

7 October 2016
(Personal information not published)

Director – Resource Assessments
Planning Services
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Submission for the Rocky Hill Coal Project – Application No SSD-5156
Stratford Coal Extension Project – Application No SSD-4966 MOD 1

Dear Sir/Madam

I oppose the Rocky Hill Coal Project and the Stratford Modification on the grounds that it is irresponsible for Australia to continue to mine coal while global climate change continues to accelerate. There are two reasons for this position that I address below. These are first, that the coal produced from these projects will contribute significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions and second, that Australia's food production resources are threatened by mining.

The greenhouse gas emissions produced from burning Australian coal represent a significant contribution to global carbon dioxide levels. Although under current practices, emissions accounting at the national level disguises Australia's contribution to global carbon dioxide levels, we are ignoring the contributions made when our coal is exported and burned offshore. It is a childish and short-sighted political game to pretend that the emissions produced from burning our exported coal are nothing to do with Australia – true leadership and maturity requires us to think of the consequences of our decisions and to act responsibly and ethically.

We know that to get any substantial traction in reining in global emissions, the majority of known fossil fuel reserves should remain in the ground. Mining coal, the most emissions-intensive of the fossil fuels, should cease altogether right now. We should not allow expansion of existing coal mines nor development of new mines in Australia, least of all in areas like the Gloucester region.

Mining destroys the soil structure (and often water sources) forever, no matter how much "rehabilitation" is done afterwards. Food production will become more and more difficult as climate change continues to affect weather patterns, so it is short-sighted in the extreme to jeopardise the rich farming land that we have in the Gloucester area for the political "sugar hit" of a (largely foreign-owned) mine. Australian agricultural production is predicted to become even more volatile as global temperature rises, so protecting productive land, especially where rainfall is relatively reliable, should be prioritized over coal mining.

In conclusion, I am asking that you give consideration to the longer term outcomes in the matter of the above-named applications and retain these areas for current or future agricultural use.

Yours faithfully

(Name withheld)
Maitland, NSW

(I have no affiliation with any political organisation and I have not made a reportable political donation.)