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### **Submission in Response to the EIS SSD7172 - Hume Coal Project**

I wish to register my objection to Hume Coal's proposal to develop a coal mine in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. My reasons for my objection are set out below.

I moved to the Southern Highlands ten years ago after owning a property at Marulan for twenty years. After experiencing the tough marginal country of the Marulan region I have been delighted to live in Sutton Forest, an area of high quality agricultural land and outstanding beauty.

The seven or so years since we have learned of the mining threat to our ideal location close to Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong have been years of concern and anxiety. Home and land values have stalled due to uncertainty. We came into direct conflict with Hume Coal over the Carters Lane blockade and watched as they persecuted friends and neighbours over access for exploration. The health impacts and relationship stress has been significant and will become more widespread through our community if the mine proceeds.

Of greatest concern is the impact on groundwater. The EIS suggests that over 90 bores will be drawn down, some as much as by 80 metres. Hume advertisements over local radio (2ST) lack credibility as they deny aquifer damage and suggest they will truck water to properties affected by groundwater loss. They also claim that there will be no inconvenience to residents at railway crossings where the coal trucks pass to the coast. This is an absurd assertion.

I also question Hume Coal's credibility and experience in respect to the use of feather mining and waste contamination in the mining process.

In dealing with residents the Hume Coal company has demonstrated a lack of concern and empathy being unreliable when making commitments and with poor follow-up. We have grave fears for the community if Hume becomes entrenched in our midst for the next twenty years or so.

The EIS' description of the Southern Highlands economy is somewhat scant and misleading, neglecting to highlight the higher than average dependance on the

agricultural, tourism and hospitality industries. These activities will be directly impacted by the drawdown of groundwater and the visual and environmental degradation of the rural landscape. The beautiful Southern Highlands has long been a favourite destination for Sydney siders wishing to escape the increasing density and urbanisation of the city and metropolitan areas.

Sydney's housing affordability has led to a substantial growth in the population of the Southern Highlands. Many of the families leaving the city have young children. These families have arrived in expectation of clean, fresh country air. Their children should not be exposed to the environmental impacts of a coal mine. Coal mining is in direct conflict with the zoning and stated policy of the Wingecarribee Shire Council.

Should the NSW Government give approval for this mine to proceed I would obviously have many fears and concerns. Another of which would be Hume's commitment to attempt to remediate the mine site. Of course, as they know, the water will be gone for at least seventy years. Of no concern to them as they will have long departed for South Korea.

On a personal level, I desperately hope to be able to retain the beautiful lush rural outlook from my home. To see this trashed will be devastating. We need to preserve such environments for future generations.

Finally, assuming this mine application does not proceed, I would suggest the importance of the mine lease being extinguished so that the Southern Highlands is protected in perpetuity.

I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous two years.



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