

Mining Projects

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Dear Sir/Madam,

State Significant Project – Angus Place Mine Extension (SSD 5602 - Amendment Exhibition)

I have been reading now for years about the damage that has been done by coal mines on the upland swamps of the Sydney region. I have personally walked in the Newnes plateau and seen the surface cracking which can only be attributed to the longwall mining deep below the surface and I have tried to picnic at the once full Thirlmere Lakes area but, of course, it has now completely been drained and serves no purpose for the local area anymore. These are just some of the examples of the future-blind actions done in the name of coal.

I have a number of points I would raise to indicate my objections to this extension. These are:

- I totally mistrust the mining companies when they argue that longwall does not cause sandstone strata cracks and subsequent draining of the upland swamps. There is now enough evidence from many scientific quarters to indicate that damage is done by longwall mining. Even if this is doubted, there should be a high level of precaution placed on these activities such that mining should never be allowed directly under any swamps or river streams.
- My understanding is that some of the mining activity will fall under the Wolgan River and Carne Creek. It has been noted by water experts who have studied the water in Carne Creek that this waterflow is one of the most pristine creeks in the whole of NSW. By allowing mining under this, Centennial Coal will certainly reduce the purity of this stream like they have already done to many of the other streams in the Newnes Plateau (eg. Wollangambe River). We simply cannot let the possibility of this happen – we don't have many streams like Carne Creek. The Wolgan, on the other hand, has been affected already by mining and so it cannot be allowed to be affected any more by additional mining.
- While I understand the need for keeping jobs in this area, why is it not possible to ensure that, if mining is allowed, the areas which are mined are not near any water sources or upland swamps. This is a very destructive activity and we should be cautious even if we argue against the science.
- In many of the previous extensions which have received approval, there has been a severe lack of adherence to the protections of the environment which were placed on the mining company. It is well known that they have not undertaken the environmental checks that were part of the permission granted at the time. Beside this, Centennial Coal has a history of being careless with the important rivers in the mining area.¹ Unfortunately, it has not just been the coal company which has caused this damage but also the government checking agencies which have allowed this to happen. As the referenced report says: "The study also highlights the failure of the regulatory and governance systems that enable the mine to operate in a manner that causes major environmental impacts." It is surely about time that no further leeway be given with regard to the environmental damage caused by this company.
- The application seeks to not only gain approval for this extension but also wants to allow consent to extend to 2053. With the phasing out of coal right across Australia and Australia's commitment to meet its Paris emission targets by 2030, it seems inconceivable that we as a nation would ever contemplate giving permission to a mining company to go on extracting a product which goes against the whole spirit of the Paris agreement.

1 Report: "Coal Mine Water Pollution and Ecological Impairment of One of Australia's Most 'Protected' High Conservation-Value Rivers" by Ian A. Wright, Nakia Belmer & Peter J. Davies. Published: 09 February 2017

- If permission is granted for this extension, I have a strong objection that it should not be given any longer than 5 years. The proposed end date of 2053 is far too generous with our water.
- I also would have far greater trust in the approval process being handled by the Independent Planning Commission instead of a government department with much closer ties to the government of the day.

I have walked extensively in the area where Centennial Coal have interests and I cannot stand by and watch this company, which has a terrible track record on environmental protection, destroy our last pristine creeks and wilderness.

For the above reasons, I request that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the DoPIE) recommend refusal of consent.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Yours Sincerely,

Robert Wildman

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Note: I am not affiliated with any political party and have not donated to any political party.