

Dr. Colin J Grant

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MOSS VALE, NSW 2577

29 June 2017



HUME COAL PROJECT EIS SSD 15_7172

I OBJECT TO THE ABOVE REFERRED PROJECT

I have made NO political donation at any time.

I wish to make the following submission to the Department of Planning and Environment
in respect of the above-referred Project.

I live at 341 Oldbury Road, Sutton Forrest, on the Eastern slope of Mount Gingenbullen at the Eastern edge of the proposed area identified by Hume Coal for mining. I have owned and lived at this 25 acre (10 hectare) property for almost 20 years and have undertaken significant improvements to the property, including a full renovation to the 1960s house that I purchased in 2000, as well as significant property improvements. I am advised that there was an earlier stone and mud mortar house on this site which apparently operated as a 'worker's cottage' for the original Oldbury Farm, established in 1822 by James Atkinson, just thirty-four years after European settlement, and located further down Oldbury Road.

However, I understand that this worker's cottage burned down in the 1960s and was replaced by the brick and 'fibro' house that I purchased. There was certainly a half derelict and unstable barn, with walls made partly of stone and mud mortar and partly of corrugated sheeting, adjacent to the house when I purchased the property. Unfortunately, it was necessary to demolish this barn as part of the development improvements that I made with Wingecarribee Shire Council approval in 2000-2001. However, I retained the stone, which now forms much of my garden design, as a memento to this past.

Atkinson's settlement in this district and earlier European exploration of this district is deeply significant to Australia's modern history. This is not in any way to discount the much longer indigenous history, evidence of which is said to exist on trees with 'shield scars' on Mount Gingenbullen. Accordingly, I, as a custodian of part of the district, feel strongly that our generation has a responsibility to nurture and pass on to future generations, in as unspoiled a state as is possible, what we have been fortunate to have had passed on to us. In this context it is instructive to be aware of the European history of the district, especially its reasons for settlement, and of the immediate surrounds of Mount Gingenbullen, where Hume Coal proposes to mine.

This history starts in 1798, just 10 years after European settlement of Australia, when an exploration party of three men, led by ex-convict John Wilson was sent south by Governor Hunter. The party climbed what is now known as Mount Gingenbullen and John Price, a member of the party, recorded what they observed:

'We came into a most beautiful country, being nothing but fine large meadows with ponds of water in them; fine green hills, but very thin of timber. We got to the top of this hill, where we had a most delightful prospect of the country, and in my opinion one of the finest in the known world'.

This thinly timbered, but well-watered and beautiful land proved to be ideal for low intensity farming and John Atkinson was quick to realize this.

Atkinson had migrated to Australia in 1819 and in 1820 he was appointed by Governor Macquarie as principal clerk in the Colonial Secretary's Office. During his time in this position he became conversant with conditions in NSW and in July 1822 when he resigned he was granted two parcels of land comprising 800 and 700 acres. He named these 'Oldbury' and 'Mereworth', and immediately commenced farming. I own an antique map (C1850) that identifies Oldbury as a location in the then very confined Colony of NSW, a remarkably recognition of the early significance of this district.

Atkinson was subsequently granted another 500 acres and grazing rights to 4,000 acres of crown land, and by 1826 Atkinson had constructed a house and was one of Australia's few successful early farmers. That same year he published a book titled '*An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in NSW*' aimed at providing prospective settlers with practical information to help prepare them for life in a strange and distant land. This is the first such Australian treatise on Australian farming, based on his experience gained at Oldbury.

I have read the EIS prepared by Hume Coal and several submissions by others in the Southern Highlands community, including that of the Wingecarribee Shire Council. I am aware that all articulate similar concerns based on detailed geotechnical, environmental, social and economic assessments. I cannot add anything material to these community and local government submissions that would enhance their already comprehensive and frequently articulated assessments of the impacts of the proposed Hume Coal venture. However, I can add my numerical support to their views and I do.

Accordingly, I wish to register this as a submission of my strong objection to the proposal to mine coal in this locality, by Hume Coal or any other party. This objection is based on the impacts already broadly articulated by others, but particularly the loss of overall amenity in the region, including property values, based on water impacts, visual amenity, social cohesion. The history of this region, especially as it pertains to its early European exploration and agricultural development, is unique in Australia and we as a community, and its government, should recognize this and not put it at risk by destructive undertakings, such as coal mining. The very reason for the region's settlement and early agricultural development was, and remains, its well-watered and open, savanna-like, environment, founded on an accessible, shallow, sub-surface water table. Hume Coal's EIS acknowledges this will be drawn down significantly. I cannot imagine any other nation would risk denigrating a place of such national significance for very little material gain.



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