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The Director, Mining Projects  
Development Assessment Systems and Approvals  
Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir

**ROCKY HILL COAL PROJECT – DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION SSD-5156**

We are writing to register our opposition to the Gloucester Resources Ltd's development application for an open cut mine near the township of Gloucester. We are concerned that there seems to be no real regulation of this industry: it seems it is allowed to explore in closely settled areas with the clear intent to mine if allegedly 'reasonable' consent conditions can be agreed.

In Rocky Hill's case there are real issues about GRL's willingness to curb its intrusion into this valley and, equally, government's readiness to acknowledge that Gloucester is worth protection. Historically, government has only recognised Gloucester's worth as a source of mineral and petroleum resources to be 'harvested', regardless of community concerns. These concerns relate to personal health, children's health, the environment, permanent damage to water and soil systems, and jeopardising the long term self-sustaining industries that have generated naturally in that community.

In many respects Gloucester is already a Significant State Development project. Different from GRL's short term development with damaging long term legacies, Gloucester itself is an ongoing project worth billions. It relies on natural growth via internal wealth and wellbeing processes. If it were allowed to decide for itself on a coal future, it would reject it because a destructive self-serving industry is the antithesis of the essential qualities of Gloucester.

Much is made of the economic value that GRL might bring to Gloucester. Expert review asserts that GRL projections are wildly optimistic; they do not accommodate the full costs to Gloucester. The State and Federal governments have not taken into account full life cycle costs nor the acknowledged industry and community adjustment costs when mining finally withdraws. GRL, quite inappropriately and unjustifiably, has also applied a multiplier which will miraculously deliver unheard of prosperity! They have not detailed the potential impact and reach of a two-tiered economy on Gloucester. Neither have they costed it.

GRL makes much of the employment opportunities for Gloucester. Opportunities are not jobs. The Gloucester experience is that mining jobs commonly are filled by drive-in/drive-out workers who spend very little of their money in Gloucester. These workers are drawn from the ready supply of qualified staff in the Hunter and from larger population centres along the coast.

On the matter of noise, GRL will not state definitively when coal trains will be loaded - a process they predict will take 90 minutes per train. Instead they argue that they cannot provide likely train loading times because they will have to fit in with Australian Rail Track Corporation operations. This seems superficially to be quite reasonable - until it happens. GRL needs to declare that there will be a curfew on rail operations. If the airline industry can do it, so can GRL and ARTC. This is an area worthy of objective, community-based scrutiny by the Assessment Committee.

On Forbesdale Estate and the surrounding area, within 2 km of the proposed mine, families enjoy a healthy and peaceful life. This will be lost by day. Their nights will consist of strong lights reflecting off airborne coal dust, the noises of various vehicles, coal being loaded on coal trains for 90 minutes per train and the noise of the coal conveyor as it fills the coal loader. All this will happen in a small valley every night of their lives. GRL has no answer for this.

There is no justifiable reason why Gloucester Vale should be permanently damaged for the comparatively small coal resource being sought and the highly questionable economic benefits alleged to flow to the state and local economies.

Please:

- Refuse GRL's Rocky Hill coal mine proposal
- Permanently protect Gloucester and closely settled areas.

Yours faithfully

Gary and Barbara Whale