

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

Date: 11/10/16

Dear Sir,

**Objection to the Rocky Hill Coal Project – Application No SSD-5156  
and the Stratford Coal Extension Project – Application No SSD-4966 MOD 1**

As a resident and self-employed business owner I **completely oppose** both of the projects above for the following reasons.

1. Risk to the Gloucester brand:
  - a. Over the last 30 years Gloucester has been promoted as the base camp to the World heritage Barrington Tops. This mines proximity to town will overshadow any past and future marketing that attempts to bring environmental tourism to this region shattering the Mum & Dad businesses that have come to rely on these tourists.
  - b. Gloucester is attracting a growing number of tree changers who are bringing in retirement money and keeping the thriving café scene going during the quieter non tourist season. The retirees that move here buy houses and renovate to suit their tastes employing builders, electricians, plumbers and gardeners all who live and work in Gloucester. No retiree is going to want to live next to a coal mine.
  - c. The coal deposit is considered to be small as per the web site below. So why risk this communities efforts as rebranding itself as a tourism destination? Surely a more sustainable industry.  
[http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/investors/investment-opportunities/coal/coalhttp://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/581608/coking-coal.pdf](http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/investors/investment-opportunities/coal/coalhttp://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/581608/coking-coal.pdf)
2. Risk to residents health:
  - a. The Gloucester basin is well known for having an inversion layer thus trapping in air and any particulate matter that is in the valley. Pre mine air pollution quality already exceeds national standards. The Rocky Hill Coal mine will have 194 truck movements a day, burning diesel fuel releasing PM 2.5 into the air and further risking the health of Gloucesters residents especially children and the elderly. Particulate pollution contributes to the premature deaths of more than 3000 Australians each year. There is NO safe level of exposure to particle pollution.
3. Emissions:
  - a. Over the 21 year life of the mine, Rocky Hill will be responsible for at least 38 million tonnes of carbon dioxide.
  - b. Australia along with the USA and China have all signed up to the Paris climate agreement. How can the state government then work against the federal government, Australia and the worlds best interested by approving more coal mines?
  - c. The release of fugitive methane emissions from the coal bed will also contribute to the ongoing threat of climate change. Methane is said to be at least 25 more potent at trapping in heat than Co2. Little to NO monitoring of these gases is taken into account in the EIS.

- d. The EIS does not include the contribution of the truck movement that will be used in the moving of the coal to the processing plant in Stratford. This is a complete oversight and should be rectified in the requirements. These trucks will be continually running from 7.00am to 6.00pm.
  - e. Potential risk of fugitive emission from capped CSG wells. AGL has unsuccessfully tried to extract CSG from the valley. They are now abandoning their wells and capping them. These wells are extremely close to the stage 1 of Rocky Hill. There is still fracking fluid within the coal seams. It is known that there are BTEX chemicals within the coal seam.
    - i. If this mine is approved can you guarantee that the blasting will not release either or both the fracking fluid or BTEX chemicals into the Avon or Dog Trap creek both of which flow into the Manning River. This river supplies 80000 people and hundreds of businesses with fresh clean water. It does happen look at the USA and look at Williamstown RAAF base.
  - f. Blasting from the Rocky Hill mine could potentially release already FRACKED fault lines further contributing to unmonitored release of methane gases. This raises the following concerns:
    - i. How far away are the abandoned CSG wells?
    - ii. What will be the seismic effect from blasting so close to them?
    - iii. Will GRL ensure the integrity of the wells and constantly monitor the Avon River and other streams in case they release the trapped fracking fluid and BTEX chemicals within the coal seam?
4. Risks to water:
- a. GRL are proposing to only take the coking coal and use the less valued coal in the overburden. This coal is known to have BTEX chemicals and will simply leach into the water ways of Dog Trap Creek and the Avon River affecting the quality of drinking water of up to 80000 people and businesses.
  - b. The proposed desalination plant will not be able to handle the vast amounts of water. The process is not able to completely remove all toxic substances. This area receives close to 1000mm of rain annually and is subject to violent east coast lows.
  - c. It is proposed that the toxic water from the desalination plant be sprayed on valuable farm land. AGL proposed to do their toxic water and it was deemed not acceptable by the EPA. Why would GRL even consider it this is exactly the same type of water that was called "produced water" by AGL.
  - d. The Rocky Hill Coal mine will produce 10.8 tonne of salt on each and every day that that they are required to process the estimated 2.5mlt of toxic salty water. That is a massive amount of salt that will be dumped in some landfill and slowly leach into water ways and be left for future generations to deal with. Unacceptable.

5. Noise:

- a. Noise modelling is not a good indicator of noise impacts. For example I live some at least 8kms from the train line yet every day hear the train as it passes.
- b. Noise is responsible for most of the complaints from the Stratford mine just down the road.
- c. This mine will be located 900m from homes. These residents have invested their money and time and chosen to live in a quiet rural valley. The noise from this enclosed valley will deeply impact their mental health.
- d. Inadequate monitoring of noise levels. The national noise inventory measures only high frequency noise which is auditory but not low frequency noise which is non-auditory. Noise from the trucks, machinery and desalination plant will get trapped in the valley and impact on the quality of life of these residents who have chosen to live in a quiet rural setting. <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/4213005/why-mining-noise-can-be-a-low-blow/?cs=305>

6. Economically unviable:

- a. This mine is not economically viable without expansion. GRL or whoever they sell to will then require further stages and the mining tenement gets closer and closer to Gloucesters residents.
- a. Our council and residents spent considerable time and money rezoning that area for the future expansion of the town namely the Avon View Estate, Thunderbolts Estate and the Forbesdale estates. Even listing the area that Rocky Hill is proposing to mine as scenic protection. If this mine is to go against the already existing and established council policy then it should be prepared to relocate the town and it's people. How do you move a town of 3000 people? At what cost?
- b. GRL have two other tenements that they intend to explore and mine on the southern approach to town. This needs to be taken into consideration as if they get Rocky Hill they will certainly mine the other areas. Gloucester will then have mines on both sides of the approach on the Bucketts Way further risking the ever growing tourism industry.

In conclusion it is my belief that this mine is a huge risk to the Gloucester brand and the region is yet to fully explore the opportunities that tourism, retirees and light industry offers including outdoor adventure like mountain bike tracks, wedding, parties and cultural events. All of which will attract an increase in visitors to the region creating sustainable employment.

As a resident of Gloucester I have experienced the negative impacts this mining proposal has already brought to our community. It has already affected my people who I consider my friends mental health and it will bring further health risk to our community, from noise, increased emissions contributing to global climate change plus risk the safe water supply of 80000 downstream users.

My partner and I have invested over \$650000 in to this town and it's economy. It is our intention to leave Gloucester if this mine is approved as we know that mine is uneconomical as a 1 stage project meaning it will bring us and our community further uncertainty.

Regards

*Bj Bowden*

Brad Bowden