

29/6/2017

Attn: Executive Director, Resource Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

This is a submission to the Berrima Rail Project EIS. SSD 7171

We moved to the Southern Highlands in January 2016. We were aware of the Hume proposal so avoided any area that we thought may be impacted. We have lived in the Hunter valley and so are well aware of the potential impact of mining. Unfortunately Sydney is now ringed by mines as successive NSW governments have promoted mining over the NSW landscape and its people. Mining is not a big employer in NSW with only about 2% of the workforce involved in the industry; however the mining lobby has very successfully positioned the industry as the savior to our economy and future.

My wife's parents had a cottage in Berrima for about 20 years up to the early 2000's. Over that period we grew to value our visits and the charm of the Highlands. The Highlands has gone from strength to strength and does not need to be saved by Hume Coal.

I object to this project and believe it should be rejected for the following reasons.

1/The construction of above ground rail infrastructure will directly impact on cultural landscape of the surrounding villages Berrima, Sutton Forest and Exeter. The construction of the rail infrastructure will deter visitation to Berrima especially from the south. This will have a major negative affect the tourist based economy of Berrima. It will also be the first development viewed as Sydney Visitors take the Berrima Freeway exit. This is a very poor introduction to the beautiful Southern Highlands.

2/The Landscape is generally Zoned E3 by the Wingecarribee LEP 2010 which has a goal to preserve the rural landscape character and the significant cultural values of the landscape. This development does not meet these goals in any way.

3/The graded separation proposed with rail over the road at the Old Hume Highway can only be called a potential blight on the visual landscape and the southern approach to Berrima, New Berrima and Medway. It will also enable rail noise to travel further due to the elevated position. The design totally disregards the cultural value of the landscape so critical to the preservation to the heritage of the Berrima and Sutton Forest area.

4/The noise, exhaust fumes and coal dust from the trains will have potential health impacts from the rail loop to Port Kembla. These risks cannot be totally eliminated no matter what the design of the locomotives and coal trucks. These trains pass 30 m (school boundary fence to steel rail line) behind the Robertson Primary school presenting and unacceptable health risk to young children and staff. *"There may*

be no safe threshold for fine particulate matter and the effects are linearly related to concentration.”(World Health Organisation & Australian National Pollution Inventory)

5/The SCOPE of the EIS is inadequate as the Hume Coal Project significantly impacts the Berrima branch line AND the Unanderra to Port Kembla Branch line. Now the Tahmoor mine will operate into the future the extra traffic from Hume will double the amount of coal train traffic on the Unanderra line. This line will struggle to cope with as it is very old and tired and in need of millions of dollars of upgrades to bring up 21st century standards in construction and safety.

6/Whilst a GRADE SEPARATION is proposed for the Old Hume Highway(mentioned above) , Suttor Road in Moss Vale, Sheepwash Road and Illawarra Highway crossings are completely ignored. These last two crossings experience high levels of traffic in morning, afternoons and weekends. Many of the road users are tourists unfamiliar with the local area and rail level crossings. The Suttor Road crossing is used by both Moss Vale local residents and industrial area traffic. With the increase in heavy rail traffic these crossings pose an unacceptable risk to public safety and to rail staff.

7/ PEDESTRIAN traffic including school children are seriously at risk in Moss Vale and Robertson. Robertson in particular has a number pedestrian crossings and road crossing that are inadequate and poorly fenced. Increased rail traffic means increased risk.

8/The EIS and DA lodged by Hume Coal in respect of the Berrima Rail Project shows that there will be additional traffic delays at level crossings. (ES3.3).

The rail route of the 4 daily coal trains from the Hume Coal mine and 4 back to the mine will involve 17 level crossings in the Southern Highlands and down the escarpment on the route to Port Kembla. The addition of the Hume Coal trains will add an extra 24 minutes of closures at rail level crossings each and every day.

This will result in daily closures at rail crossings rising from 69 minutes every day to 93 minutes or more than one and a half hours daily. Major rail crossings to be impacted include those at Robertson and on Sheepwash Road.

The nearly 30% increase in the total time rail crossings are closed each day as a result of the Hume Coal proposal will present unacceptable impacts on emergency vehicles including fire brigades, ambulances, police and other critical community services.

In summary Hume Coal behaves like the company is doing the Highlands a favour, this is arrogant and reprehensible. This is a poor proposal and should be rejected by the Government of NSW. We do not need this blight on the landscape and any risk to the future of the Southern Highlands, its people and its economy should be soundly rejected.

Ian G Burns
781 Nowra Rd
Fitzroy Falls NSW 2577