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Attention Brendan Liew  
Major Project Assessments  
Extractive Industries  
Department of Planning and Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Thursday 17 July 2014

Dear Brendan

**Submission of Objection to Wilpinjong Coal Mine Modification 6 (MP 05\_0021 MOD 6)**

I have lived in the Wollar area for most of my life and participated in a very active and cohesive community that was very self supporting. We ran regular fundraising activities through the P&C to improve equipment, excursions and educational opportunities for our children. We managed the Community Hall, Recreation Ground and Harry Harvey Park for a range of social and outdoor activities. We had a cricket team in the Gulgong cricket competition, an active and well trained Bushfire Brigade, two well attended and maintained churches and a service centre that provided mechanical repairs, building and hardware supplies to the wider community.

Since the Wilpinjong Coal Mine was approved in 2006, this thriving and friendly community has experienced nothing but stress, loss and grief. Most of the supportive network of neighbours and friends has disappeared with ongoing acquisition of property by Peabody Energy.

Real estate agents will no longer take on properties in the Wollar area to sell on the open property market because they know they are unsaleable. Some property owners who would like the opportunity to sell and move on now have stranded assets. The property market has been completely distorted by the presence of the mine.

Members of the community who do not wish to leave the area have no choice but to endure ongoing loss of amenity, sleep, health and community members identified in acquisition and management zones as the mine proceeds to expand.

There has been no adequate compensation to the local community for the losses endured on behalf of the perceived wider public benefit of the Wilpinjong Coal Mine.

The current conditions of approval have not protected the community of Wollar and there is no recognition of or adequate compensation for the plight of the remaining population.

I do not support the conclusion of the environmental assessment for the sixth modification of the Wilpinjong Mine that the potential environmental impacts will not significantly increase. Any increase in the current impacts will have a significant impact on the remaining community in the Wollar area.

There has been no genuine socio-economic analysis of the impacts of the Wilpinjong mine before or after its approval in 2006. The current assessment is totally deficient in providing any economic analysis particularly in relation to the significant predicted drop in production after 2018.

The employment, royalty and tax benefits are predicted to be considerably reduced within 5 years. This has not been addressed in the assessment report in relation to the justification for modification 6.

As a member of the Community Consultative Committee for the Wilpinjong Mine, I am fully aware of the constraints and operational problems experienced on a regular basis with mining operations. The number of hours of lost production due to compliance issues is an ongoing problem and demonstrates that community concerns about environmental impacts are justifiable.


The fact that the company '*incorporates allowance for environmental downtime in its forward mine planning and budget*' (4.2.2 Environmental Review p 26) is a strong indication that compliance is an ongoing issue for the continuity of mining operations particularly during prolonged periods of adverse weather conditions at night.

I do not believe that the Wilpinjong Mine is an economically viable operation. The ongoing problems with spontaneous combustion management, impacts of noise, dust, blasting and speeding mine traffic through the Wollar village is severely impacting on the amenity of this rural area. The need to continue to modify the approval of the mine operation is a demonstration that the original assessment and approval process was totally inadequate.

The environmental assessment of the proposed sixth modification to increase the mining rate, the number of mining vehicles and the scale of overburden movement is completely inadequate under the circumstance of existing impacts of the mine on the local community.

I object strongly to the approval of this increased impact when the plans of management for modification 5 have not yet been completed and implemented. There is no certainty for the community when the planning process allows for this continued change of operations and environmental impact.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Smiles". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bev Smiles