

Paul Freeman
Director of Mining Projects
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001
paul.freeman@planning.nsw.gov.au

October 27, 2013.

RE: SUBMISSION OBJECTING ROCKY HILL COAL PROJECT – D.A. SSD-5156

Dear Mr Freeman,

I am writing in objection to the GRL Rocky Hill open cut coal mine at Gloucester, NSW. I operate a photography business in Gloucester which will be severely impacted by this coal mine and its rail loading facility. My objections follow.

1. My office space, studio and family home is located on land directly adjacent the Rocky Hill conveyor and rail loading facility. My home/office/studio is identified as receptor number 56A in the Rocky Hill Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and is located just 430 metres from the closest area of disturbance. This is too close. The proposed Hocky Hill mine is located too close to other residential areas of Gloucester also. A mine this close will have negative impacts on the town's amenity as well as on individual property values. Many surrounding rural properties including my own would be made unsaleable; there is no mention of compensation for this.
2. Losses in my business revenue will result. Currently I make sales of landscape and aerial photographs from and around the Avon Valley area and Gloucester Township. These images have been used for Gloucester Tourism purposes as well as for Calendar, even exhibition work resulting from a cultural study on Thunderbolt the bushranger who traversed the area during the 1850's & 1860's. The beautiful rural landscape we currently have to the south and east of Gloucester will be lost as long-established agricultural farming families are displaced and replaced with an open cut coal mine and rail loading facility.
3. Gloucester Shire Council and NSW State Government have recognised the value of the scenic land to the south of Gloucester and the importance in the preservation of all land in the immediate proximity of the township. In 2010 local government plans were made to preserve the scenic integrity of this land and imposed a Local Scenic Protection Zone for environmental conservation purposes. This prohibits open cut coal mining as a land use. This land should be protected. Gloucester Shire Council's decision to preserve this area should be respected and upheld by the state and federal government as council represents the voice of ratepayers who value and make their homes in this beautiful area.
4. The scenic values that the important tourism industry depends also on would be seriously degraded.
5. In a recent council survey 78% of the local community including myself voted for Gloucester Shire Council to oppose this mine. I believe along with the other 78% that the negative impacts Rocky Hill will have on the town will far outweigh any possible positive effects.

6. Too many aspects of mine operation and management of impacts have been left out of the EIS on the grounds that they would be covered in management plans that would not be developed until after the project is approved.
7. No cost-benefit analysis of the project has been presented.
8. Potential royalties to the State appear to be greatly overestimated.
9. The net employment increase for Gloucester residents would be small (only 15 - 30 jobs), which would be outweighed by the negative effects on the Gloucester community.
10. Gloucester currently benefits from a large number of retirees who have moved to the area. It is these people who are able to volunteer and donate their time, enthusiasm and new ideas to many charitable local causes. Most have moved to Gloucester for its delightful scenic landscape, the peace and the quiet. Many have built new homes; some have purchased my photographs to hang on their walls. Gloucester would be greatly disadvantaged if it lost these hard working volunteers to an alternate mine-free town.
11. Noise from the mine, especially intrusive low-frequency noise would affect large numbers of residences in the Forbesdale, the Avon and Thunderbolts residential estates. It is recognised in the EIS that my home/office/studio would experience noise levels in excess of 5dB above the project specific noise criterion for the majority of the life of the mine. Sleep disturbances are also likely as a result of noise from the 24 hour rail load out facility. The North Coast railway is no more than 200 metres from my family home. The EIS predicts increased train movements of up to 6 per day with the majority proposed for the evening periods. Acquisition is a reality but not a satisfactory option, the property has been in the family for 4 generations, the thought of acquisition has already caused great stress and sadness.
12. Proposed compensations for residents including my family affected by noise are inadequate.
13. There is no analysis on the impacts of additional noise disturbances as a result of extra trains from a State Rail level.
14. Dust and emissions from the mine, rail loading facility and additional trains would have health and nuisance effects on hundreds of residents including my young children at home and at school, there will be no escaping it. We regularly see clouds of dust and emissions from blasting from Stratford Coal mine south of our property. This dust usually moved westerly over the small village of Stratford. A similar wind pattern over the Rocky Hill mine would see this dust travel westerly over my property; schools, Gloucester Hospital and many new residential subdivisions in Gloucester would be affected also.
15. Road traffic to and from the mine would be far greater than the existing local traffic, and would put unacceptable pressure on the Shire Council's road maintenance resources.
16. The mine is located on a floodplain in the catchment of the Manning River, which supplies drinking water to major towns downstream.
17. The potential impacts of the mine on sub-surface water are not adequately understood.
18. There are no barrier walls or vegetation barriers proposed in the EIS to screen the coal conveyor to the rail loop which will visually impact neighbouring residences.

19. The mine would have impacts on threatened birds and mammals, and would be likely to result in the complete loss of the populations of squirrel gliders and grey-crowned babbblers currently in the proposed mine area.



This photograph was taken on my property. Photographed are a group of friends, neighbours and mothers all concerned about the health impacts the Rocky Hill mine will have on our children. The area in the background behind the trees is the proposed Rocky Hill mine area. The Rail loading facility is planned for the area directly to the left of the photograph, approximately 100 meters from where this photograph was taken.

Please protect our livelihoods, our town, our health and our homes by rejecting the Rocky Hill project. It's just too close.

I have made no political donations.

Yours Sincerely,

Wendy Fraser
Artist Photographer
wendy@wendyfraser.com.au