

22. Diane O'Mara

Planning Assessment Commission

D458-17 Wilpinjong Extension Project

Dear Commissioners

I have a long history of association with the Wollar community, regularly attending the large social events and functions organised by this once close knit community.

This included bush dances, Easter Fairs, family fun days, regular cricket matches, auction days and lots of other fund raising activities.

The loss of people bought out by Peabody has been a shocking change to this once vibrant community. There are no longer enough volunteers or community members left to organise the regular events that happened up until the mine arrived.

Good friends are under increasing stress and have been left isolated with no sense of a future in the community they dearly loved and invested so much time, effort and money into.

The Wilpinjong Mine already has approval to continue until 2027. This is plenty of time for the workforce and local economy to plan for change and diversify activity. This change has to be faced sometime.

If the Wilpinjong extension is not approved, the Wollar community could start rebuilding. There are lots of people looking for a tree change and wanting to live in rural villages. Many of these people were attracted to Wollar in the first place, only to be later confronted by the noise and dust pollution from the mine. They were literally driven away from their retirement investments and dreams.

If the Wilpinjong extension is not approved the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater would not lose a further 190 ha of food sources and breeding places in the Wollar district, recognised as a national Important Bird Area.

The culturally significant Rocky Hill Complex in Slate Gully would not be under threat of destruction.

The Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve would not be further encroached upon. Loss of flows to Wilpinjong Creek would not continue and the level of noise and dust pollution would gradually lessen.

The social impact of the mine on the few remaining residents in the Wollar area has not been properly recognised. The proposed Social Impact Management Plan does not solve their isolation problems, the loss of social fabric or their economic disadvantage. Why should people have their lives ruined so that other people can keep a job for another 7 years?

The number of people impacted by this mine over the past 10 years is significant. This has not been recognised in the Social Impact Assessment or the various Govt and PAC responses.

There has been no fairness or social justice in the approvals process for the Wilpinjong Mine with 6 major modifications. The current mining operations are nothing like what was first

approved 10 years ago. The ongoing loss of local people with a close, long term attachment to the Wollar area has been extreme. The social fabric of the community has been destroyed.

If you, Commissioners, decide to approve the Wilpinjong Extension Project then the remaining stranded people of the Wollar district must be given the acquisition rights they are asking for based on social justice considerations.

If the proposed changes to noise conditions occur, their lives will be hell during winter months when the mine will be able to make as much noise as it likes. Why should people be purposely trapped in stressful and unhealthy circumstances that are not of their own making.

My friends have been unfairly forced to put up with changed environmental conditions that are making them sick through loss of sleep and unrelieved tension.

In all fairness, if jobs and royalties are the priority consideration in your decision, then you must give my friends, and those still left in Wollar a fair go.

Yours sincerely,

Diane O'Mara

