

SUBMISSION – HUME COAL PROJECT SSD7172

As a long term resident of the Southern Highlands district, currently living in Bowral, I am extremely concerned about the adverse impact of the proposed Hume Coal Project.

The claimed benefits of employment and revenue to the NSW Government are dwarfed by the potential damage to the local economy and the health and wellbeing of residents. The Project should not be approved. These are my concerns:

Water

The Hume Coal Project is wholly within the Sydney water catchment which provides water to millions of people. Under Water NSW rules, developments in the Sydney drinking water catchment must have a *neutral or beneficial effect on water quality*.

The EIS makes no valid claims that the Hume Coal Project will have neutral or beneficial effect on surface water quality. On the contrary, it refers to *minimising the potential for managed release of water to surface water systems (ES4.1)*, and admits that *Runoff...may be discharged to local creeks* and one of the strategies for managing surplus water include releases to Oldbury Creek (*ES4.1.1*). The impact on surface water resources is described as *minimal*.

At *ES4.1.2 Groundwater* it is stated that there will be groundwater inflows to the mine during its operation and for three years after coal extraction ceases, which will lower the groundwater level for 23-36 years after the closure. The water within the mine will include water used to wash coal and residual spoil, which has been pumped into the mine voids (*ES4.1.1*). There is obviously potential for permanent groundwater contamination by outflow from the mine as the aquifer recharges following closure, which may not become apparent for many years.

The EIS makes no case that the Hume Coal Project will have a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality in the Sydney catchment. It falls at the first hurdle.

Air quality affecting water quality

At *ES4.7* the EIS admits that there will be particulate emissions from stockpiles, conveyor belt and transfer stations, and stacking and reclaiming coal. The dust mitigation is unlikely to control the smallest and most dangerous particles, because that is not required in Australia. They won't even be measured, but they will still blow into nearby villages and towns, onto agricultural land and also onto the surface of the Wingecarribee Reservoir and from there, into the Sydney water supply.

Economy

The anticipated economic returns from the 19 year lifetime of the Hume Coal Project to the NSW Government are incredibly low. It is about one third the revenue the government

would obtain from stamp duty on residential sales in Bowral alone over the same period (based on a conservative calculation based on May 2017 sales and current stamp duty - <http://www.yourinvestmentpropertymag.com.au/top-suburbs/nsw-2576-bowral.aspx>).

The costs to the community far outweigh any minor employment benefits. They include reduced land values close to the mine, loss of tourism revenue, loss of the Southern Highland's reputation as a clean green tourist destination, health costs directly from air pollution emanating from the mine and indirectly from the stress of lost value of homes and businesses.

World-wide environmental impact

At ES4.8 it states that *greenhouse gas emissions from the project will be minimal*. Presumably this refers to the mining operation not the burning of the mined coal. If the Hume Coal project proceeds it will contribute to global carbon emissions wherever the coal is burned. Australia is already the world's highest per-capita carbon emitter and should be reducing rather than increasing emissions.

Lack of Integrity

Experience with other mining operations in NSW has shown that governments and regulators lack spine when it comes to enforcing operating conditions, restricting operating conditions to those originally approved, or acting in the public interest when donations from, and jobs with, the fossil fuel industries are on offer. If this project is approved it is likely that operating conditions will be neither adhered to, nor enforced.

Conclusion

The adverse impacts of the Hume Coal Project far outweigh any financial benefits. The Project should not be approved.