



June 30th 2017

To whom it may concern

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the site on which this mine is proposed to be built, the Gundangara clan, and pay respects to their elders past and present.

We are a volunteer run collective writing to express our opposition to an underground coal mine in the Southern Highlands, NSW. We stand in solidarity with traditional owners, farmers and communities who already and consistently opposed this destructive mine throughout the planning and consultation process.

We will support the community to take whatever steps necessary to prevent this mine for several reasons:

Community Opposition

An April 2017 independent Galaxy Research poll found support for the coal mine among Wingecarribee Shire residents is just 18%. A clear majority oppose the proposed mine and more than seven in ten people are concerned about its impact on water supply and purity (Ref: <http://www.medianet.com.au/releases/133574/>, accessed 27 June 2017).

Climate Change Impacts

Australia has signed onto the Paris Climate Agreement which aims to limit global warming/climate change to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Burning thermal coal for energy production has been identified as a leading cause of anthropogenic climate change by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change along with many leading scientists. When Hume Coal project was first proposed, they promoted the extraction of high quality metallurgical coal. However, they have now announced that the coal produced will be almost 50% thermal.

Economic factors

This mine joins most new fossil fuel infrastructure in becoming a white elephant - an expensive exercise with a very short shelf life. A new report by The Australia Institute found

that Hume Coal's mine could damage the economy of the Southern Highlands, which is diverse, heavily reliant on groundwater, and relies upon tourism, agriculture and manufacturing, not coal. The report found that uncertainty around the mine is already reducing business investment. (Ref:

<http://www.tai.org.au/sites/default/files/P226%20For%20Hume%20the%20bell%20tolls%20-%20Southern%20Highlands%20business%20case%20studies%20FINAL.pdf>, accessed 27 June 2017).

Australia must begin a gradual and socially just phase out of existing coal infrastructure as soon as possible if we are to meet our international obligations. Beginning the transitioning immediately to 100% renewable energy is necessary and technologically feasible - and is becoming politically more feasible as the impacts of climate change continue to take hold. We have seen that in the strong growth in renewable energy take up worldwide, and in the setting of higher state based renewable energy targets in Australia.

POSCO fails NSW's Mining Act

Under the NSW Mining Act, a proponent must be 'fit and proper' to hold a mining right. Coal Free Southern Highlands has serious concerns about the corporate record of POSCO, the 100% owner of the Hume Coal project. POSCO has an appalling international track record for corruption, environmental destruction and/or human rights abuse which is well documented in countries including India, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Vietnam and West Papua.

Water Impacts

Hume Coal admits that the mine will affect the area's ground water - as the driest inhabited continent in the world, Australia must do everything we can to protect our groundwater supply. By Hume Coal's own admittance groundwater will be impacted and more than 70 properties (over 90 bores) will suffer water loss. Some will be drawn down by up to 80 metres. Their estimates foresee groundwater recharge taking 100 years after mine closure.

Toxic mine waste water is a pollution risk to the local river system which is part of the Sydney drinking water catchment. All wastewater will be stored and then pumped (along with waste rock and ash) underground into mine cavities and sealed. This process poses risk to surface water should holding dams burst and waste make its way into creeks. It also poses future threats to groundwater as the cement plugs will eventually corrode or crack due to natural processes.

Ecological Impacts

Hume plans to mine under parts of Belangalo State Forest, through to rich farm lands of Sutton Forest. The planned mining activity area includes transitional shale forests, which have been listed with Federal Government as critically endangered ecological communities.

A desktop review of Hume Coal's own information shows little or no information about how groundwater loss will impact on these ecological communities, and no indication of baseline data nor plan for ongoing monitoring.

Social and Community Impacts

It will increase the number of Fly-In-Fly-Out jobs which create social and economic disequilibrium. While Hume Coal is promoting 300 jobs for locals, these workers will require high skill set. With so many coal mines winding down in NSW, there are many miners now and soon to be out of work who will be the ones to take the positions. There will be no new jobs created to help battle unemployment, and plenty of existing jobs at stake due to the impact of mining activities on groundwater and land use.

Hume proposes that employees can be housed in existing hotels and accommodation. This is a direct threat to the booming tourism industry and wedding industries already established within the beautiful Southern Highlands.

We urge the Government to reject this project and protect the Southern Highlands, by supporting a vision for a sustainable and coal-free future for this region. Thank you for considering this submission.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions about its content .

Sincerely,

The Quit Coal Collective