

Submission : From - Medway road Medway

Against the Hume Coal Project

June 2017

Intro:

Our property is listed on the EIS as Hume coal land.

This is incorrect. We are extremely concerned and upset at this critical error.

We own the land and have lived here since 1998. We have built and established a home and garden. We have a beautiful place to live that we are very proud of, surrounded by friends and family.

Our property has been given no consideration in the EIS in regard to noise, visual, dust or any other direct impact.

We have been advised that Hume Coal were to contact the Dept. of Planning and Environment, to notify them of their error and to reinstate our property correctly in their modelling.

We have requested notification of this correction and as yet have received no such communication.

The effect that this has had on us as a family in relation to our family, friends and neighbours cannot be understated.

The EIS had been made public with incorrect information in it regarding ownership of our land and we cannot help but wonder – what else have they got wrong?

Noise and Visual:

Our property has direct South and West boundaries with Hume Coal land.

Our property was originally part of "Evandale".

We will be able to see the coal towering stockpiles from our kitchen/living room window, directly south at a distance of 750 metres.



Picture: view from window looking South. Line indicates position & height of stockpile:

Noise & Visual cont.

Our neighbours to the East and North/East have voluntary acquisition noise level modelling. Our houses are 100 metres and 250 metres apart respectively. As explained previously, we are not listed on the EIS, so we can only presume that we would also be in this category.

We know we will be able to hear any noise clearly on any given day or night, good weather or bad. Rain, hail or shine.

We live here in the country where the air is clear and the acoustics are exceptional. With the lay of the land and the way all the small creeks converge into steep sandstone walls; combine to carry sound extremely well and unless you live here and experience this it is very hard to gauge. As a rooster crowing can be heard up to a kilometre away.

We live in a rural area where we live with seasonal, agricultural noise.

We are very concerned about the night noise as sound is so clear in the evenings and at night. These times are when we are outside enjoying our land, after work or sleeping safely in our beds. This project will be a 24/7 constant reminder that our lives have changed forever.

We know that the lighting used at night on this project will have a huge effect on us. The glory of the night sky with its everlasting stars are part of our life here.

A local property "Araluen" on the Eastern side of Hume Motor way 4.2 km directly south of our property holds several equestrian events each year. They use a speaker system to announce the event and call results etc throughout the day. We can clearly hear the detail of these events and this gives an indication of the way sound travels in our environment.

So we will summarise our noise concerns by using the words of a great Australian poet who loved the rural life;

Mr AB Patterson's 'Clancy of the Overflow' "and in place of lowing cattle, I can hear the fiendish rattle....."

Agricultural Outlook:

Much of the site that the mine covers is historic agricultural land. It has been improved and has fabulous stands of native vegetation and woodlands. The maze of creeks and streams with rocky outcrops are outstanding and irreplaceable. The birds and other native animals are in abundance and should be protected. Not covered with dust and have their songs drowned out with machine noise 24/7.

This will not be a farming / seasonal cycle. There will be no let up, no natural time to be left alone.

Two major concerns as direct neighbours are – bushfire and pest control. Our concern is that the footprint of the mine and related infrastructure will cover all of 'Mereworth' & the northern end of 'Evandale' and there will be no area of rural land left as it is now.

So many more important ways to use this land than cover it with ugly, noisy, non food producing infrastructure.

Dust – Health & Water:

As we have lived here since 1998, we have first hand experience with the extreme wind that can last for weeks. Some years are worse than others. But we always have wind!

The trees don't grow crooked out here because they were planted that way!

We have planted extensive tree laneways and we know how long these take to become established – at least ten to fifteen years to give any benefit. This timeline is only achieved with constant care, attention, replanting when needed and reviewing of planted areas and species used.

These winds will no doubt carry the dust and noise, clearly into our lives. The dust will coat our trees and garden. Our dam will be covered in a layer of dust that will be impossible to get rid of, sinking to the bottom to lay there.

We are extremely concerned about our water supply being contaminated with the dust and the chemicals used to suppress it.

We rely on rain water – we are not on town water.

Our water comes off our roof and is collected in a 100000 litre concrete underground tank.

We have seen the colour of the roofs, gardens, trees in Medway Village when the Berrima Colliery was operational.

There is no way that this will not happen with this project - no matter how it is spun in the EIS.

The water table is by all accounts the most precious natural asset we have here in the Southern Highlands. Our bore water has made our lives and our way of life possible. Our stock and gardens have relied on it over the years and we are very careful with it's use.

We understand that water belongs to everyone and therefore is worth the highest protection.

To see it disappear or be irreparably damaged for the future generations use is not what we stand for, as we believe the land should be improved to pass onto our children and their children's children.

Social - Economical - Community:

Our family company employs 6 full time local people.

Another 10 are employed as main contractors, who are all local – living in the Bowral, Moss Vale & Mittagong area.

All our 20+suppliers operate local businesses.

All have wives/partners and children who work locally and go to schools here in the Southern Highlands.

We all volunteer in our community, at our schools, we play sport, support our children in their many and varied lives.

The flow on affect of one family, one business should be greatly valued.

If this proposed coal mine goes ahead, we will not be able to continue to live as we wish and would have to question our future here in the Highlands.

The outcome of this, the ripple affect, is extensive.

As we can only put forward our own experience and try to relay our value in the community.

Social - Economical – Community cont.

The pressure and stress of planning and decision making without certainty are faced every day. We work under an unknown future with all our plans put on hold. We question any outlay of capital as our property will not return what we have put in if there is a coal mine next door. We question future business plans and have put all our home and land infrastructure and maintenance on hold.

We are trying to run a business without a clear future and have done so now for several years. We have no clear timeline as to when this proposed mine may or may not become a reality and no communication as to what can or will be done to support us.

Our own economic disadvantage will be realised if we were to sell our property.

***Our property has been valued recently (June 2017). It is highly valued and would sell directly with no concerns or issues. It would be highly sort after with the quality & assets being in high demand, as would be expected in this real estate market. This report also made very clear that :
"If the coal mine goes ahead our property will be unsaleable".
This is our reality.***

There are no jobs at this mine for our children on weekends or holidays. There are however jobs in our home town of Berrima at shops and bakeries & cafes.

We have friends and family visit the Highlands several times a year for various events and functions. They come to visit gardens & galleries, spend money shopping, to eat out at cafes, wineries and restaurants.

People visit the Highlands for many reasons, none of which have anything to do with a coal mine.

When so many coal mines are closing down in Australia, we question why a new mine, owned completely by overseas interests has any place in Australia's economy.

There seems to be very little financial gain in it for the government and future generations will suffer the effects on their water and landscape being permanently damaged.

Surely investment in new technology is the way of the future, not untried/unproven methods, mining for coal which will be shipped overseas.

In conclusion:

We thank you for this opportunity to respond to the EIS. We thank Clay Preshaw and Paul Freeman for their time to visit us on our property.

We hope that the correct decision for us, our friends, neighbours and most importantly - our community, will be made to NOT approve this project in any way or form.

Yours faithfully