

“Reclaiming our Valley”

Hunter Communities Network

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Department of Planning and Environment
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Sydney NSW 2001

Submission of Objection Ulan Mine Modification 4 (08-0184)

The Hunter Communities Network (HCN) is an alliance of community based groups and individuals impacted by the current coal industry and concerned about the ongoing rapid expansion of coal and coal seam gas exploration and mining in the region.

The expansion of the coal mining industry in the Western Coalfields area at the western end of the Hunter River catchment has had a severe and poorly assessed impact on the Goulburn River.

The cumulative loss of flow and increase in salt load in this major tributary has had an impact on the health of the Hunter River.

HCN has continued to raise objections to coal mine expansion in this part of the Hunter Region because the NSW Government has failed to conduct an independent study of the Goulburn River and the cumulative impacts of coal mining since the Ulan Coal Mine commenced operations in 1985.

HCN objections to the Ulan Mine Modification 4 include the following issues:

1. Increased cumulative loss of base flows to the Goulburn River have been poorly assessed
2. Drawdown of Triassic aquifers and groundwater sources to the north of The Drip is not adequately monitored or predicted
3. Increased salt load in the Goulburn River is unsustainable
4. Cumulative social impacts from Ulan Mine, such as ongoing purchase of private property in the area, has not been assessed
5. Increased train movements from the production of additional coal at Ulan Mine has not been addressed in the assessment report
6. The extraction of an additional 6.4 million tonnes of coal is not justified
7. The total carbon emissions from coal mining in the Hunter region are unsustainable
8. The environmental and social costs of the proposed modification outweigh any benefits

Recommendation:

That water discharge into the Goulburn River from Ulan Coal Mine be regulated through conditions that require:

- Releases to mimic natural flow regimes and restore natural variability to river flow, especially in low flow conditions
- EC to be managed to a limit of 500 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$

This submission was prepared by:

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