

Dear Madam/Sir

I strenuously object to the Rocky Hill coalmine proposed for the outskirts of Gloucester.

Although markedly serious concerns exist that this mine will adversely affect

- a) the general health of the people of Gloucester as, due to the proximity of it, they will be ingesting into their lungs coal dust, excavation dust and the very toxic plumes of the remnants of explosives for twenty-one years
- b) the hearing of the people of Gloucester because of low frequency sound emissions of the excavation equipment and constant truck movements (and, of course, this will all take place at night because once approval is given coal mines always take miles when inches were promised by them)
- c) the wider economy of Gloucester where, currently, tourism is worth \$50 million plus per year (and this money remains local, not siphoned off either overseas or into the big city), and these tourists are coming here to imbibe in Nature, not stand in queues to view big and ugly man-made holes in the ground
- d) the environment in general (it does seem quite odd that as the world is finally rising to meet the challenge of safer energy sources, the NSW government is confronting the people of Gloucester with the potential of a *dirty old coal mine* as a reverse to that trend) and especially so since Gloucester continues with its usual farming heritage whilst also pursuing nook holistic farming techniques

these clear issues are not my primary fear for Gloucester if approval is given.

What is at risk is Gloucester's look and feel. Indeed, the current Planning personnel in NSW may not quite understand exactly what baby will be thrown out with the coal dust mired bathwater if approval is given.

Comparatively speaking, Gloucester is a small township (about three thousand people) but, against the trend of most other rural environments that were once this same size, it continues to independently thrive because this is not only a tourist town. The valley has proving a magnet for tree changers. These people (including myself) in turn provide a significant source of the economic activity in the town; they are a demographic that need things done and shops locally. However, these people feel that money is well spent. Once moved into the town new people are quickly adopted into one caste or other. There are at least one hundred and twenty different organisations one can belong to in this town and these cater for an abundance of social and political schisms. Indeed, the leadership of one group often enough attempts to 'recruit' members of other groups.

Indolent in Gloucester?

"Not a bloody chance, mate. Too busy since I retired."

In short, then; this town is doing something right despite the usual political schisms of any township.

Which leads to.

In a world where providing useful activities and lifestyle contentment for an aging population is becoming more pressing for decent governments everywhere, and where housing in Sydney continues to shrink in availability but expand in cost, Gloucester now provides a model that can be studied by planning departments rather than a place to be decimated by short sighted opportunism. Any township within a few hundred kilometres of Sydney and Newcastle, and that sits on public transport routes, places active grandparents within easy access of children and grandchildren. Such townships should be gathering the interest of perspicacious Planning departments, and Gloucester especially so because of its success.

Which leads us back to Gloucester's look and feel. We are a vibrant rural town. Farming exists, tourism exists, and the service industry exists also. We are, then, a community, diverse as that sometimes can be. To surrender that to a few 'get-rich-quicks' is not the far-sighted choice for Gloucester, NSW nor Australia.

Peter Moon