

This is a submission to the Hume Coal Project SSD 7171

I object to this project and recommend that it be rejected.

The scope of the EIS is inadequate as the Hume Coal Project significantly impacts the Berrima branch line. As the Tahmoor mine will now operate into the future, extra coal trains from Hume will double the amount of rail traffic on the Unanderra line.

A GRADE SEPARATION has been proposed for the Old Hume Highway, however the Suttor Road in Moss Vale, Sheepwash Road and Illawarra Highway crossings are ignored. The latter two crossings experience high levels of traffic on the weekday mornings and afternoons and also on weekends. The increase in rail traffic at these crossings will present an unacceptable risk to public safety and also to rail staff. Furthermore the risks are not confined to road users, pedestrians will be increasingly vulnerable particularly in Moss Vale and Robertson.

The rail line runs about 30 metres behind Robertson Primary School. The increase in rail traffic, the increase in noise pollution and the coal dust sweeping off the train will pose an absolutely unnecessary and unacceptable risk to both students and staff at that school.

The EIS and DA lodged by Hume Coal in respect to the Berrima Rail Project indicate that there will be increased traffic delays at level crossings (ES3.3) The route of the 4 daily coal trains out from the mine and back to the mine, pass through 17 level crossings. These extra trains will add an extra 24 minutes of closures at each of these level crossings, each and every day of the week. Apart from manifesting as a massive inconvenience to the general public, this will have an unacceptable impact on the safe passage of emergency vehicles including the police, ambulances and fire brigade. Yet another undesirable consequence.

As it is, commuters using the Southern Highlands line are already inconvenienced by delays caused by prioritising goods trains over commuter trains. If this project is approved, this inconvenience will deepen and as a consequence it will have a massively disruptive impact on the both regular and the occasional users of the Southern Highlands line. It is no secret that the NSW State government is committed to encouraging commuters to move off the road and on to public transport and approval of the mine and rail link will have a counter intuitive effect on this worthy goal.

I ask that the NSW State Government reject this project

Dr Gerard Brophy