

Director, Mining Projects Development Assessment Systems & Approvals
Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001
By email: plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au

28 October, 2013

Dear Director,

Submission of Objection – Rocky Hill Coal Project

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Rocky Hill Coal Project proposal.

NCC is the peak environment body for New South Wales, representing over 120 organizations across the state. We have long-standing experience in state environmental assessment and planning and are extremely concerned with the proposal to develop the Rocky Hill Coal Project in the Gloucester region.

The Rocky Hill open cut mine will be operating within close proximity to residential and agricultural areas in the Gloucester area. Allowing an open cut mine within close proximity to the Gloucester community will have far-reaching health, social and economic impacts.

The Rocky Hill mine area boundary comes within one kilometre of Forbesdale, two kilometres of the Thunderbolt Estate and between four to six kilometres of the town Gloucester, with the Gloucester hospital and high school coming within a 5km distance of the proposed mine boundary. In addition, the Rocky Hill mine will be in operation right next to prime agricultural land.

There are community concerns that the open cut mining operations at Rocky Hill could have a significant impact on the water quality in the Gloucester area. Specifically, heavy metals and other contaminants produced in run-off from the overburden has the potential to enter and contaminate the Waukivory Creek and the Avon River which are part of the Manning River water catchment that supplies water in the Gloucester area. This new mine, in addition to the Stratford coal mine, south of Gloucester, will contribute to the cumulative effect on the air and water quality in the Gloucester area.

Due to its close proximity to residential areas, coal dust and particulate matter produced by the mining operations will put the community at risk. The health impacts related to particulate matter included respiratory problems, cardiovascular issues, increase in the incidences of asthma and other respiratory ailments¹. Those most at risk from particulate matter exposure are children, teens and those over the age of 65.

The close proximity of the Rocky Hill coal mine to Forbesdale and Thunderbolt Estate residential areas raises concerns that noise pollution produced by the mining operations will create ongoing community disturbance.

The proposed mine site boundaries extend onto existing productive agricultural land, in particular dairy pastures west to northwest of the mining boundary. Open cut mining will have an impact on the local water table, putting prime agricultural land, dairy and food production, and the local farming industry at risk.

For these reasons, I urge the Department of Planning to refuse GRL's Rocky Hill coal mine proposal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Smolski', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Katherine Smolski
Campaigns Director

¹ American Lung Association, 2013, *State of the Air 2013*, <http://www.stateoftheair.org/2013/assets/ala-sota-2013.pdf>, pp.33-34.