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The Director
Resources Assessments Planning Services
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Rocky Hill Project – Application No. SSD-5156
Stratford Coal Extension Project – Application No. SSD – 4966 MOD1

I oppose the Rocky Hill Coal Project and the Stratford Mine Extension.

This submission is to express, as strongly as possible, my utter rejection of the proposal to open the Rocky Hill mine at Gloucester, and the extension of the Stratford mine.

The snippet of information below was taken from the **DESTINATION NSW** website. (DESTINATION NSW is, according to its website, a “Department of NSW Government”)

<http://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/hunter/barrington-tops/gloucester>

“About Gloucester

In a picturesque valley at the junction of the Avon, Gloucester and Barrington rivers, Gloucester is a great base for adventure activities and tours. Explore the beautiful World Heritage-listed [Barrington Tops National Park](#) and discover a gold mine in the [Copeland Tops State Conservation Area](#).

The spectacular wilderness and mountain ranges near Gloucester were used by the colonial bushranger Captain Thunderbolt, aka Frederick Ward, to hide. [Thunderbolts lookout](#) in the Barrington Tops is named after Ward, who was known as the gentleman’s bushranger.”

I am writing to you, as an employee of the NSW Department of Planning, to remind you of the value that another NSW government Department, places upon Gloucester and its nearby World Heritage-listed Barrington Tops National Park.

The Destination NSW website clearly states that overnight and daytrip tourism is now worth more than \$51 million to Gloucester each year. Hopefully, this figure will increase year-by-year.

You should know by now from other submissions about the Rocky Hill mine, that many individuals and businesses in the Gloucester region are vehemently against the Rocky Hill mine, due to the negative images that will develop from current and future tourists should the mine be approved.

Should you take the time to inform yourself about Gloucester, you will see that Gloucester is not on the main NSW highways or tourist routes. If a tourist travels to Gloucester, is by design and not because it is on the main tourist routes between Sydney and Brisbane. It is an 'out-of-the way' town and area.

Many Gloucester residents and those of its surrounding villages provide the accommodation (B&Bs, camp grounds, etc), the food services (pubs, clubs, cafes, etc). **They staff these businesses. They live local to Gloucester. They own these businesses.** A visit to Gloucester's main street on any weekend, and more so long weekends, will show the large number of motor cycle groups, caravanners, campers, etc. flocking to Gloucester's accommodation providers, shops, cafes, service stations, clubs, supermarkets, etc.

Contrast this with employees from the nearby Stratford mine (currently in maintenance mode), and the Duralie mine (Due to close in 2017) , which in recent months laid off 50 staff, and further, earlier in 2016, laid off an additional 50 employees and contractors. Talk about job security and valuing your staff!! These mines always tout the number of jobs they provide, but are usually strangely quiet when they put off staff.

Submissions from the Stratford Extension EIS from a few years ago showed that a large proportion of these workers travelled from as far as Old Bar (86ks and 1hr 6 minutes from Gloucester) and the Maitland (123 ks and 1 hr 33 mins) and (122 ks and 1 hr 44 mins) Newcastle areas. Sadly, for the miners, they have had little or no job security. Many of them travel long distances to and from the mine and work long shifts. Unless they live in or very near to Gloucester or its villages, they contribute very little to the Gloucester community. They don't do their weekly shopping in Gloucester, and they probably buy their fuel in Krambach (Gloucester-Taree Road) or at distant villages between Gloucester and Raymond Terrace/Newcastle areas, rather than drive the extra distance into Gloucester township for fuel. I'm sure that after a hard day or night in the mine, their only interest is to get home to their families as quickly as possible (often at high speed).

Should the Rocky Hill mine be approved, and notwithstanding whether GRL's infrastructure construction commences immediately or in a few years after approval, the Gloucester area will quickly become known as 'The Mining Town', and not the 'Tourism Town'. In other words, within a short period of time, the attraction of Gloucester as a unique tourist destination will be, without question, decimated. There goes much of Gloucester's thriving \$51 million PA tourist dollars. **Well done, Department of Planning.**

Now, some basic information for your digestion.

- In a 2012 survey, Gloucester tourism accounted for 124 FTE (full time equivalent) jobs (7% of the local economy); mining a lower 93 FTE (5% of the local economy). As at October 2016, this 5% mining FTE is probably much lower, due to the imminent closure (2017) of the Duralie Mine and the fact the Stratford mine is now in maintenance mode;
- 2016 Gloucester LGA statistics shows that there are a total of 5,973 tourist beds in the area, including caravan and campground beds, and a total of 1150 beds in the more traditional accommodation types, such as B&B, hotels, motels, etc.;
- Woolworths arrived in Gloucester about 3 years ago. Its savvy planners would have been looking at the current and future tourist influxes, and not that of the itinerant and short-term mining influxes.

CONCLUSION

The Rocky Hill coal mine proposal touts jobs, income and progress for Gloucester. The current lifetime of the mine is 21 years.

The Gloucester tourism industry already employs 124 FTE **local** people, attracts (as at 2014) \$51 million per year, and has many, many accommodation providers. Without the spectre of the mine, Gloucester tourism should last forever. It will last way beyond the lifetime of the proposed mine Rocky Hill mine.

Should the mine be approved, let alone commence production, Gloucester will lose much of its tourism income. After developing a label of a 'Mining Town', Gloucester will probably never recover from its severely tainted mining town image. Should the GRL mine go ahead, all that will be left when GRL finally close its mine and leave town in 21 years time, will be just another dusty, dirty mining town, with many of out-of-work ex-miners. Much of its tourism image, and its near-guaranteed income, will be lost for all time.

Can I strongly encourage you, as a public servant, to do your own basic research on Gloucester and its tourist area. Google phrases such as 'Gloucester tourism', 'Barrington Tops', 'Groundswell Gloucester', 'Gloucester Council', 'Advance Gloucester', etc. Consult a road map to ascertain the tourist uniqueness of the Gloucester and Barrington Tops areas. As you are reading this and other submissions, you are thus a part of the decision-making process. Thus, you must be fully aware of the issues facing Gloucester and its economy.

The Stratford and Duralie mines have a well-established track record of employing, and then subsequently sacking, many of their employees and contractors. Neither mine offers any form of job security or have any loyalty to their staff. Approx. 50% of their workforces do not come from the Gloucester LGA. Thus probably little of their pay packets find their way into the Gloucester economy.

Coal mining is on the decline in Australia. Tourism is not.

It is for all the factual reasons outlined for you above that I totally and utterly say 'NO MINE FOR GLOUCESTER', and no Stratford mine extension.

Sincerely

Bruce Gilbert
Forbesdale

(Our bedroom is approx. 1-1 k's from the Rocky Hill mining site, and will look directly into the pit)

PS: Having been deeply involved in Groundswell Gloucester and the local 'no-mine near Gloucester' community, I also totally support and acknowledge the many points and issues raised in the many hundreds of no-mine submissions that you have received.

As recently as Wednesday 12 October 2016, the newly formed MidCoast Council administrator, John Turner, publicly stated that he was against the Rocky Hill mine as it was simply "in the wrong place". Those at the public council meeting were able to interpret that as meaning it is "too close to Gloucester township".

I understand that today, Friday 14 October 2016, Groundswell Gloucester representatives hand-delivered 1,000+ 'no mine' submissions to your Department.

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