

Proposed Rocky Hill Coal Mine SSD-5156

I wish to object to the revised application for the Rocky Hill coal mine project.

I have not made any political donations. You may publish my name.

The proposed mine stage #1 is too close to Gloucester and many rural properties. It is very likely that for the project to be commercially viable there will be additional stages of development in future. These extensions will be even closer to a large number of people. As usual the proponent is attempting to deny there will be additional stages, this is known as the wedge strategy. Start small, get established then grow. With a compliant state government this works like a charm.

The reasons that the mine is too close are as follows:

- Small particulates from dust and diesel engines are proven to be harmful to human and animal health. The modelling of these pollutants seeks to minimise their impact and the standards used to judge them are far too lax. Huge amounts of diesel consumption will contribute to a permanent cloud of pollution trapped in the valley's basin-like structure for years.
- The noise and vibration from blasting are similarly dismissed as being insignificant. This is mere wishful thinking. Again standards by which such things are judged are very unrealistic and weighted towards extractive industries and against people.
- The visual amenity of the valley will be further damaged by the new mine and by the extension of the life of the existing washery. Aside from the peace of mind of the people who call the valley home the outcome of this will be to harm the economy of the valley. The so-called amenity barriers are a joke. While the pit may be invisible the barriers will be looming grey-yellow walls that look completely unnatural. The proponent claims they will vegetate these walls and all will be beautiful, this lie will be accepted by a biased system but nothing will be beautiful.

As well as direct effects on residents' health and wellbeing the above effects have secondary consequences, which are:

- The economy of the valley will be harmed. Tourists do not go to rural areas to admire coal mines and to breathe dust and diesel fumes. Retirees do not relocate to new housing developments near open cut scars on the landscape. While not recorded well in any statistics a steady stream of retirees bringing money to the region to spend on new houses, refurbishing old ones and daily living is a significant economic benefit due to the natural beauty of the area and the proximity to family in Sydney and Newcastle and services provided in the greater Newcastle region.
- The proponent will burble on about the number of jobs created by the project but always neglect to assess how many will be destroyed. The fragile nature of the coal industry will never be discussed. Should the project go ahead it is quite possible that it will not go its full term if the international market has another wobble. Those mining jobs will evaporate just like the ones at Stratford.
- Those residents who are near enough to the mine to be affected but not near enough to be bought out will be trapped. They will watch the amenity of their home get destroyed and be unable to move away. Those in this sacrifice zone will find that they get no buyers and so must hang on in desperation. These homes are occupied by real people not statistical units.

- The legislation covering cumulative effects of extractive industries has always been weak but now another inadequacy becomes apparent, the same people whose lives were put on hold by the first EIS for Rocky Hill were those who were going to be affected by the now defunct AGL gas project. These same people are now facing the resurrected Rocky Hill. There is no limit to the number of times these projects can be revisited. There is no limit to the duration of the uncertainty and stress that must be endured. For some it has been 15 years with no end in sight.

The world has an oversupply of coal. Even allowing for the fact that Rocky Hill will produce largely coking coal that resource has seen major falls in prices during the last few years. The future is very uncertain. Why does Australia and the world need another small coal mine of marginal profitability close by an area where, compared to most mines, there are many people living? Clearly it doesn't. There is no logical need for a mine of this type. When did logic ever apply to resource management in NSW?

Why should there be another mine that sends its profits overseas and leaves its costs for the locals to bear? No reason at all its just policy.

Why would the proponent spend more money on trying to develop such a dodgy proposition? As a last resort, to try to get some value back out of a project that looked good during boom times but that looks very doubtful now.

Why would the State allow the proponent to keep banging away at this when there are so many other existing mines that can provide sufficient coking coal for the foreseeable future? Because it has been captured by the industry and cannot wean itself from the teat of donations and abandon the bogus PR campaign 'coal is always good' that it has nurtured for decades.

Thus the people of Gloucester are to be made proxies for the imprisonment of the State. Well done oh good and faithful servant.

David Hare-Scott

1089 Johnsons Creek Rd
Wards River NSW 2422