

8 July 2014

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Mining and Industry Projects,
NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission as Objection - Airly Colliery DA 162/91 Modification 3
Inappropriate Consent Conditions

I Object to modifications to the Airly colliery as a concerned citizen and as a frequent visitor to the Gardens of Stone National Park.

- Approval for mining in or near a State Conservation area must closely scrutinised. The 1991 development consent does not take into account the adverse impacts of subsidence. Subsidence from coal extraction and the overburden can adversely lower surrounding groundwater tables. The 1991 consent also does not take into account system springs and fault lines and the impact of subsidence upon them. Subsidence can induce fracturing and affect leakage rates to productive aquifers and thus surrounding communities. It can also reduce surface water flows and quality with the same result. The overburden has the potential to produce acidity and salinity in surrounding water systems. This poses the very real threat to impact downstream in the Modification 3 proposal. The discharged water from the mine can pollute Airly Creek, impacting on the Gardens of Stone National Park, in 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.
- Coal mining uses vast quantities of water to wash the coal (separating it from other minerals or rock present), for drilling, dust suppression and mining communities. On average, each tonne of coal requires 200 litres of water. A mine producing 5 million tonnes per annum will use a gigalitre (1,000,000,000) of water. Coal mining water is sourced from borefields, rivers and dams in direct competition with a sustainable but vulnerable agriculture sector and the towns and communities far beyond the mine boundary.
- Also, the transport of coal and resultant exposure of coal dust along the routes that it travels has impacts on many communities. The World Health Organisation concluded that coal dust contributes to a range of diseases and health problems including respiratory illness, cardiovascular diseases and lung cancer. Particles penetrate the lungs and are difficult for the body to expel. Over time they accumulate and do more damage. They stated that there is no safe level of exposure to coal dust. A study in the Hunter Valley found that coal dust exposure increased by up to 13X as a train passed. The increased coal transport pollution is not addressed.
- The economic benefits of expanding Airly Colliery are negligible as they are only temporary and mostly go overseas, as in this case where Centennial Coal is owned by the Thai company Banpu. This contrasts to farming or tourism that are on-going and the benefits are directly felt by those communities.

- The historic Oil Shale Ruins are of special significance and is one of the best preserved heritage sites of its kind in NSW, I oppose any coal mining that does not fully protect these historical Oil Shale Ruins.
- I agree with the World Heritage Advisory Committee that the Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area should be added to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. It contains some of the most unique rock formations and is not replicated anywhere.
- Visually 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. Tourism is a sustainable industry, the fossil fuel industry is not.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,

Claudia Caton