

I have been following the Rocky Hill Coal project in the media and am astounded that there are people out there who are opposing this project going ahead. I plan on moving to the Hunter region at the end of the year and all I can see are positives with the ongoing development of this project.

First and foremost, is the creation of a large number of employment opportunities for local residents. I have read that GRL aim to fill employment positions with 75% local, Gloucester residents. This will attract a large number of well-educated, school leavers (with on the job training offered) who would otherwise be looking elsewhere for employment. It would also encourage university students who might have left the area to come back and apply their expertise in their local community.

The employment opportunities mentioned above, as well as the attraction of new, young families to the area, will help to transform what is becoming an ageing population in the Gloucester region. With younger, working families moving into the area, the larger number of children requiring schooling and day-care will also retain and create more jobs for the local area. The younger families will also stimulate the local economy with all the spending that is required to raise a young family.

The physical environment will also benefit greatly from the Rocky Hill Coal project, with road upgrades (some of which are desperately in need). This will not only benefit the people involved in the mining industry, but all people of the local community. It will create a much safer environment for current residents and for any potential new residents.

I do understand that with any project such as this, there are environmental concerns. However, I am very confident that with what I have read, the people involved in this project are committed to minimising any potential impact that it may have on the environment. The term 'responsible development' is often used to describe how they plan to approach this project.

All in all, I feel that the economic and environmental benefits of this project are far too great to be ignored. Particularly at a time when other industries that used to be fruitful for Gloucester such as timber and dairying are either dead or no longer booming.