

SUBMISSION – HUME COAL PROJECT

PROPRIETOR

PROPERTY: GOLDEN VALE ROAD, SUTTON FOREST,

This submission is being made on behalf of the Proprietor of the abovementioned property, who wishes to remain anonymous. The Proprietor strongly objects to the Hume Coal Project.

The Hume Coal Project has been the subject of discussion in this area for some years and as far as can be told, all land owners and occupiers are opposed to the Project and in the view of the Proprietor, correctly so.

Apart from the obvious loss of privacy for all these landowners, the project itself will have a vastly negative effect on the whole Southern Highlands area and in particular the underground water table.

It is understood that Hume Coal holds an exploration licence which gives it the right to explore for coal on the land and they can drive their trucks and other equipment through the paddocks and gardens in this respect. A common view among the locals is that “it’s an appalling decision”.

The objections of the Proprietor to the Project include the following:

- If local residents and property owners wish to fight in legal terms Hume Coal, this will have a serious and negative social and mental health impact right through the community. Apart from the extreme financial cost of any proposed action, already there have been members of the local community with mental health issues which they believe are directly attributable to the stress of the Hume Coal Project and what they see as the “bullying ways” of Hume Coal to access their properties. The prospect of fighting Hume Coal in court with not only the stress of the litigation, but the financial stress it will bring is also a serious consideration particularly when, as in most court cases, no definite outcome can be predicted.
- If the Project proceeds it will clearly have a detrimental effect on the value of properties which will be significantly devalued. The Project cannot have any other effect.

- Much has been said about the implications to health if the Project goes ahead. The elderly, and many in this category reside in the area, and the young are more susceptible to respiratory problems from coal dust. The community has concerns that this will be a long term burden not only on the locals here, but on the health system generally from health issues arising from coal dust and/or contaminated water.
- The Southern Highlands is to a large extent a rural area and farmers have stressed all along problems that will be caused by the long term impact on their bore water which in time will dry up leaving them with no ability to irrigate, provide water for livestock and the like. This prospect is a reality.
- The environment, a much bandied word at the moment. Apart from the problems of “climate change” and whatever impact that might have in the area, the Project will bring its own problems. The mine will fill with water which, as has happened in the past in other areas, will be dumped into the nearest river part of which flows along the boundary of the land owned by the Proprietor. This will cause contamination by toxic metals in water which make up the local towns’ water supply back up system. Much of the toxic coal waste and contaminated water will end up penetrating the aquifer.
- Safety issues. There are significant concerns in the area around the arrival of many large trucks that will be used in the local area along small local roads, coal trains and the general impact on the land and environment.
- While Proprietor does not pretend to be an expert, it appears quite clear that the Environmental Impact Study, lodged by Hume Coal, has many flaws in its findings and experts have been seen to say it is mathematically and scientifically impossible to do what Hume Coal proposed to do without the associated problems which have been listed above.
- The entire project would be catastrophic for the Southern Highlands district. Even back to its formation, the Southern Highlands has been seen not only as a wonderful peaceful and rural place to live, but a place where people from outside that area, particularly Sydney and Canberra, can visit for a holiday or a weekend and enjoy the calm and peaceful ambience of the area. If the Project proceeds, this “ambience” will be lost.

To repeat, the Proprietor strongly opposed the Project.