

# **Berrima Rail Project (SSD 7171) - EIS submission June 2017**

## Introduction

This submission is lodged on behalf of Exeter Village Association (EVA), an organisation of more than 170 members, which represents the communities of Exeter and Sutton Forest (population 1410).

At the General Meeting of EVA held on 20 Feb 2017, the preparation of a submission opposing this development was endorsed. I, as a member and Treasurer of the presiding Committee, was authorised on 04 May 2017 to lodge this submission.

## Context

Exeter and Sutton Forest are two small villages set in a rural hinterland in the Southern Highlands (SH). SH is an attractive area for tourism, agricultural and rural industry. It is a drawcard for weekend escapes, dining, weddings, accommodation (including luxury and upmarket), golf and wineries within picturesque countryside that provides a range of employment and destinations for many visitors, especially from Sydney.

This submission illustrates how the introduction of a coal mine and associated infrastructure and rail facility are not compatible with this region, and also threaten the livelihoods, future investment potential, enjoyment and character of the locality.

## Reasons for opposing the Berrima Rail Project

1. Impact on road traffic and safety from additional trains: Berrima Rail Project (SSD – 7171)

Additional train traffic using a new rail spur line required for the Hume Coal Project (i.e., Berrima Rail Project- SSD 7171) will lead to delays to traffic on Wingecarribee roads. While recognising that the crossing of Berrima Road would be grade separated, an increase of more than 30% in train traffic using existing level rail crossings will cause substantial delays to traffic using Douglas Road in two locations and Sheepwash Road, thereby potentially compromising safety. Train traffic will also cause delays to other level crossings in Robertson and all the way down the line to the Port Kembla Coal Loader. As a result, emergency vehicles may be delayed in responding to critical calls at these times, while the potential for road accidents at these level crossings would be increased.

## 2. Interruption to Main Southern Rail line

It is considered that there would be potential for an average of 50 train movements per week from the coal mine (ES2) to interrupt normal services on the Main Southern Rail line. This is to be avoided, given that local and regional passenger services on this line are limited in any case, and there is considerable freight train traffic on this line already.

## 3. Potential contaminant runoff to Oldbury Creek

There is potential for runoff containing contaminants from the works and maintenance road to adversely affect the quality of Oldbury Creek. Any contamination of this waterway would be unacceptable.

## 4. Dust and Noise

Due to coal train movement, fugitive dust from rail wagons deposited along areas along the route could be a potential health hazard and nuisance through the Southern Highlands. In addition, the additional noise from coal trains would impact on residents particularly as the train line travels through the centre of the towns of Moss Vale and Robertson.

## Conclusion

The Berrima Rail Project is opposed on the grounds that there are significant concerns with respect to road and train traffic (delays and safety), dust and noise nuisance along the route and potential to affect the water quality of Oldbury Creek.

In accordance with the above, Exeter Village Association requests that Berrima Rail Project (and Hume Coal Project) be refused.

**Rick Beers**

Treasurer, on behalf of Exeter Village Association