

My wife and I are the owners of Mount Ashby Estate situated on the Nowra Road approximately 4 kilometres east of Moss Vale. The property is on land that was part of the original grant to the Throsby family in the early 1800s

Mount Ashby Estate is a boutique Vineyard and includes a tasting area and restaurant with approximately 100000 visitations annually. We have owned the property since 1999 and have been involved with local tourism since we opened in 2006. Our property consists of 100 acres with extensive grazing and a carrying capacity of 60 head. Since inception it has supported dairy cattle in conjunction with a dairy farm adjacent.

Water.

We are reliant on bore water and run off into our dams for stock and domestic use. Any disruption to the underground water supply would be catastrophic to our business and the several like businesses in the area as would any pollution caused by coal dust from the rail lines that are only 2 kilometres North of our property. In addition the potential for diesel emissions, noise pollution from trains and the washery and associated equipment above ground would be an absolute blight on the Southern Highlands as a tourist destination in NSW.

Tourism

Tourism is a major part of the local Southern Highlands economy employing an ever increasing number of local people particularly young people. The industry has flourished in the last 10 years as a direct result of

- The area being considered a clean green area
- Its proximity being 1 ½ hours from both Sydney and Canberra
- The influx of new residents escaping the hassle of an ever congested and polluted Sydney
- The increased development of tourist attractions. There are now over 70 vineyards in the region supported by an ever increasing number of cafes and restaurants
- The popularity of the area for functions and weddings particularly larger weddings for over 100 guests situated in a clean green rural environment.
- The attraction of the villages in the area which have retained their historic charm protected by local council heritage rules. These villages include Bundanoon, Burrawang and in particular Berrima which will be severely affected by any coal mine and associated washery.

Economic Return, Project Viability and Employment

I am a qualified Chartered Accountant with a background in banking and finance. In this capacity I had the opportunity to be involved in evaluating several mining projects and in particular coal mining projects. The economics of this proposed mine and washery quite frankly are ridiculous both in the current world environment and even a much more attractive environment should world coal prices change for the better.

There are several more attractive coal projects much more attractive and less environmentally sensitive than this one so why is Possco pursuing this?

It provides very little return to the State Government and any return is negated by the potential damage done to the local economy.

The employment estimations in the EIS are flawed and any local employment in the project is likely to be temporary during construction and will certainly have an adverse effect on local employment in Tourism both in the short and long term. Tourism is our largest employer in the Wingecarribee Shire and in particular Berrima which will be severely affected.

Coal and Diesel Omissions

It is beyond doubt and a proven fact that coal is a major contributor to global warming and is a serious polluter. This is both in the mining process and when used as a fuel both in power supply and industry. The coal dust, diesel emissions from the mining and coal transport are a serious pollutant not only in the air but on the ground and will affect a rural area abundant in cattle particularly dairy cattle as well as sheep, equine and other species. Only 4 kilometres from the proposed mine is one of the largest cattle sale yards south of Sydney which has only recently been completed. It is highly likely this cattle sale yard will have to be closed should the mine and washery proceed due to the pollution impact.

This is a flawed proposal with major catastrophic environmental impacts and I urge the Government to reject this project.

Signed