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Submission in objection to Wambo Modification 17

This is a submission from the Lock The Gate Alliance in objection to the proposed s75W modification 17 of the Wambo Mine.

Lock The Gate submits that the proponent as not fully assessed the impacts of this project, and that the project is too significant to be assessed under s75W. The development application should be rejected.

The proponent is attempting to have the project approved under s75W of Schedule 6A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*, seeking a rapid approval with minimal assessment by virtue of the existing project's approval under the now-repealed Part 3a of that Act.

Lock The Gate submits that Mod 17 is a major extension in both area and project-life of the existing mine approval. It would extend the mine's life by seven years and take the approved mining area outside the limits of the current mining lease. As such, this project should not be treated as a modification of a Part 3A approval, but as a new project requiring full approval under Part 4 of the current Act.

We are concerned that the risk of subsidence impacts on rock features of the Wollemi National Park have not been fully addressed. The proposed longwall extension would come to within 120m of the Park.

By the proponent's own modelling, North Wambo Creek is expected to be significantly impacted by subsidence from the project. The Wambo mine has already had serious (and unforeseen) impacts on surface and underground water in the vicinity, and Lock The Gate considers that no further damage from this project ought be permitted.

The proponent of this project cannot be trusted to limit impacts to those it has modelled, nor to rectify impacts when they occur. For years now, they have failed to deliver promised repairs to damage from this mine on Wambo Creek.

The fugitive greenhouse emissions from Mod 17 would reach as much as 280,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, and the Scope 3 (downstream) emissions of the 18 million of coal mined would amount to approximately 45 million tonnes of equivalent carbon dioxide. The impacts of these emissions have not been assessed at all in the EIS. Climate scientists now estimate that over 90% of Australia's coal reserves must remain unexploited¹, for the world to have a fighting chance at limiting global warming to globally agreed maximum of 2 degrees. Approval of this project would be inconsistent with Australia's stated commitment to this target.

1 Climate Council of Australia (2015) *Unburnable Carbon: Why we need to leave fossil fuels in the ground*

Lock The Gate has no faith in Peabody Energy's commitment to its rehabilitation obligations, and we do not share the Dept of Resource and Energy's faith in the ability of its rehabilitation bond system to pick up the slack. In March this year, Peabody was permitted to abandoned 98% of a 2.7 billion USD rehabilitation debt in Oklahoma, USA, as part of its exit from Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings².

The development application should be rejected.

2 <http://au.advn.com/p.php?pid=nmona&article=74158206>