

Personal Submission as an Objection - Airly Colliery DA 162/91 Modification 3

I wish to register my objection to this inappropriate proposal. I do so as one who enjoys the amenity of unspoilt bushland, including the Newnes Plateau and nearby areas, as one who recognises the awful toll that human development is having on this planet's fragile biosphere and as an experienced geologist who has a good understanding of the technical aspects of this region's mining activities.

It is simply wrong to destroy the environment and the local human industrial heritage, in this case coincidentally from earlier oilshale mining, in an attempt to make a coal mine profitable.

It is especially reprehensible to seek to further exploit such dirty and polluting fossil fuel at a time when, globally, the move to renewable energy has gained such enormous momentum; the clear direction of people with intelligence and morality is that the preservation of this planet's environment, and indeed of the continued ability of mankind to flourish, is utterly dependent on moving away from a carbon-economy as quickly as possible. If coal has a future, then we don't. Troglodyte industries have no place just because they have a track record and employ a few people. Times change, in this case because they must.

Some pertinent considerations of the proposal are :-

- The 1991 development consent is out-of-date and inappropriate as it lacks the necessary environmental safeguards for coal mining in a State Conservation Area; specifically this modification proposal to extend the consent should be either refused outright or varied to eliminate any manifestations of subsidence due to the mining method envisaged.
- The record of subsidence-induced cliff collapses and watercourse bed cracking in this region is well known and unacceptable; cliff collapse is widespread. Subsidence under the 1991 development consent of 1.8m is a relic of less enlightened times. There must be no exceptions to following limits: vertical subsidence being a maximum of 125mm, a maximum tilt of 2.5 mm/m; and a maximum strain of 2.0 mm/m.
- The shale oil extraction from the western coalfields constitutes an important aspect of our industrial heritage. In places the ruins of these ventures remain, and the historic oil shale ruins are of special significance and comprise one of the best preserved heritage sites of its kind in NSW. To preserve such industrial archaeology, I oppose any coal mining that does not fully protect these historical Oil Shale Ruins from any form of coal pillar extraction.

- Conservationists recognise the beauty and ecological value of the western escarpment and adjacent plateau areas, and the World Heritage Advisory Committee notes that the Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area should be added to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area once mining has been completed. This will be a pointless exercise if surface damage, with cliff and pagoda collapse, has occurred.
- We have already been subject to the creeping visual blight of expanding coal mines along the escarpment. Like a cancer, these attacks on the visual amenity of the area are progressive and eventually overwhelming. Such prominent waste and product heaps must be appropriately screened and landscaped to blend in with surrounding parks and popular tourist destinations in the Capertee Valley, such as Pearsons Lookout.
- The damage to the Gross River below the abandoned Canyon Colliery is well known, due the lethal effects of heavy metal trace elements on stream fauna. Recent studies show that Centennial has inflicted similar havoc on the Wollangambe. For these companies, 'out of sight, out of mind' seems to be the modus operandi. Consequently, environmentalists and scientists are concerned about Centennial's apparent failure to consider downstream impacts on the World Heritage Area in the Modification 3 proposal, with operations proposed under Modification 3 discharging water pollution into Airly Creek. Such discharges would impact on the Gardens of Stone National Park, part of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.
- Reverse osmosis water treatment of the effluent from Airly Colliery to remove all salts and dissolved metals must be required for any discharge to a World Heritage listed property.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I declare that I have made no political donation in regard to this matter or the parties involved.

Yours sincerely,



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