

WILPINJONG EXTENSION PROJECT RO39-16

ATTN: Mr David Kloppers

Dear Mr Kloppers,

I am writing to object to the extension of the Wilpinjong Mine. I urge the PAC for once to put the community and the environment above the interests of the coal lobby and to recommend this mine does not go ahead.

This extension will kill the village of Wollar, already severely impacted by the mine. This has been the opposite outcome from what was predicted under the mine's approval when a rosy picture was painted of all the benefits that would accrue to the village of Wollar. None of that happened.

Therefore no-one has any confidence whatsoever in any social impacts predicted by DPE, positive or negative. This time DPE predicts the population of Wollar will continue to decline, even without the extension, a view not based on any evidence. If one looks closely at the Wollar community one sees a tightknit community with just enough social cohesion that will allow it to bounceback once the threat and impacts of mining have been removed.

The DPE social impact assessment fails to recognise the impacts on remote residents should Wollar be totally destroyed.

There are eight other areas apart from the social impacts which all support a decision to NOT approve this extension:

1 Biodiversity

The proposal will have a cumulative impact on threatened species habitat that cannot be offset.

The Biodiversity Offsets will not meet the requirements for the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater. It is not acceptable for current mine rehabilitation to be counted as an offset.

The proposal to open cut the very narrow valleys protruding into the Mughorn Gap Nature Reserve without buffers should not be approved.

2 Noise and Dust

Noise has been the biggest impact from the mine. There was no assessment of Low Frequency Noise (LFN) impacts of the current mine or the proposed extension.

EPA noise monitoring conducted in June 2016 demonstrated that LFN is an issue. The noise assessment must be redone to include LFN predictions.

The proposal to shift \$42m of noise mitigation costs onto community health impacts is irresponsible and should not be approved.

Dust emissions are predicted to increase and exceed the 24 hr PM10 criteria. Protecting community health should be a prime consideration of decision-makers.

3 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

The proposed destruction of an ochre quarry and Aboriginal artwork on Rocky Hill should not be approved. The mine extension will destroy 92 artefact sites and put another 138 at risk.

The Office of Environment and Heritage has identified that the cumulative impacts of mining on cultural heritage is approaching unacceptable thresholds in the region.

4 Final Voids

All final voids should be backfilled. The argument that a third void in Pit 8 is necessary because it will cost \$15m to backfill is ridiculous. This cost shifting onto the environment must stop.

5 Peabody finances

The resolution of Peabody Energy bankruptcy in America and implications for capital expenditure on Australian projects has not been resolved. This must be a key consideration.

The DPE report identifies that benefits of the project include \$172.5m of direct capital investment. The report also states that the development decision relates to the 'land' not the 'person'. However, all the public benefits including employment predictions and investment relate directly to the proponent and their proposal under assessment. The economic analysis and public benefit predictions are an essential part of the decision and cannot be separated from the applicant.

6 Climate change

Australia is now a formal signatory to the Paris agreement to minimise global warming to no more than 2°. The project is estimated to produce 20.4 Mt greenhouse gases per year until 2033. If approved Wilpinjong will become the largest coal mine in NSW. It is against the principle of inter-generational equity to approve more coal extraction under the threat of substantive economic, social and environmental harm caused by climate change.

7 Justification for mine

Wilpinjong Mine was developed in 2006 to provide 80% of coal requirements for Bayswater & Liddell Power Stations until 2026. The current approval can meet these contractual obligations. The extension project is not required to ensure security of coal-fired power supply in NSW.

8 Planning Process

There has been unfair access to information for the proponent during the assessment process. The community has only had access to the DPE assessment report & expert review reports since 7 November with one month to make submissions. Peabody Energy has been provided opportunities to review and respond to the additional expert reviews throughout the assessment process and prior to the public release of reports.

Please consider the environment and the community of Wollar. Do not approve this mine extension.

Your sincerely

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