

10/06/17

Re Hume Coal Project EIS 15_7172

I make this submission and I wish to express my considerable concern regarding this proposed project. I am strongly against it going ahead.

I have lived in the Southern Highlands for 14 years. I was attracted to the area because of the clean air, its peaceful rural nature, and the historic importance of the area. Berrima is the oldest area in the Southern Highlands and includes the oldest continually licenced pub in NSW dating back to the 1830's, besides the old Jail and Courthouse. I am concerned that many of the historic buildings in Berrima are sandstone and would become stained with coal dust as happened in the "Black country" in England. Some forty years after mining stopped in England many of the buildings still show signs of staining, although the grass is now green and not black.

I am also a member of the Berrima District Acclimatisation Society (BDAS). One of our long term goals has been to clean up the Wingercarribee River and introduce more native fish (not Carp) to the river under the dollar for dollar scheme run by the Department of Primary Industries and therefore attract more tourism. The location of the mine could well jeopardise this aim.

The Wingercarribee River also flows into the main Sydney Water catchment area and I do not believe that enough is going to be done by Hume Coal to stop underground water and contaminants ending up in the river from Oldbury Creek and therefore into the water of most Sydney residents.

Hume Coal claim that they will create 300 jobs, which is insignificant when one realises that there are 48,000 people living in the Wingercarribee area. I do not believe that we have people with the necessary skills to fill these jobs and that most of the job seekers will come from outside the area. This will mean there will be limited benefit to the local economy as most of the money will be spent outside the area.

I am concerned about the rail movements between the mine and Port Kembla. I understand these trains (8 movements per day) will be the largest, heaviest and longest trains using the line. Only in April 2017 a grain train became a runaway and disaster was only avoided because of quick thinking by rail employees. The Hume trains will be heavier and therefore have more momentum with more chance of them becoming deadly.

I am concerned that in the case of a disaster that POSCO the owners of Hume Coal will close and liquidate Hume Coal and walk away leaving the NSW Government and Wingercarribee Shire Council with a costly clean up. The only method I can see working is if a substantial bond (many hundreds of millions of dollars) being placed with the NSW government to cover this contingency and that any legal proceedings can then take place after the clean-up allowing immediate action.

Any small amount of royalties from the project I believe will go into general consolidated revenue of the NSW Government and will not necessarily be spent in the Wingercarribee area.

I have yet to meet anyone living the Wingercarribee area that is in favour of the proposed mine. In fact there are numerous people that have experienced considerable stress with regards to this proposal. I do not believe that there are enough benefits (if any) for the local community for this project to proceed.

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