

Part 3A Modification 4 - Invincible Mine Extension (07\_0127 MOD 4)  
and  
Part 3A Modification 2 - Cullen Valley Mine Extension (DA 200-5-2003 MOD 2)

PREAMBLE

I am compelled by ongoing conviction (having lodged a submission a couple of years ago and having appeared before the PAC on the earlier plan of Coalpac) to lodge a submission to address two matters - each of which is a sorry step-by-step exercise of Coalpac to wear down the morality and will of community and government who previously demonstrated their desire to protect landscape, environment and human lifestyle in a rural hamlet that is the area in and around Cullen Bullen.

For Coalpac, and those who suck on the teat of that grotesque monster, there is no rest in a degraded pursuit of monetary gain no matter the extent of scarifying in what has been, until recent years, a picturesque, environmentally sensitive though part agriculturally worked landscape above the ground. Mining was permissible underground but a degenerate, voracious monster that is Coalpac is not satisfied to leave it at that. Instead, even a poorer grade of coal is now sought at the expense of all that appeals in the way of landscape, environment and livability in and around Cullen Bullen.

SUBMISSION

I oppose proposed modifications to the Invincible and Cullen Valley coal mines. They will adversely impact the internationally significant pagoda landform complex located on the western edge of the Great Dividing Range in Ben Bullen State Forest. This public forest should be fully protected from open-cut mining in a state conservation area for nature conservation, recreation and tourism.

The coal in this proposal is of poor quality and there are better quality substitute resources that can provide for at least 25 years electricity generation by the two power plants in the Lithgow Region. The claim of increased costs to electricity consumers if the Coalpac proposal does not proceed is a wild exaggeration. Nearby underground mines have provided for local electricity power plants for over 20 years.

The proposal will destroy by open-cut mining the unique biodiversity, scenery and geological values associated with the pagoda landform complex. Its outstanding values include a Grassy Box Woodland - a nationally endangered ecological community, many nationally endangered Clandulla geebung shrubs and 2,300 threatened Capertee Stringybark trees. **Given the importance of the natural environment, the Planning Assessment Commission recommendation for independent vegetation study should not have been ignored by Coalpac in its current environmental assessment.**

**The proposal fails to provide the 300 metre minimum buffer**

**recommended by the Planning Assessment Commission** from the base of the pagoda rock formations and the open-cut area. The buffer provides protection for wildlife, including many Lyre Birds and the threatened broad headed snake. **If such a buffer were provided, there would be no mine.**

The proposal is less than two kilometres from Cullen Bullen and dust from this project will lead to increased morbidity and mortality in the community from respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Noise, truck movements and blasting will also adversely impact on residents. The proposal intends to vastly increase water extraction from underground workings from 26Ml/year to 750Ml/year, but fails to address the ongoing fires underground and in waste heaps. Where 2Ml/day of water pumped from old workings is to be released is not explained.

The Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment lacks credibility because it did not find a cave art site in the proposed disturbance area for the Cullen Valley Mine. Previous studies had missed other important Aboriginal cave art sites in the area.

Coalpac's rehabilitation claims are a sham. Ecosystems cannot be replanted on farmland or after open-cut mining native forests. Thousands of years of natural heritage integrity is lost. No mature woodland has ever been established through mine rehabilitation because nowhere has it been demonstrated that all the structure - groundcovers and each level through to canopy - are successfully restored. Further, the vehicle movements and human activity over time in the area of extraction works will introduce weeds, even to the soil set aside for refilling. The futile exercise of rehabilitation, even if undertaken with diligence (and that can't even be guaranteed by the present proponent for - who will be the owner at completion of works?) will result in a significant net loss to ecological function and natural heritage. The biodiversity offsets are inadequate, and cannot replace a Gardens of Stone Stage 2 reserve over Ben Bullen State Forest.

I appeal to the Government to maintain the principle of previous lengthy consideration measures and determinations with respect to Coalpac's ambition in the Cullen Bullen area and refuse consent to both proposed modifications and stop open-cut mining in the Gardens of Stone area.

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