

I am opposed to the Hume Coal Project proceeding and in consequence also strongly oppose the Berrima Rail Project being given any consideration.

I have lived in the Southern Highlands, on the Illawarra Highlands alongside the railway line connecting Moss Vale to the coast, for over thirty years. In this time I have observed the growth in the Southern Highlands of agriculture, in particular viticulture, the growth of the tourist industry, the retirement industry and, over the past fifteen years, the expansion of residential growth as young families take advantage of a clean environment, lower property prices and proximity to Sydney, Wollongong, Campbelltown and Canberra for employment and higher educational opportunities. It is inconceivable that the NSW government is prepared to jeopardise the health, well-being, and existing economic opportunities of the area by approving a Korean-based coal mining development of low quality coal that will almost certainly be unmarketable in a few years, let alone 23 years as alternative sources of renewable energy come on line. In such an event if (and when) the Hume Coal Project becomes unviable it is likely to be abandoned, the damage to water, environment, economy etc. having been done. I have already argued my position on the Hume Coal Project, its viability, risk to the environment including ground and surface water, the economy, local heritage and ultimate rehabilitation in my submission SSD7172.

Hume Coal acknowledges that there will be additional rail traffic of longer than the current 32+ container carriages on the line passing my property down the escarpment to Port Kembla. For me this will represent additional delays at level crossings on Sheepwash Road and Robertson with the longer, more frequent trains. For my neighbours with properties on the Illawarra Highway with unprotected rail crossings they will be incurring a significant additional risk with the increasing volume of rail traffic. Diesel emissions and the uncertainty of additional coal dust are of further concern for their impacts on air and ground quality.

The uncertainty surrounding the Hume Coal and Berrima Rail Projects is causing significant stress throughout the Southern Highlands, for property owners with respect to their surface and ground water, for myself with respect to the rail impacts and my own ground water bore, and for all Highlanders the risks to air, rivers and streams from pollution and potential impacts to their property values, economic, social and mental health. There is no justification for either the Hume Coal or the Berrima Rail Project proceeding.

Mim Merrick

June, 2017