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Aina Ranke, of ASHTONFIELD NSW, made the following submission on the project:

Mangoola Mine - Modification 6 - Extraction Rate Increase



Objects to this project

I appreciate the opportunity to make a submission regarding the proposed Mangoola Coal Modification 6 of Project Approval 06-0014, and respectfully make the following comments in objecting to the expansion of this mine.

Mining companies already own more than 50% of the rateable land in the Muswellbrook Shire. As the Upper Hunter Valley is already saturated with coal mines, further expansion should be halted.

The Precautionary Principle regarding short and long term health effects should be applied. There is insufficient data available to make a sensible determination regarding the impacts of open cut mining on the residents of the regions that are already exposed to high density coal mining. The reduction in air quality for residents of the Upper Hunter is already evident. Increasing mine output will increase the already high mine sourced air pollution and further decreased air quality for Upper Hunter residents. With the proximity of the mine to Denman, the fact that Denman does not have an air quality monitor that is part of the Upper Hunter Air Quality Network should be a community health indicator to halting expansion of this mine and establishment of new mines. In addition, the mine expansion will further add to the cumulative impacts of mine sourced air pollution for residents of the whole Hunter Valley.

Noise pollution will also be increased by expansion of operations through an increase of rail traffic and rail noise. This is unacceptable given that current disputes between mine affected residents and Mangoola Coal remain unresolved.

Water quality of the Hunter River and diversion of water from agricultural systems to mining operations are further reasons for halting expansion of Mangoola Coal. Discharges of saline mine water into the Hunter River are already resulting in an increase in the background levels of salinity in the River, causing detriment to the river environment and downstream agricultural operations. Discharge of saline water to the Hunter River was specifically NOT permitted under the original application and, if this expansion is approved, strict water management conditions should apply to ensure discharge is not used unless in extreme circumstances.

Public infrastructure in the Upper Hunter and Muswellbrook Shire is presently not coping with the pressures of current saturation levels of mining activity. Lack of affordable housing is also a significant detrimental impact of saturation levels of mining and extra pressure from increasing employee levels will only add further pressure for housing forcing young home buyers on normal incomes out of the area.

Threats to diversification of the regional economy as mining drives out other sustainable industries and the long term employment they provide are likely to have detrimental impacts on the regional economy when the bubble bursts on coal mining activities - additional economic reasons for rejecting the Mangoola Coal Modification 6 proposal.

Mining in the Hunter Valley has a bad history of leaving land affected in a poor state and the damage caused leaves an irreversible scar on the landscape and renders the land useless for agricultural production. The initial application for Mangoola Coal and this modification fail to address the issue of leaving post mining final voids.

In conclusion, on 17 June 2013, the Climate Change Commission released its report warning that there needed to be a major shift in the way energy is produced if international targets for global warming were to be met. The Commission said the best way to avoid a changing climate beyond 2 degrees would be to invest heavily in clean energy and to phase out coal, keeping most of the world's fossil fuel reserves underground. This proposed expansion will produce an additional 2.4 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year, further increasing the threat of climate change.