

Submission in response to the EIS into the Hume Coal Berrima Rail Project
SSD 15_7171

Submission in Opposition to the Hume Coal, Berrima Rail Project Application

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From Nick Murray

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Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a response to the Hume Coal EIS about the railway line to accompany the Hume Coal mine project.

My wife and I have a property located in Sutton St Berrima, which is one of the closest parts of Berrima to the proposed site of the Hume Coal mine and the Rail Project's access to the site. Our house is 2 km from the northern boundary of the mine area and the proposed railway line, surface infrastructure associated with the processing and loading of the mine output. The property is relatively secluded with boundaries on the Wingecaribee River to the east, and crown land on two sides (north and west).

My submission is that the application to approve the construction of a major rail line for the coal mine **should be refused**.

The basis for my opposition is that the disruption to surround land from the rail line is unacceptable. The emissions of dust during construction, plus pollution from train exhaust and coal dust during operations is incompatible with other surrounding uses.

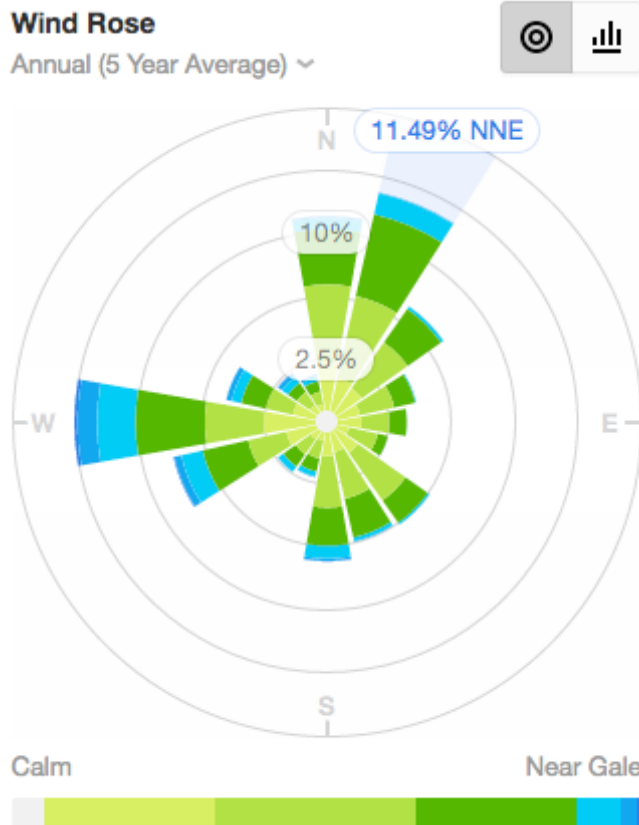
Dust

Figure 8.1 in the Rail EIS, shows that the second most prominent wind direction will blow dust from the railway head to the town of Berrima a distance of under 3 km NNE of the mine site.

Berrima is a well preserved Georgian village. It is a tourist destination and currently has no pollution issues whatsoever. The potential dust impact of the railway loading operations on Berrima is terrible.

Further, the most prominent wind direction will blow dust to Medway a delightful village to the West of, and close to the loading and storage site.

The proposal in the EIS that dust escaping from the site during construction and operation of the rail transfer facility will be contained by the use of shade cloth screening on the fences, is laughable. The annual 3 million tonne output of the mine being stacked and then loaded into trains cannot be done without significant coal dust emissions.



The Berrima Wind Rose, showing that prevailing winds will blow mine dust NNE to Berrima Village 11.5% of the time. The most prominent wind direction is directly towards Medway to the West.

Noise.

The construction noise is acknowledged to be capable of effecting the Berrima township at sites 71, 72 and 24. If the construction noise can reach the village, then regular trains with associated diesel engines and horns being sounded for "safety" will certainly disturb residents of Berrima, Sutton Forrest and Medway.

Road safety – level crossings

While the railway EIS contains details of proposed alternative rail or road bridges adjacent to the Berrima/Mossvale Road, there is no detail on the proposed crossing which will be required over the Old Hume Highway near Medway Road. This road is the only connection for Berrima residents to Sutton Forrest, Exeter and importantly Canberra.

For the project to be approved, the company should be forced to provide similar bridge or underpass facilities on the Old Hume Highway as will be built on the Berrima Road.

Employment opportunities are exaggerated .

I note that the total additional employment revealed in the Rail EIS document is 400 during construction, reducing to only 300 during the life of the project. It seems pathetically small a possible benefit given the other problems associated with both

projects (mine and railway). I also note the project has been declared state significant presumably due to the potential employment benefits.

But what is more, the EIS for the Coal Mine itself reveals that the mine proponents expect that 80% of the people employed at the mine would have attained a job elsewhere (see p467 of EIS 15_7172). That means that even at peak operating capacity, only 60 incremental jobs will have been created by the project.

During construction, with 90% of the employees living in the “temporary village” on site, there is virtually no local employment created and the project will be providing no benefit to the state during that part of the mine’s life.

Disruption for road users

The length of the trains will result in the roads in the area being closed for about 4 hours a week. This is an unacceptable impost on the local traffic movements and will create unnecessary delays in local traffic movements in most cases doubling travel times between townships if a train is encountered.

The application for approval of the rail line should be rejected.