

Alison Smiles-Schmidt

I live on a small property between Wollar and Bylong with my husband and sister. We have been greatly impacted by the loss of the Wollar community through the impacts of the Wilpinjong Mine.

We can hear the mine and it disturbs our sleep even though we live over 10 kilometres away. We are also disturbed by the noise from a growing number of coal trains, especially at night.

I worked at the Wollar Nursery, a 10 minute drive from home each day. The noise, dust and blasting from Wilpinjong caused the owner to sell up to the mine and move the business into Mudgee.

The environmental assessment for the mine claimed there would be no impacts on Wollar Village. How wrong has that been.

I now have an hour's drive to work on the narrow and dangerous Wollar Road through Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve. My safety is already threatened by speeding mine contractors who don't dip high beam at night and drive recklessly. There is no policing of traffic behaviour on this road.

I understand that the Wollar Road is to be the main route for heavy vehicles with large pieces of mining equipment travelling to Bylong Mine.

If the mine is approved I will have to navigate these over-sized vehicles with nowhere to pull off the road in many places. If the whole length of the road is closed to get these large vehicles through, there has been no assessment of the time other road users like myself will be held up.

I will also have to deal with the traffic of two shift changes a day, to and from Mudgee. If you are going to approve this dreadful Bylong Mine, you could at least have a condition that mine workers are bussed to work, to keep additional traffic on the Wollar Road at a minimum.

Also, there should be no start of mine construction until the full length of road is upgraded.

The current condition of the Wollar Road between Wollar and the Mudgee turn off is shocking with potholes and crumbling edges. It needs a major upgrade.

Also, we have watched the quality of the work done on the new section of road between Wollar and Bylong. Once regular heavy traffic starts using it the condition will deteriorate quickly because of the poor materials used in the construction.

The safety of local Wollar people and other road users will be at severe risk.

The other key social impact from mining in our area is the loss of active volunteers with local knowledge from the district bushfire brigades. This has put greater pressure on remaining local members like my husband. Mine workers on 12 hour shifts are not available to fight fires.

I implore you to reject the Bylong Mine.