

As a 16 year student that cares about the future of Australian agricultural land I disagree firmly with the proposed coal project by Kepco in Bylong Valley. Yes I am only 16 years, no I do not have any credentials, nor am I an adult. But what I can say is I am a member of future generations, I am a member of society who is going to feel the long-term detrimental effects of this project, it is my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren who are never going to get to see Bylong Valley in its natural state, as one of the most beautiful valleys in Australia. It is my children, grandchildren and great-children that are never going to experience what I have been fortunate to experience, an escape to Australian countryside. My family have owned 'Budden' in Bylong Valley for 40 years, I have spent Easter every year for the past 16 on this property, I have learnt how to ride a motorbike, drive a truck, go yabbing, round up cattle, weigh cattle and learn everything that is needed for cattle farming. These real Australian experiences future generations will not get to experience, by the time my great grandchildren are around, at the rate the mining industry is going, there will be no Australian countryside left. There will just be destroyed land, trying to grow back after being destroyed for unsustainable production methods. I am aware this submission is in regards to the environmental statement that Kepco has issued, but I feel it is important to go past the legal and political aspects of this project, and look at the long-term effects and immediate effects it is going to have on farmers, members of the agriculture industry, people who love their Australian meat, and members of the Bylong Valley, tourists and visitors. We need to be intelligent and think about the individuals, families, communities and society this project will effect. It is you the politicians, the adults that make the decisions for us the teenagers and children. It is you who will make the decisions for our future, so I ask you, as a teenager who would like to live in Australia, one of the most beautiful nations in the world, and be able to visit the countryside, eat Australian meat and visit significant and important sites in Australia without mining everywhere I go to think about this project in regards to the environment and Australian citizens, the young and old. I want to be able to continue to have my easters at 'Budden' in Bylong Valley, I want my children to get to experience easter up there, learn how to ride motorbikes and get to assist in the jobs on a working cattle farm. It is all these things future generations will never get to experience, it is future generations that will never get to experience outback Australia in its natural state, as by the time they come around they will be stuck in the city, surrounded by coal mines. Why can we not open our eyes, use our brain and realise this is unsustainable? Why can't we think past the temporary monetary gain we get from the mining industry and think about the bigger picture? Coal does not last forever, but the countryside if untouched, will continue to wow all those who visit, provide unforgettable life long experiences and provide some of the best crops and meat in the world. These are just some of the small aspects this project will have an effect on.

Now that I hope I have made apparent the exact effect it will have, in particular on citizens of Australia and taken you away from the political and legal side of things for a brief moment, I will now mention the environmental statement and the detrimental effect Kepco's proposal will have.

To start off with I would like to address the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Significance of Bylong Valley. There are 239-recorded sites, 144 of which are at

risk from Mine impacts, 102 of these in the open cut area. My question is why? Why do we need to even object to such a thing? It is embarrassing that we Australians, live on the land of the oldest living culture in the world, and we are willing to destroy such cultural significant sites for a temporary monetary gain. It should not be the tribes, and only the tribes that are heard in regards to these sites before they are protected. I as a non-Indigenous Australian disagree firmly, and am highly embarrassed to call myself an Australian whilst such a practice is occurring. These are some of the oldest sites in Australia, we consider modern and ancient historical sites around the world of great significance and put all our efforts in to protect them. Yet here we are in Australia, allowing an International company to come in to our beautiful country dig a large, messy, unsustainable hole in our prime agricultural land and destroy significant Aboriginal sites. It is about time the government looks past the temporary monetary gain we make from the mining industry and come up with more sustainable ways to produce electricity, and start looking at the long-term effects of mining. Or, if so caught up in the monetary gain, start looking at other ways to gain money, a start would be reminding one another that we are home to the OLDEST living culture in the world, I mean that's a start to some huge tourism, IF we stopped destroying and loosing cultural significant sites! We should be proud to live on the same land as such important sites, instead of loosing them due to our own arrogance.

The next aspect of the proposal I would like to address is the important European heritage in Bylong Valley. As a very intrigued student of history, studying 5 units for the HSC, all I can say is I am embarrassed and in shock that such historical will be lost forever, for a temporary project, for which may I add Australia will not gain much from, instead loose more than we can ever gain back again. I will refer again to tourism, why don't we stop considering the mining industry as the only aspect of our economy and start looking at other things. When people travel to Australia they come for our stunning beaches, wildlife and the diverse landscape of our beautiful country. The drawback is history, every tourist wants to see a bit of history whether it's half a day of their 10-day stay, and they like to see the historical aspect of the country they are staying in. But they can't do very of that in Australia, because we don't show off any of our history, why? Because we have knocked it down for a bigger apartment, or for a coal mine. The logic in that, I don't understand, you could call me just a naïve teenager, merely ignorant, but what I consider it as a naïve or ignorant teenager, or as I would like to regard myself, a concerned member of society, just sheer stupidity. I object to the loss of some of the most stunning sites Australia has on offer for the benefit of an international company. I object to the loss of the Catholic Church Cemetery, Upper Bylong Public School and the homesteads that will be lost, majority of which are over 100 years old, for a big hole in our land.

I object to the KEPCO project in Bylong Valley for the reasons mentioned above, I want to visit one of my favourite places in the world, my second home, and be able to breathe the fresh country air which makes it so peaceful, be able to hear nothing but the sounds of birds chirping and trees swishing. Be able to see the clear blue sky every morning and admire the beauty of outback Australia. I do not want to smell the dangerous air that comes from coal mines, loose the

wildlife due to the disturbances and see a dark sky due to the substances let into the air.

I will conclude my submission with this; you may consider me whatever you please whether an ignorant or naïve teenager I do not mind. But I do consider myself nothing more than a concerned citizen of Australia, that cares about the future of such a spectacular country, and the future generations to come. I ask you as the adults and politicians of this country to think about us the small people, the citizens that make up this country and consider what we feel and what we want for the future of Australia. As a 16 year old student I ask you to think about the Aboriginal Cultural Significance of Bylong Valley, the European Heritage of Bylong valley and the prime agricultural land that the valley is home to, as some of the many significant aspects of our country that will be lost if KEPCO's statement is passed. It is we the young citizens of Australia that are relying on you, to make decisions that will maintain the beauty of Australia for future generations to continue.

Regards,
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