

COMMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT OF AIRLY MINE EXTENSION PROJECT, APPLICATION NO. SSD 12_5581, SEPT. 2014.

INTRODUCTION:

I have been visiting Mt. Airly and Mt. Genowlan since 1970. I have family connections to people who lived at Mt. Airly in the early 1900s, and I have researched some of the history of the area. Since the 1970s I have also undertaken a number of wildlife research projects in the area, such as bird atlas surveys, birdsong recording and analysis, flora and fauna surveys, and more recently I have been photographing unusual dragonflies in the spring-fed dams at Airly Gap and Airly Village areas. Airly Village has always been an ideal place to bring elderly or disabled people for a bush picnic as it is easily accessed. The area is also a wonderful wildlife haven and scenic asset that should be conserved for future generations.

I own a property in Capertee Valley with 1 km frontage to Coco Creek, and have lived here since 1996. Eighty-five acres of my 100 acre property is conserved as nature habitat by Nature Conservation Trust. It is dry woodland and Coco Creek provides the only water source for my land, the wildlife depends on it. I do not want to see Coco Creek, nor any other waterway in Capertee Valley, compromised by a coal mine that may pollute or limit flows in any way.

COMMENTS RELATING TO AIRLY VILLAGE AREA:

[EIS statements are taken from EIS Volume 1, Executive Summary, Table 'Summary of Environmental Impacts'].

EIS:

An additional 500 mm subsidence may occur, on top of the predicted 150 mm, for area known as New Hartley Shale Mine [bright yellow // hatched area on attached map], with potential for surface fracturing.

COMMENT: Unacceptable. This area adjoins the historic Airly Village complex. Some of the cliffs above the village are very high. Any rockfalls would endanger both the village and people walking on the Tramway Track.

EIS: There could be 5% cliff failure with isolated individual rockfalls.

COMMENT: This is unacceptable, compromising the surface environment and the safety of walkers.

EIS: Flows from the Village Spring are likely to cease.

COMMENT: Unacceptable. I assume this means all the springs in the Airly Village area but the actual locality is not specified in the EIS summary. The Airly Village springs supply fresh clean water to campers and walkers, and are an essential part of the wildlife habitat at Mt. Airly. The springs have historically been accessed at various points along the Tramway Track, and this delightful area along the Tramway Track at Mt. Airly is easily accessed by walkers and family groups and currently receives the majority of human visitors that come to Muggi Murrumbidgee State Conservation Area. This area also

has a good population of Superb Lyrebirds, and I have often noted the (ground dwelling) lyrebirds bathing and drinking at spring water seepages. These springs form an integral part of the habitat of individual lyrebird territories.

EIS: There will be no impact on the recreational use of Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area.

COMMENT: I doubt this. With the danger of rockfalls, and springs near the camping area completely drained, plus plans to regularly undertake exploration borehole drilling, the impact on visitors to Airly Village and Muggi Murum-ban State Conservation Area will be considerable.

EIS: There will be increased discharges into waterways in prolonged wet weather. There will be a 5% reduction in stream flow for Gap Creek and Genowlan Creeks.

COMMENT: Unacceptable. Do not poison or modify our waterways, this precious water flows into the drought-prone Capertee Valley from higher areas such as Mt. Airly and Mt. Genowlan that receive more regular rainfall. These waterways in the valley are well used by several thousand local residents for domestic, farming, agricultural and recreational purposes as well as creating important habitats for wildlife. Where water is concerned, the wider environment of Capertee Valley must be considered, not just the area of the mine.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Airly Mine Extension Project.

Vicki Powys

**OVERLAY OF MINING & HERITAGE MAPS, SHOWING
NEW HARTLEY AREA & WALKING TRACKS.**

