

Dear Sir/Madam

The extension to the Wilpinjong mine should not be approved because of the devastating effects it will have on the natural and social environment. The impact assessment is likely to understate the real impacts. Nevertheless, the impacts which the proponent has acknowledged, make this development unacceptable. I have a number of concerns, which are listed below.

Impacts on the natural environment

There will be serious and irreversible effects to the natural environment at the mine site and in the adjoining areas. In particular, there is an insufficient buffer zone between the mine and the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve. The biodiversity offsets are unlikely to provide any effective replacement for the destroyed habitat.

Sterilisation of agricultural land

There will be sterilisation of agricultural land and no intention of even attempting to rehabilitate the degraded land at the completion of mining. The mine plans to leave three voids at the completion of mining.

Inadequate consideration of human health effects

The environmental impact assessment fails to adequately consider the health effects of the development on people living close to the mine and those in the regional airshed.

No consideration of cumulative effects

At a broad level the consent authority has failed to consider the cumulative impacts of coal mining in the Hunter catchment and adjacent areas. The approval process does not seem to take into account the serious and irreversible effects that coal mining is causing in many parts of NSW.

No effective consideration of the greenhouse gas contribution

Finally the approval process is deeply flawed if it does not take into account the greenhouse gas contribution of the mine extension. The NSW Government is apparently ignoring all the scientific evidence that demonstrates the contribution of burning coal to global warming. Coal mining in NSW should be reduced and no new mines or mine extensions should be approved.

In conclusion there are a number of reasons not to approve this extension. The extension will have a devastating effect on the Wollar community and on the surrounding country. The extension will have serious and irreversible effects on the natural environment and contribute to global greenhouse gas emissions.

Sincerely

Warwick Pearse
22 Feb 2016