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NSW



October 2, 2016

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

RE: Rocky Hill Coal Project - Application No. SSD -5156

Dear Sir or Madam,

**I Oppose the Rocky Hill Coal Project** for the following reasons:

- Health Issues
- Adverse effects on Local Tourism
- Adverse effects on the Environment
- Governance - two issues;
  - The Administrator of Mid Coast Council has known affiliations with the mining industry; I am concerned that any decision by Mid Coast Council may be affected by this.
  - GRL has a history as a poor corporate and civic citizen

Details follow:-

## Health Issues

The proposed open cut mine is **5km from the town!** Black Lung has resurfaced for fit mine workers with safety equipment and limited daily exposure. What health implications are there for nearby communities with their various health issues and 24-hour exposure?

Adults in coal mining communities have been found to have:

- Higher rates of mortality from lung cancer and chronic heart, respiratory and kidney diseases.
- Higher rates of cardiopulmonary disease, chronic obstructive, pulmonary disease (COPD) and other lung diseases, hypertension, kidney disease, heart attack, stroke and asthma.
- Increased probability of a hospitalisation for COPD (by 1% for each 1,462 tons of coal mined) and for hypertension (by 1% for each 1,873 tons of coal mined).
- Poorer self-rated health and reduced quality of life.

Children and infants in coal mining communities have been found to have:

- Increased respiratory symptoms including wheezing and coughing, increased absence from school due to respiratory symptoms.
- A high prevalence of any birth defect, and a greater chance of being of low birth weight (a risk factor for future obesity, diabetes and heart disease).

(From: Colagiuri R, Cochrane J, Girgis S. Health and Social Harms of Coal Mining in Local Communities; Spotlight on the Hunter Region. Beyond Zero Emissions. Melbourne, 2012)

## Adverse Effect on Tourist Industry

**Tourism is worth \$51M per annum to the Gloucester economy.** An open-cut coalmine within 5km of Gloucester and within sight of the Bucketts Way will destroy the visual



amenity of the area - be reasonable **no one is going to take a tourist drive to see a coal mine!**

**Jobs:** And for the sake of a possible (but unproven) 50 jobs in the mine -most of which would be short term! And few - if any- likely to go to Gloucester residents who have no experience of mining work, the mine will **risk the jobs of hundreds employed in the tourism industry.**

### **Environment**

**There are a number of issues, better described by the experts,** the following example is enough to cause significant concern; The proposed mine is on the Avon River floodplain and in the catchment area of the Manning River, which supplies drinking water to over 80,000 people. The Avon River has flooded 5 times in 4 years, with 2 floods occurring in 2013. There is definite potential for **contamination of the water in the catchment.**

### **Concerns relating to Local Governance**

Gloucester no longer has independent Local Government representation - it has become part of Mid-Lake Council. The administrator of the new Mid-Lake Council, Mr. John Turner, is a former Shadow Mining Minister, and is currently being remunerated by Whitehaven Coal, Glencore, Idemitsu Resources, Vale and Yancoal for his work as the Independent Chair of at least six Community Consultative Committees. There is a potential for the decisions made by the administrator to be affected by these connections.

The Committees are designed to provide a mechanism for ongoing consultation between coal companies and local communities and stakeholders. As Independent Chair, Mr. Turner's role is to act as an impartial ancillary between coal companies and communities.... [there is] a perceived conflict of interest between his work through the Community Consultative Committees and his new role as Administrator of the new Mid-Lake Council.

[\(https://newmatilda.com/2016/05/16/new-super-council-administrator-accused-of-conflict-of-interest-over-coal-and-national-party-roles/\)](https://newmatilda.com/2016/05/16/new-super-council-administrator-accused-of-conflict-of-interest-over-coal-and-national-party-roles/)



**GRL has a history as a poor corporate and civic citizen**

GRL bought properties secretly under different names until Gloucester Council found out

It denies that it will move further towards residences. It will not tell us its plans for the two other adjoining areas along our valley. All GRL's communications are silent on their other two exploration areas nearer the Stratford washery and along the Buckets Way

Recent discoveries of GRL backer AMCI's registration of entities in several of the top ten international tax havens - Cayman Islands, Switzerland, Netherlands, Mauritius ... Should be cause for concern that Australia will see anything more than the dust of a money trail.

The governance of GRL as per its present and previous Managing Directors is a matter of concern:

- ex MD B. Wingett (disbarred NSW solicitor) - 'one day I'll own this valley' secretly bought properties under a variety of names.
- ex MD Keith Ross - 'mine as close to Gloucester as allowed'. He previously was director for Whitehavens Werris Creek coal mine. Werris Creek is now under threat.
- ex MD G Polwarth presented Gloucester with the prospect of 40 metre high overburden piles and called them 'visibility barriers'.
- Current MD maintains 'there is no stage 2' - yet they have been exploring for it. Starts to argue that the mine itself is more distant from residents than the overburden piles and mine site activity

None of the above suggests a company with ethics one can feel any confidence in.

Gloucester is a self-sustaining community; Neither its [citizens] health nor its long term viability should be jeopardized for an environmentally damaging project that will only profit a few outside opportunists.

Yours Sincerely,

Katherine Makepeace



I have never made a political donation

