

Mr. David Martin

NSW 2077.

The Commissioner

NSW Planning Assessment Commissioner

Dear Commissioner.

Re: Wilpinjong Extension Project, situated at the south western edge of the Hunter catchment.

I am writing to object to the extension of this open cut coal mine for the following reasons:

1. The extension will bring the mine to within 1.5 km of the village of Wollar. The impacts of noise and dust have caused most of the population of the Wollar district to sell up and leave. The social impacts of the project on the community of Wollar far exceed any other social benefits the mine may bring. The impacts have not been properly assessed by the proponent, the Department, nor the previous Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) and must be properly assessed before any determination is made. At the very least if the project were approved all remaining residents of the Wollar district must be offered acquisition rights.
2. The Review of this project by the previous PAC identified 'the need for a long term strategic plan' for the coal mines around Mudgee, and for NSW generally. The current assessment approach fails to properly account for the cumulative regional impacts of multiple mining operations. The current PAC should delay its determination of the Wilpinjong Extension Project until the 'long term strategic plan' recommended by the previous PAC has been completed.
3. The Aboriginal cultural heritage of this mining project has not been properly taken into account. The Rocky Hill complex contains an ochre quarry, rock art sites, and significant artefacts, but will be entirely destroyed by the proposal. Further consultations with Aboriginal stakeholders must be undertaken before the project is determined.
4. The proposed biodiversity offsets don't meet current NSW policy, which requires that when critically endangered habitat is destroyed, its offset must be 'like for like'. That is the same area of the same remnant ecosystem must be protected somewhere else. The proponent has not attempted to do this. According to the policy, so-called 'supplementary measures' (such as paying into a fund) must only be a last resort. More than half the offset credits for the Wilpinjong Extension will be on land that has been mined and rehabilitated. This makes a mockery of biodiversity offsets, which were already of dubious value in protecting biodiversity and preventing loss of species. Using previously mined land for biodiversity offsets must not be allowed.
5. Biodiversity threatened by this expansion includes:
 - i. An endangered ecological community of Blakely's Red Gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*) and Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) Woodland.
 - ii. A threatened flora species called *Ozothamnus tessellatus*.

- iii. Up to 38 threatened fauna species including via disturbance of 190 ha of critically endangered Regent Honeyeater (*Xanthomyza Phrygia*) habitat and 160 ha of Koala habitat.
6. I support the recommendations of the Department that there should be no final void left in the proposed new pit. Additionally, should project approval be granted, it should require the proponent to back fill the voids in the currently approved pits (and be revegetated with local native plants) in line with community expectations and world's best practice mining rehabilitation. Continued regulatory failure and flawed assessment processes are permitting considerable swathes of NSW to be rendered into ugly, vast saline lakes and leaves an expensive mess for future generations.

The pristine native bushland that we now have is all that we will ever have.

I ask that you will give these points serious consideration.

Yours sincerely

David Martin

8th April 2017