



Attn: Executive Director,
Resource Assessments Department of Planning
And Environment,
GPO Box 39,
Sydney, NSW, 2001

This is a submission to the Hume Coal Project EIS SSD 7172 and the Berrima Rail project EIS SSD 7171

I am the farm/property manager on the Cherry Tree Hill property encompassing approximately 1500 acres, where we run almost 300 head of Angus cattle.

We are passionate about what we do and are committed to the future prosperity of our farm and its relationship with the Southern Highlands.

Vital to our success is

1/ Protecting the “Clean, Green and very special Southern Highlands” landscape. Our customers tell us they enjoy leaving the industrialisation of Sydney behind and traveling to what is a unique and very beautiful rural landscape.

2/ Protecting the unique village atmosphere of the highlands. Each village has its own character. Towns such as Berrima are especially significant in attracting tourists (over 200,000 p.a.) and have an important place in Australia’s history.

3/ Ensuring the availability of clean air and water.

Wingecarribee Council and the local business community have a plan for the ongoing economic development of the shire that capitalises on its existing attributes and the charm of the area. Coal Mining is not part of that plan and never will be.

The Hume Coal Project and Berrima Rail EIS highlight the very real weaknesses and risks in Hume’s proposal and these projects. The negative impacts of the mine and the rail extension will have significant and long lasting detrimental effects on the whole of the Highlands. The EIS is a sales document and maximises the benefits and minimises the negative impacts of the project whilst attempting to comply with the Department of Planning and Environment requirements.

Hume Coal argues that as the cement works exist there should be no problem in adding another very large industrial complex. The cement works started operation nearly 90 years ago in a very different time and philosophy on what is regarded as development and it never would be approved today.

Of particular concern are the following,

1 Water bores will be seriously compromised:

Hume admits that the project will seriously affect landowners water bores in the area above the mine.

In fact, the EIS says that 93 bores owned by 71 landowners (to which we are one that has been marked as being affected) will be affected with some bores drawn down by up to 80 m and the impact lasting for decades. Our experts expect the impact to be worse and more extensive. No guarantees have been issued by Hume Coal is it worth the risk? We do not think so.

2 Mine Waste Reinjection is a health hazard:

Hume plans to reinject the potentially toxic mine waste including the chemicals used in the coal washing process back into the mine, potentially polluting any groundwater in the aquifer above the mine. Any new water bores drilled after mining could be compromised. Once again Hume has issued no guarantees that a wider area will not be affected in fact they do not think this poses a problem at all!

3 Pollution of Local Rivers and Streams:

Hume claims that it will only need to pump mine water into Oldbury Creek (which will find its way into the Wingecarribee River) on rare occasions. It doesn't have a Water Treatment Plant in its plans so if they are wrong about the amount of water there is a serious risk of toxic mine waste water polluting the local river system which is part of the Sydney Water Catchment.

4 The project makes no economic sense:

Hume's economic model ignores the serious negative impacts on other local industries such as tourism, retail, accommodation, food and agriculture and the subsequent loss of local jobs while exaggerating the jobs that will be created. The project contributes very little to the NSW government by way of royalties.

5 Coal Dust is a very serious Health Hazard:

Dangerous coal dust can carry a long way in windy conditions that typically occur at certain times of the year in the Southern Highlands. Dust is also stirred up by passing coal trains. Dust and diesel emissions are a potential threat to human health particularly the elderly and our children. Sutton Forest, Berrima, Burradoo, Moss Vale, Bowral and Robertson could all be affected.

6 Property Values:

Local real estate agents confirm that the impact on property sales and values in the affected area is already being felt and believe that this will be exacerbated if a mine is built especially if Hume Coal have underestimated the negative impacts on the geology and groundwater. Properties which lose their water (and potentially their businesses) will be worst hit. Many of us use our properties as security for our business loans any reduction in property values may impact our ability to fund expansion plans and the ongoing investment in our businesses. This will result in a loss of employment opportunities.

7 Some of Australia's unique Colonial Heritage is under threat:

The Sutton Forest and Berrima areas contain some of Australia's most valuable and pristine colonial heritage assets including the Berrima Township. A coal mine 1250m from Berrima conservation zone will have a serious impact on the attractiveness of the area for tourism and heritage related activities on which the economy of the region depends.

The cultural heritage is also contained in the landscape and this is enshrined in the Wingecarribee shire council DCP for E3 zoned land. This development does not comply in any way.

8 Coal Trains cause disruption, noise and dust:

Hume plans to have 4 long heavy coal trains every day thundering 24/7 from Medway through Moss Vale and Robertson down to Pt Kembla and back, creating noise, dust and traffic disruption along the way. There are 17 level crossings, and numerous pedestrian crossings some used by school children with minimal safety fencing if any.

9 Real Social Impacts can already be seen:

Over six long years, the uncertainty caused by the prospect of a coal mine in the district has caused anxiety, depression and ill-health in the community. Hume's aggressive approach and lack of transparency exacerbated the situation. This will be made much worse if a mine is approved.

Summary

It is impossible for any person who has any regard for the unique Southern Highlands heritage, landscape and the region's future to support this weak, damaging and misguided proposal.

I urge the NSW Government to reject the proposals and arrange to have the license cancelled as soon as possible.

Signed,



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I have not made any reportable political donations

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