

Mrs Susan Schneider

Department of Planning & Environment.

Re Bylong Coal Project SSD 14 6367.

I, wish to submit objections to Kepco's proposal to mine 6.5 million tonnes of coal per year (Mtpa) over 25 years from 2 open cut pits (8 years) and an underground mine in the highly fertile Bylong Valley

1. The predicted long-term impacts on prime agricultural land and water systems in the Bylong Valley are unacceptable and will not be mitigated through proposed offsets and rehabilitation. The renowned "Kaswyn Park" natural sequence farming processes will be destroyed.

2. A significant area of prime agricultural land will be destroyed. The mine footprint will disturb 2,875 ha of land including 440 ha of Bioregional Significant Agricultural Land (BSAL), 260 ha being destroyed in open cut, plus 700 ha of mapped Critical Equire Industry Cluster land. The proposal to replace BSAL at another location is untested and high risk.

3. Impacts on groundwater and surface water will be significant. The highly connected alluvial aquifer system within the stressed Bylong River catchment will have predicted peak losses of up to 295 million litres per year (ML/yr). Loss of base flows to the Bylong River is predicted to be 918 ML/yr. The mine proposes to use up to 1,942 ML which is over 75% of the annual rainfall recharge. The river system is over allocated and local farmers will lose important water supply.

4. The mine disturbance area has very high biodiversity values that will not be mitigated through the proposed offset arrangements. Nationally endangered species recorded in the area include the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby, New Holland mouse, Regent Honeyeaters and Spotted-tailed Quail. Three entirely new plant species were recorded. A significant area of critically endangered Grassy Box Gum Woodland will be destroyed along with habitat for 17 threatened birds and 7 threatened plants.

5. The area has Aboriginal cultural heritage significance. 239 sites were recorded in the study area with 25 regarded as being of high local or regional significance (including an ochre quarry, grinding grooves and rock shelters). 144 sites have been identified at risk from mine impacts with 102 in the open cut area.

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The increased train movements, up to 10 per day, will cause more trains to stand idling in the Wallar rail loop. This will increase the air pollution in the village of Wallar from diesel fumes including NO₂ and PM_{2.5} particles.

The traffic report does not assess increased traffic movements through Wallar village or on the Wallar - Mudgee Road through the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve.

The loss of the Bylong, Wallar and Ulan Bushfire Brigades has increased the threat of unattended fire and road accidents across the north eastern area of Mid-Western Regional Shire.

I, strongly object to this proposal.

Yours Faithfully
Susan Schneider