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Executive Director Resources Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney 2001

26 June 2017

**Submission in Opposition to the Proposed Hume Coal Mine and
Construction/Expansion of the Railway - SSD 7172 Mine and SSD 7171
Berrima Rail Extension**

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are residents of Berrima and do not agree that a rural area in the Southern Highlands with established agriculture and tourism businesses should be potentially damaged due to the impact that the proposed construction of the Hume Coal mine could make on the water table.

I (Grant) have also stood on the Battle for Berrima stand in both Berrima and Bowral and spoken to people both young and old. The overriding impression I have been given is that people are very worried about the impact the Hume Coal Mine will have on water security in the Southern Highlands. On Sunday the 25th June I counted over 200 signed submissions against the Coal project collected from 9.30am -12.30pm. That is over 60 per hour or an average of 1 signed submission very minute. I understand that this level of support has been replicated every time concerned residents like myself take the time and trouble to speak to people directly. It is our understanding that over 10,000 signed submissions also support the rejection of the construction and operation of the Hume Coal Mine and Railway.

Impact Hume Coal Mine will have on Short Term Accommodation in Southern Highlands

We purchased a property in Berrima so that when retired we could derive additional income by renting out part of our house for short term holiday accommodation. It is important for you to know why we chose Berrima. In addition to the area being of outstanding natural beauty, we recognized that there is a growing tourism industry based on the Southern Highlands becoming a wedding venue and an expanding food and wine destination. For example the Bendooley Estate hosts between 2-3 Weddings every weekend and we accommodate some of their guests. Berrima Village is busy every weekend with a constant flow of visitors. We are extremely concerned that this growing tourism industry will be affected by the construction and operation of a coal mine. We have read the submission from Hume Coal and they have significantly understated the amount of accommodation available, especially the type of short term holiday accommodation provided by local people like ourselves.

1. <https://www.stayz.com.au/accommodation/nsw/southern-highlands>
2. <https://www.stayz.com.au/accommodation/nsw/southern-highlands/berrima>
3. <https://www.wotif.com/Hotel-Search?destination=Southern+Highlands,+New+South+Wales,+Australia&startDate=04/07/2017&endDate=06/07/2017&adults=2®ionId=6049720>
4. <https://www.bookeasy.com.au/website/images/southernhighlands/DSH%20planner%202017%20MAPS.pdf>

Note : Links above were created on 26 June 2017

Link 1 above identifies over 300 properties available for short stay holiday accommodation in the Southern Highlands on the Stayz website.

Link 2 identifies over 58 properties available for short stay holiday accommodation in Berrima on the Stayz website. Many are operated privately like ours.

Link 3 identifies properties 98 available for short stay holiday accommodation in the Southern Highlands on the Wotif website. This offers Motel and Bed and Breakfast (not usually private holiday accommodation like ours). Many of these are located in the Bowral/Mittagong/Moss Vale and Berrima areas.

Link 4 is the Official Tourist Information Centre called Destination NSW Web site. Here there are over 30 properties listed providing accommodation (Hillside Cottage is ours). All like ourselves pay to advertise in this publication (unlike Stayz where listings are free).

Additional reasons why the Hume Coal Mine should not be constructed and operated in the Southern Highlands:

1. Water. It is our understanding that the water aquifer is going to be punctured and the geology reports suggest that remedial works will be required to prevent water contamination. We simply cannot grasp how a geologist, hired by, Hume Coal can guarantee that this will not have a lasting and detrimental impact on the water table in the Southern Highlands. Nothing that we have read convinces us that there will not be significant long term detrimental implications. Should we really be taking what we and many people believe is a gamble with our water security?

The Hume Coal Mining proposal is located within the Sydney Water Catchment, which services the Sydney metropolitan basin. Water NSW rules require that "Developments in the Sydney drinking water catchment must have a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality".

It is our understanding that the Hume Coal Mine proposal will have a range of impacts including:

- a. 93 Bores on 71 properties will be affected by water drawdown. The impact on bores will remain for between 36 to 65 years, after mining ceases. (ES4.1.2)
- b. It is expected that some bores affected may never fully recover. Treatment and release into Oldbury Creek of surplus onsite mining water in years when above average rain falls. (ES4.1.1)
- c. If there is any discharge into the surface or ground water systems in the Sydney water Catchment, will Hume Coal guarantee that the development has either a neutral or beneficial impact on water quality".
- d. Water used to wash coal and residual "spoil", which will be pumped back underground into mine voids, which has the potential to impact groundwater systems. ES41.1.1

In addition we have a water well on our property that dates back to 1840. Will this be affected by the lowering of the water table?

2. Poor Economic Return

It is our understanding that the proposal by Hume Coal represents a poor economic return and poor economic incremental benefit for NSW in 2016 dollars for the 19 years of operation of only approx. \$15 million per annum. (EIS Appendix Q page 40)

We have been informed by B4Berrima (see their web site www.battle4berrima.com.au) that this amount would provide less than three days of the total revenue required to operate Sydney trains (\$6.13 million per day average Sydney Trains Annual report 2014)

Again, we are disappointed that Hume Coal have underestimated the amount of holiday accommodation provided in the Southern Highlands. Such accommodation significantly contributes to the local economy. We use the services of tradesmen (electricians/plumbers), cleaners and laundries to maintain our property as an accommodation venue. In addition, by enabling people to stay in the Southern Highlands, this allows tourists to spend in shops and restaurants. We would suggest that many of the other properties offering holiday accommodation provide similar local jobs.

3. Is the quality of Coal sustainable for high quality coking coal extraction ?

It is our understanding that Hume Coal will mine both coking coal (55%) and lower quality Thermal coal (45%)

Despite saying for more than two years that the purpose of the proposed mine is to obtain high quality coking coal for overseas export and offshore production of steel, the Hume Coal EIS confirms that the company is now seeking to extract thermal coal for sale. The EIS also confirms that Hume Coal seeks to sell the thermal coal on undisclosed local and other markets.

I (Grant) stood on a Battle for Berrima stand in Bowral on Sunday 4th of June and was approached by a gentleman (name can be provided) who has been involved in mining in the Southern Highlands ever since his Welsh coal mining family emigrated here over 100 years ago. He was a chemical engineer and stated that he had tested the quality of the coal for previous companies considering mining in this area and he said it was uneconomic to continue mining in this area including the site of Hume Coals proposed mine. We suggest further research is undertaken to confirm or reject this.

4. Berrima Rail Project.

We understand that the expansion of the rail link will create additional traffic in the area and affect in particular Robertson and the school which is in close proximity.

Summary

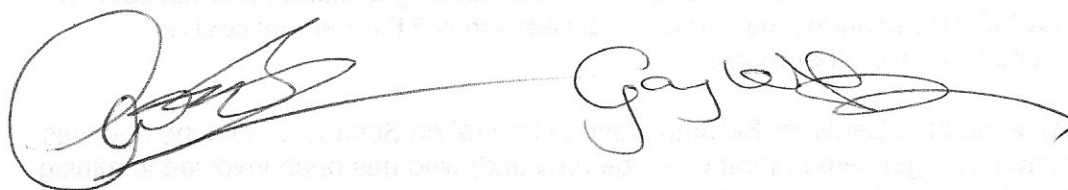
As concerned residents, we are extremely worried about the impact that the Hume Coal Mine will have on the Southern Highlands.

We contest the following justifications in the Hume Coal EIS and request further investigations are made:

1. Water Security. Can your planning committee guarantee that the water table will not be detrimentally compromised affecting our drinking water and agriculture? Would you be prepared in the future to stand behind this decision should it be proved that water security has been compromised by the construction and operation of the Hume Coal Mine?
2. Economic Return (1). Hume Coal have significantly understated the current economic return generated in the Southern Highlands by Tourism.
3. Economic Return (2). Will the operation of the Hume Coal Mine provide significant additional economic benefit to NSW in terms of revenue from Coal extraction and can your planning committee guarantee that jobs dependent on the tourism industry will not be affected by the construction and operation of the Hume Coal Mine?

We hope that this submission along with all the people I (Grant) personally spoke to whilst standing on the Battle 4 Berrima stand will encourage you to reject the Hume Coal Mine proposal.

Kind regards

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Grant' and the signature on the right is 'Gayle'. They are connected by a long horizontal line.

Grant and Gayle Mason