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Date: 27/06/2017

### **HUME COAL PROJECT EIS SSD 15\_7172**

I strongly object to the underground coal mine proposed by Hume Coal in the Southern Highlands of NSW and I urge the government to reject this project for the following reasons.

#### Water Degradation

- The mine plans to release waste water directly into the local creeks, which eventually flow into Warragamba Dam with potential contaminated risks.
- If the mine proceeds the main aquifer for the Southern Highlands will be drained and more than 90 water bores, primarily used for agriculture, will be left totally or partially dry for decades as acknowledged in the EIS.
- The government cannot allow the groundwater reserves of this area and agricultural livelihoods to be destroyed.
- There is a high risk that many of the beautiful, old trees that the Highlands is famous for will suffer or die. When the water is drained from the aquifer the general water table in the area will be lowered, especially in the Berrima and Sutton Forest areas. During our hot, dry summers the trees rely on the deep groundwater reserves to survive, and if these are depleted or non-existent many will be severely stressed or die. We just can't risk this happening.

#### Noise, Dust, Air Quality and Light-Spill from the Mine Site

- Coal dust from the stockpiles and trains will be deposited over large areas of the Highlands by the very strong to gale force winds from the west to southwest in winter and northwest in summer. These winds will cover the beautiful villages and towns (and their gardens) such as Berrima, Bowral, Moss Vale and Bundanoon in ugly, black coal dust.
- Coal dust and diesel emissions from the mine site and trains carried by the winds will be in the air for everyone to breathe, causing respiratory problems especially in those people with asthma, children and elderly people. The Highlands has attracted large numbers of retirees so a large proportion of the local population will be at risk.
- Noise and light-spill from the mine will impact local villages, particularly Medway, New Berrima and Berrima.

#### Damage to Southern Highlands Economy and Employment

- The economy of the Southern Highlands is very much dependent on tourism. People visit because they love the clean air, peace and quiet, quaint and historic villages and the beautiful trees and gardens. Where these things are adversely affected by this mine, through the dust, the extra trains, the ugly mine itself and dying trees visitors will go elsewhere. Thousands of people are employed by businesses which directly and indirectly service the people who come to visit the Highlands. If visitors stop coming these businesses will not survive.
- The number of local jobs that are likely to be lost in the tourism and agricultural areas far exceeds any local jobs that the mine might create in the short term.

#### Poor Economic Return to NSW

- The proposed mine is relatively small and costly to operate due to the groundwater issues, the limited amount of coal that will be extracted and the fact that around half the coal is cheap, thermal grade coal. The claimed royalties that the state would receive are tiny compared with the state's expenditure. It is not worth subjecting the Southern Highlands to all the adverse environmental and economic risks for such a pitiful return.