

NSW Department of Planning

RE: Hume Coal project (SSD7172) & Berrima Rail project (SSD7171)

I support the Hume Coal project (SSD7172) and the Berrima Rail project (SSD7171)

Water (Ground and Surface)

Why is it that the State does not regulate and monitor water on farms as you would at a mine site. Why aren't water bores monitored for use and the primary producers pay for the water that they use. They are the first to cry out in the wilderness when someone wants to use their precious resource. They need to learn that the water resources in this State belong to the State and the people of the State should be getting their fair share of its return.

Tax deductions should be reassessed for farmers to ensure that benefits don't go to unprofitable farms. People who live on the water at Sydney Harbour shouldn't be given assistance by taxpayers to develop unprofitable farms.

My understanding is that Hume Coal currently have licences for over 60% of their water requirements during mining. That is they are entitled to use this water. If the mine is approved they say they'll have 100% of all licences required. Now no-one knows if that's right or not, but having 60% of their requirements at this time seems a bloody big commitment to me.

As an underground miner I am aware that the proposed mining system has forgone Longwall Mining design to put in place a system that will not cause caving or failure of the overlying strata. This is critical to protect the aquifer – this is a tremendous concession to the local farming community and will protect the environment.

The EIS details the Make Good policies and this seems a reasonable attempt to make up for impact that the mine might/will cause as a result of drawdown into the mine. Knowing the area I am aware that it gets nearly a metre of rainfall every year. Even in drought conditions it still rains an abundant amount of water. Most farmers actively use their dams for water and don't actively rely on water bores.

Community Impacts

I understand there is some significant opposition to the Project and that the mine will genuinely impact in minor ways to the community. I hate having to wait at traffic lights and rail crossings, but I don't go ballistic if a grain train holds me up – as I understand this is people's livelihoods. People need to develop some patience and appreciation that we all have to live in society, not just one isolated place by themselves. No man is an island, unless they have a harbour side villa and an overseas mansion.

Environmental Impacts

The EIS goes into great detail about the local environment and the impact of the mine on existing landscape, flora and fauna. It is a very creditable review. But let's be realistic, this area is not pristine – it may have been once upon a time prior to farming. But today the place is denuded of the vast majority of original native species, both fauna and flora - cleared for farming purposes. With exotic species (in some cases – pest species) rows of windbreaks. While I have no problem with farming, some people think that by digging up a grass paddock and putting a tunnel in, is destroying the pristine environment and the planet. These people need to get a good grasp on reality.

Economics

I don't understand economics, but it seems to me that at producing 3Mtpa and half of that is coking coal at a conservative estimate of \$100 a tonne is going to generate some significant revenue, add together the

secondary product value and you'd have to be around \$250M pa. Payback for the mine in a comparatively short period of the mines life with the larger profits over the longer term of the mines life. It sounds doable to me. But the important thing is that the mine will contribute to the royalties of the State Government – in the budget just this week the treasurer is actually predicting increases in royalties. Mining royalties represent the fourth largest source of revenue for the State – after Taxes, GST and Gambling!

Health Impacts

The impacts of coal dust doesn't seem to have ever been raised in this region before, despite mining at Tahmoor Colliery and using the existing rail line to Moss Vale and Port Kembla. No one at Robertson is up in arms about it. All of that coal is carried in uncovered wagons. Hume Coal plan to put their coal in covered wagons. I am not Einstein, but it seems to me that this has to be better than the existing system that no one here seems to be complaining about. Anyone who compares this mine proposal to the Hunter Vale needs to stop. It simply isn't a reasonable comparison and highlights how misguided they are with their arguments.

Noise – don't people realise that the Hume Highway is adjacent to the proposed mine site. There are some 25,000 movements along this artery each and every day – both ways. Give me a break. Normal restrictions of noise and noise monitoring of mine sites will ensure adequate controls. I want to see noise monitoring and dust monitoring placed on every farm that ploughs a field. I want to see every house in the area have to have their fire places removed. If people are genuine about dust as a health issue let's get rid of open fires and stop burn offs on farms - permanently.

Climate Change

I don't really understand the impacts of Climate Change – I haven't done much reading on it. But what I tend to get is news from the radio, tv and papers. While I read widely I don't know what to believe. Because one thing I do know is that people throw their own spin into news reports. I no longer have the same faith that I once had in the media and yet the media are the only ones I hear anything about climate change from. I don't personally know anyone that has read the Climate Change Report from the UN or whatever it is. But one thing I do know from mining is that Methane (CH₄) is 25 times worse than Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). And Nitrous Oxides are 300 times worse than Carbon Dioxides yet no-one seems to mention them. I don't understand why that is. I do know that the vast majority of methane and nitrous oxides come from farming and land clearing. So I'm not convinced that a mine producing coal is going to add all that much in the scheme of things to the overall climate change issue – if there is one.

Cattle produce 1000 times more CH₄ than human beings do. There are also 1 billion cattle on the planet. By comparison coal mines produce very little methane when compared to cattle. Should we look at stopping the production of meat in this country?

Heritage

I can understand why people don't want to see change and why they don't want what they perceive to be a dirty bloody coal mine in their own back yards. But the EIS clearly outlines that this will not impact upon the local towns. The centre of Berrima is about 4km away (Google Earth is a great tool to use!) from the train loading facilities. Berrima is a pleasant enough place, it does have some attractive buildings and again some very big pest pine trees. The town acts as if the mine is going to be built down the main street.

The EIS identifies that the infrastructure is going to be in keeping with the existing industrial corridor already present in Moss Vale. It is to the west of the Hume Highway. Visual impacts are going to be limited.

People

The mine will genuinely impact some people in close proximity to the mine. I feel sorry for them and hope that the government and the company treat them well and make sure they can do all they can to ensure that their inconvenience is minimised for the benefit of nearly 300 people who would take up full time employment at the mine.

What a selfish bunch these people must be.

You will have noticed I have been a little cynical in places – it's only been used in an attempt to highlight the absolute hypocrisy of some people who have half a dozen cars and tractors but refuse to acknowledge that the world still needs coking coal to produce steel to produce wind mills and even to produce solar panels.

I support a sensible approach and the green light for rational utilisation of the States resources – all of them. I say give the mine a go. Give 300 jobs to locals and lets all look for more opportunities to develop the nation and its people.