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16th July 2014

**Mining and Industries Projects
NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39 SYDNEY NSW 2001**

**Objection - Airly Colliery DA 162/91 Modification 3
Existing Consent Conditions are Inappropriate"**

Supplementary Submission

In our view, the documents publicly exhibited in support of MOD 3, namely the EA and the Subsidence Assessment do not provide sufficient certainty for the community that the subsidence predictions will remain at the level set out in the Subsidence Assessment.

The EA refers to on page 8 refers to the Airly Mine lies within the northern end of the Western Coal Fields but remains silent on Tourism and Agriculture as being significant contribution to the overall economy of Capertee and the Capertee Valley and is a destination for tourism Regional, NSW, National and International.

Agriculture and Tourism is important for this valley to be sustainable. Lack of economic assessment in the EA of the proposal is failure for the proposal to indicate whether the proposal is likely to result in a net benefit to NSW and put in jeopardy the existing economies that exist.

Whilst Lithgow has a long history of mining, it is finite and to not recognize the value of the Capertee Valley as an asset surrounded by the World Heritage Area as an economic asset in tourism is not a balanced view, total disregard for the value of employment in Agriculture and Tourism at Capertee and the localities in the Capertee Valley (Glen Davis, Glen Alice, Bogee and MT Marsden) including Rylstone and Kandos.

The Mesas of Airly and Genowlan Mt's with internationally significant pagodas and their associated cliff lines, and also the heritage of the OIL SHALE ruins, will be lost to tourism and our heritage of the Capertee Valley... this is not fair.

Our pagodas, cliff lines, surface water, groundwater, biodiversity and oil-shale heritage must be protected from major levels of subsidence. The Scenic values of the area and its tourist industry must be protected from possible cliff collapses, rock falls and major levels of subsidence. The scenic beauty must be protected from visual pollution eyesores such as waste dumps and stockpiles. It is imperative that the destructive capacity of mining should not sabotage the natural values as the basis of tourism.

The development consent is 23 years old and for that reason alone the proposal should be rejected.

Tourism Exists.

The Capertee Valley is the widest enclosed valley in the world featuring glorious exposed cliff escarpments and buttes rising from lush rolling grazing land located adjacent to the Wollemi World Heritage Area. It is

known as a bird watchers' paradise and home to the endangered Regent Honeyeater. The valley has been internationally registered as an Important Bird Area (IBA). It is also known for many rare plant varieties and fauna. It is a great place to stay. The Dunns/Capertee Valley Discovery Trail, part of the Greater Blue Mountains Drive, (Tourist Drive 2) connects the village of Capertee on the Castlereagh Highway with the towns of Kandos, Rylstone and Mudgee via this beautiful valley. The valley also features as part of the Tablelands Way, an experience trail from Goulburn to the Hunter Valley.

The introduction to the valley is from Pearsons Lookout on the Castlereagh Highway approximately 5 kms south of the village of Capertee. It has spectacular views into the 'Capertee Valley. The sandstone escarpments light up in the afternoon light and the atmosphere in the valley is always changing with the passage of sunlight, cloud, fog, and rain.

The large butte sitting to the right is Pantoneys Crown. It is now a Nature Reserve in the Gardens of Stone National Park and is part of the Wollemi National Park Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

There are Capertee Valley tourism signs in Piri Park in Capertee.

From the Castlereagh Highway at Capertee village, the Greater Blue Mountains Drive, Dunns/Capertee Valley Discovery Trail descends into the Capertee Valley through rocky outcrops providing panoramas of the cliffs and valley floor. Here it skirts the Gardens of Stone National Park and to the left, Mt Airly, a historic shale oil mining area which operated in the early part of the 20th century. This mountain is now Muggi Murumbidgee State Conservation Area and is loved by tourists for its heritage shale oil town and the magnificent forest, spring and vistas from the mountain tops. A National parks camping area is at the base of the mountains.

At the intersection with the Glen Davis Road the road turns North (or left) towards Glen Alice. Here the Capertee Valley is dissected by the Bi Centennial Trail. Alternatively, you can penetrate even further into the valley by turning right to Glen Davis. This now sleepy village, named after the Davis brothers of the Davis Gelatine Company and originally known as Green Gully, was developed as the site of a shale oil industry during WWII and lasted 12 years before closing. The site of the refinery is on private land and only accessible by guided tour starting at the gates at 2 pm each Saturday.

Behind Glen Davis at the Coorongoba camping and picnic area in the Wollemi National Park, the Capertee River, which drains the valley, has cut a gorge from here through to the Colo River, a wild river that then joins the Hawkesbury River. The rock walls towering above the valley are spectacular, especially in late afternoon light. National Parks walks start here. A walking guide to the town and light food and drinks are available at Glen Davis Community Hall which is open at the weekends. There is a free camping ground including toilet block next to the hall. The Pipeline Track walk to Newnes also starts here. Glen Davis also has the Glen Davis Boutique Hotel, part of the historic shale town, which is very popular venue for weddings. Soon it will also be functioning as a health resort.

In the Northern end of the valley, Capertee National Park is accessed via Port Macquarie Road. A code must be obtained for the padlock from the Blackheath National Parks office. Accommodation in this park is available in the original homestead.

The Dunville Loop leaves the Glen Alice Road at Bogee and returns to it via a 30 minute side trip that passes closer to the escarpment walls of the Wollemi National Park World Heritage Area and is particularly beautiful in late afternoon light.

The valley can also be entered from the North from Kandos and Rylstone in the Cudgegong Valley at Mt. Marsden, which is a point on the Great Dividing Range.

Other Information

Accommodation is varied in the valley ranging from 5 star B&B, licensed hotel at 'Capertee, boutique hotel at Glen Davis, and farm stay to shearers' quarters and camping. Fuel, café and pub food is available at 'Capertee, Kandos and Rylstone. Helicopter flights over the valley are available from 'Capertee Valley Helicopters near 'Capertee.

Bushwalking, camping, mountain climbing, four wheel drive tours, bird watching, star gazing, photography and painting are just some of the activities in the valley. Some visitors just want to put their feet up and watch the scenery and the birds in this unique and largely undiscovered valley.

Capertee Valley, this glorious place, is within the traditional country of the Wiradjuri people

Nature 'Things'

The valley is internationally listed as an 'important birding area' (IBA) and in Chris Santella's book 'fifty places to go birding before you die'; birding expert Alan McBride nominates the Capertee Valley as one of Australia's richest birding venues. He says 'there's a terrific range of birds in Capertee Valley, and for most visitors, they will be all new species'.

The Regent Honeyeater is possibly the most well known bird in the valley due to its endangered listing, closely followed by the Swift Parrot, Turquoise Parrot and Diamond Firetail. The valley boasts a 'Capertee Valley Map & Guide to Birdwatching'. Almost 6,000 copies have been distributed and close to 2,500 downloaded from Lithgow Council web site and the Capertee Valley Way web site. There is a bird trail sign in Piri Park in Capertee.

Many local and overseas visitors are drawn by the prolific birdlife and in particular, the Regent Honeyeater. The valley is included in a well known bird trail down the East coast between Cairns and Bruny Island; these tours are run by several Australian bird tour operators using Australian tour guides.

Besides birds, the valley has all manner of wildlife which includes kangaroo, wallaby, wombat, lizard, goanna, snake, frog, echidna, rodents of all sizes and many more.

Rare and endangered plant varieties can be seen along the secondary roads, in the State Conservation Area, the Capertee National Park and on private property. Many species of Eucalypt inhabit the valley as well as Acacia, Melaleuca, Oaks and lots more. Woodland conservation and bio-diversity are evident everywhere. One of the property owners is soon to open a farm trail.

And yes, the valley has domestic animals, cattle, sheep, horse, chickens, alpaca, pigs and goat. It is estimated that over 6,000 beef cattle movements either in or out of the valley occur each year. Fodder crops abound and many people grow their own fruit, olives and vegetables. Our award winning Capertee Valley Saffron farmer is becoming widely known and supplies saffron products from their shop in Rylstone to many outlets.

All this and only 3 hours from Sydney.

The People

Farmers, retirees, crafts people, and weekender professionals inhabit the valley. In other words people from all walks of life with a diverse range of interests and experiences who are informed, energetic, entrepreneurial, cultured, skilled and enthusiastic make up this diverse community.

There is a primary school at Glen Alice and a number of young families bus their kids to neighbouring high schools in Lithgow or Kandos.

Our Vision

We live in a World Heritage Area and need to ensure that the surrounding natural areas do not lose the natural water courses (which run east into the Colo River) and wilderness which would lead to degradation of the biodiversity of the region and the ruin of the Colo Wilderness, to say nothing of the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment. The natural water is most important to our farming community and tourism.

The Capertee Valley, as it currently exists, is a valuable and priceless asset to be protected. In the long term, it will be our saviour as terms of farming, an ecotourism destination, a bird watching nirvana and pristine wilderness. It will be a drawcard to the local government area (LGA) for all those escaping from the city and young people setting up viable home businesses using e-commerce.

Agriculture is an important economic driver (sustainable farming) and has been for the last 200 years, along with environmental and ecological drivers which will offset negatives in employment and health risks.

The Capertee Valley Community feels that these positives are developing into thriving opportunities for residents and will attract new residents as their country lifestyle destination. Providing stimuli to the embryonic industries in rural areas can enhance the economic and business climate in our area.

The clean air and clean water cannot be over emphasized to promote better health and lifestyle, conservation, environment and education. Developing a campus from one of the large Sydney Universities is an option which has been discussed. Campuses in Eco-Tourism, Botany, Ecology, and Geology, Aboriginal and European Heritage, veterinary sciences and health are obvious choices. It could become a specialist centre of excellence.

A tertiary college for the environment and conservation, in the Capertee Valley - now there is a beautiful symmetry!

The Capertee Valley residents want to see a glorious future and have planned for it. Let us all help. There is room for us all, in fact without us all contributing nothing will change or get done.

The logo at the start of this document was designed by students of UTS: our future generation is the beginning of our vision and who we are in the Capertee Valley.

If we look after our valley it will be there forever but if it is used without care it will ruin the spectacular escarpments and stop the water.

Finally, the attributes of the Capertee Valley and surrounds is not unknown by the decision makers, nor Centennial Airly Mine. The owner Banphu, probably not.

To continue to deny the 1000 rate payers the right to live and work within the valley as they always have in Agriculture and Tourism is a denial of Natural Justice. A threat to their social well-being of living and working in the valley to mining at Airly Mine which has been in care and maintenance for most of the 21 years of its existence, on selling to overseas companies on the impetus of providing employment, when in Christmas of 2012 destroyed the livelihoods of 120 employees and their families only to re-open in march 2013 transferring only 59 staff from another Centennial mine at Charbon which closed. An action that would have effectively saved money to Centennial in regard to redundancies, not add to the economics of Capertee Valley.

The decision makers should be focussing on the value of employment in the Lithgow Region especially when the 2011 Census (which we participated in) stated that the workforce within the Lithgow Local Government area, 85% employment is outside mining and power generation.

The proposal should be rejected as is likely to be financially marginal and have impact on existing agriculture and tourism including sensitive environmental areas.

Bruce & Donna Upton

Websites

Website	www.caperteevalleyway.com.au
Community information, news, events, issues etc.	http://caperteevalleyalliance.blogspot.com/
Photos of the Capertee Valley	http://caperteevalleyphotos.blogspot.com/
Lithgow Council Tourism site bird page	http://www.tourism.lithgow.com/birds.html
Home page for Capertee Valley, download bird brochure from here	http://www.caperteevalleyway.com.au/
Tourism page for Capertee Valley	http://www.caperteevalleyway.com.au/tourism.php
Visit NSW, Destination NSW	http://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/blue-mountains/lithgow-area/lithgow/attractions/capertee-valley

Capertee Valley:Grand Canyon on Facebook

Reference: Lithgow Tourism Strategy Destination Management Plan

