

Submission against the proposed Hume Coal Project and Associated rail extension

Submitted by : Carl McGann

Address : 334 Medway Road, Berrima, 2577

Dear Commissioner,

I am a resident of Berrima living on Medway Road with my wife and 2 children. We have been residents for over 10 years having bought a “country” lifestyle property in a pristine and historic area near the village of Berrima.

I work in financial services and have a better than most understanding of the energy technologies which are continuing to evolve rapidly, the global demand for energy and the challenges associated with polluting energy compared with clean energy. Whilst this is not my basis for objection it seems absurd to me that in a world where pollution and environmental damage (not to mention the impacts on human health and well being) is probably the single biggest global challenge coupled with the rapid advancement and commercialisation of clean energy alternatives (solar, batteries, wind, etc).

Having worked in China I have been exposed and seen first hand how damaging a lack of foresight on dirty energy can create catastrophic consequences which can take much longer time periods to rectify than they did to create. Regularly Beijing and Shanghai have air pollution multiples higher than world health recommendations – there is no doubt that in the fullness of time the costs to repair this and the costs to manage the illnesses that will occur will be vastly higher than the short term money grab that created the problem. If the Chinese Government can see the errors of their ways how can we in Australia not!

Having said that the basis for my objection to this proposal is outlined below.

1. **Water Catchment** – not only is this area an agricultural area it is also a key catchment area for Sydney. Of course Hume Coal say nothing will happen however if and when it does it will be too late – there will be no going back. This happened recently with the Adani facility in North Queensland where they failed to contain a leakage despite all the assurances that the facility was infallible. This proposal does not just affect the 50,000 or so residents around the highlands but also all of Sydney. This surely is a risk too big to take.
2. **Water Supply for Residents** – it is clear that regardless of the damage to the water quality there will be a massive impact on the groundwater in the area with water sources being depleted altogether and ground water sinking up to 150m over a 200sqm to 300sqm area. Hume Coal have said they will work with landowners to deepen bores etc where they are cooperative – this is a veiled threat that speaks volumes for the approach of the Korean owned company to the residents and owners of the land.
3. **Historic Township** – Berrima is a historic township that dates back to the early first settlers and is recognised a treasure that should be preserved and conserved for generations to come. This proposal will definitely compromise and damage Berrima and indeed the entire highlands should

it proceed. It is in Australia's national interests that such unique places are preserved and conserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

4. **Economic Benefits** – Hume Coal have continued to talk up the economic benefits of the proposed mine including the jobs that will be created if it were to go ahead. On the jobs the initial set up does create some jobs (200 – 300 maybe) however these are temporary and will largely disappear once the mine becomes operational. You only need to look at established mines in other regions (such as the Hunter Valley) which are operated on an on-going basis by a handful of staff (as these are mostly automated). So employment will be temporary and whilst they say they will only hire people from a radius we all know they will hire whomever they want and retro fit to the rules. On the other hand the region is a thriving and sustainable community and economy that is a mix of tourism, agricultural and service based industries. The region does not need and in any case will not get any sustainable economic benefits from this proposed mine – so why would we take the risk for no sustainable benefit. Further based on the projections we understand that even the State Government is going to receive very marginal revenue from the project. If there is real economic benefit it must be going somewhere else – I guess to Posco in Korea. So not much upside for the community directly affected let alone to state government for a huge amount of risk (feels like betting on a Melbourne Cup winner with odds at \$1.05 for each dollar placed – no one would take that bet)
5. **Community Support** – it is abundantly clear that the majority if not the entire community is opposed to this proposal. Surely given the community is who must live with the mine is best placed to way up the pros and cons and have made their view abundantly clear.
6. **Mine Technology** – Hume Coal have been very vocal that this mine will use new technologies that will minimise impact, be more efficient and operate almost like it is not there! Of course this ignores the 6 story coal piles, the 24 by 7 operations, the light pollution and dust pollution. Also recently they determined to reorient the mine face away from the freeway “just in case” there was a problem (read explosion) it would be unlikely to impact the freeway. Surprisingly this does not provide me with a great deal of comfort over their so called new technology. Given all that is at stake surely this is not the place or time to be trying new technology. What if they get it wrong just like Adani did recently and has happened time and time again.

In summary there are many extremely compelling reasons that this proposal should be declined. Some of these focus on the direct community impacts (noise and air pollution and damage to the local economy and potentially the health of residents including people like myself and my family) while some are much more profound and wide ranging including the risk to Sydney's water catchment and the potential to containment a pristine and historically significant region of Australia. Overlay these many and significant risks with little to no benefits it seems absurd that we would even be considering this. This all boils down to Australia (Sydney and the southern Highlands communities) taking all the risks (which can endure for decades or longer) to help Posco make steel in Korea for their customers and for their benefit. This is very clear on their part as they are exporting their risks and environmental and social damage to gain the economic benefit for their them – surely we aren't going to allow that!

Regards,
Carl McGann

