

**HUME COAL PROJECT
SUBMISSION TO NSW GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT
FROM PATRICIA MANOLAS**

I am the co-owner, with Bruce McGowan, of a property located at 7665 Illawarra Highway, Sutton Forest NSW 2557. The Hume Coal permit extends under the property and beyond to Exeter. The southern boundary of the current Hume Coal project bordering the Illawarra Highway lies immediately opposite the northern boundary of our property. We have received formal advice from Hume Coal that the bore on our property will be affected by the current project.

I oppose the Hume Coal Project and request that the NSW Government does not approve the project and that it terminates the licence as soon as possible. My reasons are as follows:

Effect on the use of our property and the significant decrease in value of our property.

We purchased the property in 2008 in anticipation of retirement and specifically chose a 100 acre farm because we looked forward to eventually retiring and living in a beautiful area whilst engaging in a productive farming operation. We have a bull and 30 cows on and rear calves from birth. We could not run the farm without use of groundwater to satisfy the needs of the cattle.

The EIS prepared by Hume Coal confirms that the level of groundwater below the property will decline by 5-10 metres during the 19 year operation of the proposed mine. I am extremely sceptical that remedies proposed by Hume Coal will sufficiently guarantee water supply over the period – particularly whether their predictions are correct, what would happen if weather conditions worsen and what would happen if our bore runs dry with consequent loss of our cattle. The heavy handed actions taken so far by Hume Coal have shown their true colours including but not limited to purchasing properties by stealth, taking heavy handed legal actions hoping to intimidate landowners crush them financially. Hume Coal has done these things during a period when they have been trying to portray themselves as good citizens in the area. Instead they have demonstrated that they would be a strong and difficult company to deal with should they be given permission. They propose individual negotiations with landowners over water resources – it is not difficult to envisage that they would bully the landowners yet again.

Real estate agents have confirmed that property values in the areas covered by the mining permit have already decreased with many of the properties being unsaleable. Should the project be approved the value of our property will be severely decreased if not wiped out. It is neither fair nor reasonable for us to have to suffer this penalty at this time in our lives whilst a very large foreign owned company with no allegiance to our community makes profits from desecration of the community's resources and environment.

Socio-Economic Reasons

The Southern Highlands is region which has always attracted tourism from Sydney because of its beautiful rural beauty, its charming towns and villages, its heritage sites, its healthy climate and friendly atmosphere. I have great memories of coming to Moss Vale as a child and have returned as a result of those experiences. The area is unique, attracting not only the older generation but many of the younger generation who find that they can have a better lifestyle than in Sydney and who are developing businesses and raising families. Costs of housing are considerably lower, there is a wide range of very good schools, both primary and secondary, for their children's education, easy access to healthy outdoor activities, a more relaxed way of life in an integrated friendly community. The younger generation entrepreneurs are developing cafes and other tourist activities, gardening services, farm services and tradesmen services making a living not only for themselves but also for other younger people. This generation has no interest in working in a dying industry such as coal mining and certainly would not want their children to commence working in an industry with no future prospects.

The EIS paints a very biased picture of the region with flagrant misrepresentations eg minimising the number and nature of tourist activities. It limits its analysis to a very narrow cost / benefit analysis based on the benefits to the government from royalties and employment in the mine ignoring the other costs born by individual landowners and the community in general.

The EIS does not take into account the following costs:

- the negative affects on tourism and population growth , which will accrue from a polluting industry and its consequent addition to road and rail traffic congestion. I am sure that these impacts will be well documented in other objections.
- the fact that the majority of employment in the mine will be unattractive to locals and will have to be filled with shorter-term transient workers with no sense of local identity. On what basis does Hume state that most employees will be local – most do not want that work – how could Hume ensure that employees would be local – would they be able to layoff someone who moves outside the district? I ask the question – would you encourage your children to embark on a career in the coal industry? Why should it be attractive to the youth of the Southern Highlands?
- the decrease in property values affecting several hundreds of locals with consequent loss of local rates and taxes and social impact on these locals.
- the decrease in farming activities with consequent loss of flow-on local expenditure within the community for goods and services. It should not be presumed that the effect will only be limited to a few wealthy landowners – the demography of people attending anti-coal meetings includes many small farmers and commercial people with limited incomes and limited ability to withstand a decrease in their property value.

The EIS does not take into account the following benefits:

- The NSW government is expending extremely large sums to alleviate traffic congestion in Sydney both by infrastructure investment within the city and by promoting the development of Sydney towards the west and the south-west. Already significant developments of housing and service industries can be seen along the M31 corridor leading towards and beyond the Southern Highlands. Maintaining the Highlands as a beautiful residential and tourist area is commensurate with that development. An unsightly and polluting mine adjacent to the M31 extension is not consistent with rational development to the south-west.
- The NSW government recently announced measures costing over a billion dollars to assist first time home buyers – foregoing the much smaller royalties from the Hume Coal mine would be a very effective investment to attract additional first time buyers to the Southern Highlands and further ease the pressure on Sydney housing.

I believe that the assessment of the Hume Coal EIS should not be restricted to the narrow scope defined in the EIS but should take into account the wider costs on the community and impacts on the NSW government's plans for Sydney. Sydney has preserved the natural beauty of the harbour foreshore lands despite the fact that considerable profit could be gained from sale of that land. I contend that a similar policy should be adopted for the Southern Highlands and that its natural beauty and lack of pollution be preserved for the long-term benefit of the inhabitants of NSW and not for the short-term commercial benefit of an absentee foreign company with no long term commitment to NSW.

