

Submission to Dept Planning & Environment  
By Hugh Farrimond 27 June 2017

## HUME COAL Project EIS.SSD 7172

As a resident of Berrima I strongly object to the proposal by POSCO (Hume Coal) to mine coal under the project ident shown above, for the following reasons:

- Noise
- Air pollution
- Economics
- Water
- Employment

Each reason is explained below.

### NOISE

The 8 trains per day or one every 3 hours for the next 20 years is not something to which I look forward as a resident of Berrima. Whilst the EIS says otherwise I expect that I will be able to hear train movements in the “silent hours” (10pm-5am)

Loading operations are of concern. Whilst the EIS states the loading dock is on an incline to ensure the wagons remain in tension, this is considered idealistic and I expect a lot of noise in the loading process particularly engine power up after the fill of each wagon.

I expect a lot of noise from the returning empty trains on the descent from the Old Hume Highway overpass; the wagon connections will be in tension on the climb up to the overpass but not so on the descent.

### AIR POLLUTION

The stockpiles of coal will present an airborne dust hazard to Berrima, New Berrima and beyond. Despite the claim of Hume Coal that the stockpiles will receive some magic treatment to contain dust I’m skeptical.

The dust will not only be a nuisance, covering washing, window sills, roofs and gutters but a potential hazard to health.

### ECONOMICS

Hume Coal have advised that the coal will be extracted in a manner that will have ‘negligible subsidence impacts’. The method has been identified as “Pine Feather” in previous documentation; the term is not used in the EIS but the method is sketched in the same manner as original documentation. The extraction rate has been cited at less than 40%, so more than 60% of the available coal will be left in the ground.

In other Australian underground coal mines, extraction methods are generally “longwall” or “room and pillar”.

These methods generally result in extraction rates between 60 to 90% of available coal. But some of these mines have closed.

So if some other NSW based coalmines have difficulty making a profit at extraction rates of over 60% I wonder at the economics of this proposed coal mine. I’m not

concerned with the profitability of the mine to the company but with the return to the public purse. I envisage Hume Coal will in time seek to increase the rate of extraction.

Furthermore, the coal that will be left in the ground will be contaminated and possibly unusable.

Whilst coal is not a popular energy resource today it may be required in the future. Destroying this resource now is not considered prudent.

## WATER

The predicted draw down of the existing water table by more than 2 metres is considered of utmost importance.

The following statement at clause ES4.1.2 of the EIS is considered arrogant. "Predicted impacts to other groundwater users (including groundwater dependant (SIC) ecosystems, watercourses, drainage lines, and swamps that receive baseflow) have been assessed as insignificant".

A lowering of the water table is a change in the natural conditions and predicted to occur for more than 20 years; this must have surface affects. I envisage less water availability to surface vegetation will affect the vegetation that feeds us, and feeds our animals.

I'm disturbed that the environment is not given more respect in the EIS; bland, unsupported statements such as "assessed as insignificant" are in my opinion, contemptible. I'm sure similar conditions have occurred in the past and have been researched. Had the draw down been "insignificant" the example(s) would have been presented. The absence of examples indicates to me the research has proved negative.

The argument presented by Hume that this project will satisfy the nil or beneficial affects requirement of the Federal Government is considered "smoke and mirrors".

## EMPLOYMENT

The claim by Hume Coal that 300 to 400 full time jobs will be created ignores the affect a coal mine will have on other industries in the area.

I anticipate that employment rates in our existing industries (hospitality, entertainment, agriculture, tourism and so on) would gradually fall if the coal mine was approved.

I urge the NSW State Government to reject the proposal by Hume Coal to construct a coal mine in the Southern Highlands and in doing so legislate against any further attempts to mine coal in this area.