further coal mining anywhere in Australia, due to its adverse effects on the atmosphere, and thereby the health and wellbeing of the human race as a whole, and welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed Cobbora Coal Mine project.

According to our information, the mine will cost the NSW taxpayer approx \$3.4 billion, providing half-priced, poor quality, high ash coal to our state's polluting power stations for more than 20 years and will be run at a loss. If we were talking about small business – this would be unconscionable. It is a direct subsidy to power generators in NSW! Furthermore, the health impacts of using poor quality coal have not been assessed.

Surely the long-term benefits of renewable energy sources far outweigh continued coal-fired electricity which is having a direct impact on global warming – the effects of which we have seen quite recently.

We would prefer that our Taxpayer's Dollars were 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 1,959ha 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 and Large-eared Pied Bat.

As a former WIRES Carer, Lyn particularly, cannot condone anything which could be so devastating to the environment. The ecological footprint of the mine is far too high and cannot be adequately offset. The PPR does not identify a final offset package because this is not achievable.

We have been advised that the mine will need to use up to 4,340 ML (million litres) of water per year from surface water and groundwater interception. However, the PPR does not justify the increase in water demand for mining operations from the previous prediction of 3,700 ML per year up to 4,340 ML per year.

The increased pump rate from the Cudgegong River and access to higher natural flows has not been adequately assessed. For this reason we submit that 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, particularly in times of drought, as is common in this area.

Government will soon be looking at the cost of augmentation of that dam to cope with the demand! More cost to Taxpayers and senseless waste of our precious water supplies.

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.

Social disruption to the towns and properties along the coal chain will be impacted by additional noise and dust from increased coal train movements:

1. Increased dust emissions. The air quality model needs to be redone using all available meteorological information, using the increased height (+20m) of over burden emplacements.
2. The proposal to implement the draft '*Rail Infrastructure Noise Policy*' will disadvantage local residents affected by increased noise from the proposed rail loop.
3. The issue of train length on the Ulan line has not been addressed as identified in the ARTC 2012 – 2020 Rail Corridor Capacity Strategy. Many level rail crossings in the area would be affected.

Demand for coal-fired power has dropped significantly since this project was first proposed, as part of the Keneally government's electricity privatisation deal.

Justification for the mine is based on incorrect projections of demand for coal-fired electricity over the next 10 years. These projections were based on contracts negotiated by the ALP Govt as part of the Gentrader deal. These could be filled through other arrangements.

The project **cannot** guarantee a '*reliable, secure and economically stable domestic coal supply (to) NSW generators*' **nor** can it guarantee '*affordable electricity in NSW*'... something every household in NSW would be very grateful for.

Yet it will lock NSW into coal-fired electricity generation until at least 2036! **This is ludicrous! Another 23 years of smog is unforgiveable when we should be spending this money on developing solar, wind, wave and other renewable energy sources!**

Yours sincerely,

Andrew & Lyn Eccleston

ANDREW & LYN ECCLESTON

CC:

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Planning Minister Brad Hazzard: office@hazzard.minister.nsw.gov.au