

**WOLLAR PROGRESS ASSOCIATION**

**C/O- POST OFFICE**

**WOLLAR NSW 2850**

[wollarprogressassociation@gmail.com](mailto:wollarprogressassociation@gmail.com)

Independent Planning Commission of NSW  
Bylong Coal Project  
Public Meeting 7 November 2018

Thank you Commissioners, my name is Bruce Hughes, I have been a resident of the Wollar community for most of my life and am currently the President of the Wollar Progress Association.

Our community has been nearly destroyed by the Wilpinjong Coal Mine directly to the west of the village. Therefore we are very concerned about the ongoing impacts of mining in our area, particularly the impacts of the proposed new mine at Bylong.

We do not think the assessment of the Bylong Mine has considered the ongoing social and economic disadvantage to the remaining Wollar people. This has been caused by mining operations emptying out the countryside, getting rid of our neighbours and long term friends and threatening our safety. The loss of goods and services has caused economic stress.

The key issues I want to talk about today is additional mine traffic through the Wollar Village and on the Wollar Road, additional coal trains blocking our access at level crossings and the ongoing risk through loss of emergency services in our region, especially at times like this with high bushfire danger.

Firstly on the roads and increased mine traffic. The draft conditions of approval for the Bylong Mine show that the Wollar Road is to be the only route for Heavy Vehicle Access to the mine.

Draft condition 51 states that Bylong Valley Way from the Golden Highway and from the Castlereagh Highway is restricted for heavy vehicles to the mine, also the Ulan-Wollar Road. So this leaves only the Wollar Road to Mudgee. It is also likely that the majority of mine traffic at shift change will use the Wollar Road if most of the mine workers live in Mudgee.

We believe our safety is at risk if all over mass, oversize vehicles have to come through Wollar Village and across the narrow and dangerous road through the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve.

Some funding has been given from the NSW Government and some additional money from Kepco to straighten out some bends in the road and a few other safety measures. But the whole length of the road is very narrow, through the Nature Reserve and all the way through to where the new work has started on the Bylong Road.

When the Wilpinjong Mine was approved, the original intent was to have the main access on the Wollar Road. After a more detailed road condition and road safety audit<sup>1</sup> conducted in 2006, the approval was altered so that all mine traffic was redirected to the Ulan Road and Ulan-Wollar Road.

The audit had advised that the Wollar Road pavement is generally in poor condition and would require massive remediation and reconstruction to cope with mine related traffic and that Wollar Road should not be utilised as the main access road to the Project during the construction period. I will table a copy of the available report done for Wilpinjong Mine.

We note that Council supported the changed access route to Wilpinjong Mine with the following comment:

*"In relation to the change in access arrangements it would appear that the proposed access will have less impact on the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve. Council would encourage any modification that would reduce the impact on the Reserve."*

We don't believe the proposed work on this stretch of road will improve the safety when very large oversized, heavy trucks come through carrying big pieces of machinery and mining equipment. There will be nowhere to pull off the road. The entire length of the road would have to be closed until the trucks had got through. This long hold up when using the road has not been assessed.

Having the length of road closed for a period of time will cause problems for emergency vehicle access. We've just had the Moolarben Road closed for that mine – so now fire trucks from Cooks Gap have to travel further in a bushfire emergency.

Our main worry is that Wollar people now have to drive in to Mudgee more often for goods and services because these have disappeared from Wollar Village. The social impacts of mining in the area will be made worse if we have to dodge very large trucks and two shift changes a day when travelling into Mudgee to buy things that used to be available in Wollar.

The types of essential goods & services I'm talking about is mechanical repairs on vehicles and farm machinery – all gone from Wollar, purchase of gas and hardware, building materials, stock feed – all gone from Wollar, all medical check-ups now have to happen in Mudgee because the regular health clinic in Wollar has closed down. All these impacts are directly related to the expansion of the Wilpinjong Coal mine over time.

We do not want our lives put at risk every time we have to drive into Mudgee because of more mine traffic– or have to wait for road closures of over 30 minutes or longer while big heavy trucks come through – because there is nowhere to pull off the road.

All the road upgrades should be completed before mine construction commences. This is a condition for the Wollar to Bylong upgrade. It should also be a condition for the Wollar to

---

<sup>1</sup> Route Assessment Study (RAS) (incorporating a Road Safety Audit and a Road Conditions Audit) was undertaken in 2006 (J. Wyndham Prince Pty Ltd, 2006).

Mudgee upgrade. This is a school bus route and all work should be completed before big vehicles start using it.

We also note that other mines in the state have a condition that requires 90 per cent of mine workers to be taken to the mine site in shuttle buses. This would be much better for Wollar people to have mine traffic to Bylong minimised. It would also be consistent with other remote mines in rural areas like the Maules Creek Mine.

We know what it's like to have mine traffic through the Wollar Village. In 2016, Moolarben Mine had a highwall collapse that threatened the safety of the users of Ulan-Wollar Road. For over 6 weeks we had all of Wilpinjong Mine shift changes and heavy vehicles through Wollar.

The damage done to the road surface through Wollar and the Munghorn Gap with just 6 weeks of mine traffic was incredible and it has left us still with poor road conditions. There are major potholes, sides crumbling and falling apart – a real mess.

I hope the Commissioners took note of the condition of the road from Bylong after the field trip yesterday.

This must be fixed for the whole length of the road. Our lives depend on it. This is also a popular tourist drive.

The other major problem we have in Wollar is coal trains stopping across level crossings and blocking our road access. We've had a long running dispute with ARTC over this matter, particularly when volunteer firefighters have had their access blocked while trying to attend a fire emergency.

The ARTC has told us in writing that "*Unfortunately as the level crossing is on a high demand portion of track with a large volume of trains, from time to time there will be cases where trains may occupy Mogo Road, but we will try to minimise as best we can.*"

Also they said '*this is a section of track with a large volume of trains and occasionally they will need to occupy the level crossings for short periods of time*'

The prospect of up to another 10 trains per day from the Bylong Mine will cause even greater hold up of trains than we are already experiencing. The Sandy Hollow Railway Line appears to already be beyond capacity.

There has been no assessment of this impact on the Wollar community or on anyone living near the rail line with access issues to their properties.

The trains are also often the cause of fires on high fire danger days and this is an added pressure for us because we have lost so many trained volunteers from the Wollar brigade and the Bylong brigade as well.

The primary Social Impact Management Plan mentions the close relationship between our two communities and that the Bylong brigade assisted us with the catastrophic fire we had

threatening the village in February last year. Well, two of the people who brought the Bylong fire truck over to Wollar have now been bought out by Kepco and moved out of the district.

Our safety during major emergency events has been threatened because of increasing isolation and the sheer area of mine-owned land between Ulan and Bylong where barely anyone lives anymore. It has been a social tragedy for all of us who remain in the area.

The social impact management plan basically ignores our problems which will only get worse if Bylong Mine goes ahead.

We do not support the Bylong Mine or believe that the impacts have not been properly assessed. Especially the social and environmental impacts of four large coal mines in our area.

We are stuck in the middle with stranded assets and economic disadvantage that no-one seems to care about.

Our question is - why are the lives of the local people remaining in Wollar and Bylong less important than other people in the district?

Wollar Progress Association is asking the Commission to consider four key things:

1. That a transparent assessment of traffic movement constraints caused by over-sized, over-mass trucks on the whole length of the Wollar Road be conducted before a final decision is made.
2. That a transparent assessment of the condition and capacity of the Sandy Hollow Railway Line be conducted before a final decision is made.
3. That, if approved, no mine construction can commence until the whole length of Wollar Road, the main access route for heavy vehicles, has been suitably upgraded.
4. That, if approved, a condition require that 90% of mine workers to be shuttled to work.

Thank you

Extract

**TRAFFIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT**  
**WILPINJONG COAL PROJECT – OPERATIONAL PHASE ACCESS**  
**ROUTE MODIFICATION**

**FOR**  
**WILPINJONG COAL PTY LIMITED**

Ref. 7714\_TIA

April, 2007

Prepared By



**J.WYNDHAM PRINCE PTY LTD**  
**Civil Engineers & Project Managers**

77 Union Road  
PENRITH NSW 2750  
PO BOX 4366  
PENRITH WESTFIELD NSW 2750  
DX;8032 Penrith  
Tel: 02 4732 3366

## CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>PROJECT INFORMATION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background Information	1
1.2	Document Structure	5
<b>2.0</b>	<b>EXISTING ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Intersection Performance	6
2.1.1	Wollar Road	6
2.1.2	Ulan Road	7
2.1.3	Ulan-Wollar Road	7
2.2	Road Safety	7
2.2.1	Wollar Road	7
2.2.2	Ulan Road	8
2.2.3	Ulan-Wollar Road	9
2.3	Pavement Conditions	13
2.3.1	Wollar Road	14
2.3.2	Ulan Road	14
2.3.3	Ulan-Wollar Road	15
2.4	School Bus Routes	16
2.5	Lighting and Signage	16
2.5.1	Wollar Road	16
2.5.2	Ulan Road	17
2.5.3	Ulan-Wollar Road	18
2.6	Traffic Flows	19
2.6.1	Existing Traffic Flows	19
2.6.2	Project Operational Phase Traffic Generation	20
<b>3.0</b>	<b>POTENTIAL TRAFFIC IMPACTS OF THE MODIFICATION</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1.1	Distribution of Operational Phase Traffic Flows	21
3.1.2	Consideration of Potential Cumulative Traffic Impacts with other Mining Projects	22
3.1.3	Consideration of Potential Future Traffic Growth	22
3.1.4	Potential Interaction with School Bus Routes	23
3.1.5	Summary of Potential Traffic Impacts	24
<b>4.0</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>27</b>

## 1.0 PROJECT INFORMATION

J. Wyndham Prince Pty. Ltd. has been engaged by Wilpinjong Coal Pty Limited (WCPL) to undertake a traffic impact assessment for the proposed modification to the Wilpinjong Coal Project (the Project) operational phase access route. The location of the Project and the proposed access route modification is shown on **Figure 1**.

This traffic impact assessment is a requirement specified by the Department of Planning in the Director-General's Requirements for the proposed modification to the Project operational phase access route, as follows:

*Traffic and Transport – a detailed traffic impact assessment of the proposed modified mine access route, including consideration of intersection performance; road safety; pavement conditions; school bus routes; the potential for staggered shift changes with other mines in the area; lighting and signage; and the likely interactions with other approved, existing or proposed mines in the area. A strategy must also be included that describes the measures to be taken by the proponent (in consultation with other relevant mining companies) to ensure that an appropriate level of road safety and road surface performance exists on Ulan Road (and other relevant local roads) that is consistent with it being used as the primary access route for the various coal mines in the area.*

Accordingly this traffic impact assessment includes:

- Consideration of:
  - traffic generation;
  - intersection performance;
  - road safety;
  - pavement conditions;
  - school bus routes;
  - lighting and signage; and
  - potential interactions with other approved, existing or proposed mines in the area (i.e. Ulan Coal Mine and the proposed Moolarben Coal Project).

## 1.1 Background Information

A Road Transport Assessment was undertaken for the Wilpinjong Coal Project Environmental Impact Statement (the Project EIS) (TRAFFIX, 2005) to assess road transport issues associated with the Project. The Road Transport Assessment outlined the existing traffic environment and the potential impact of the Project utilising Ulan Road and Wollar Road as the main access route for Project generated operational phase traffic.

In accordance with Condition 4, Appendix 2 of Project Approval (05-0021) for the Project, a Route Assessment Study (RAS) (incorporating a Road Safety Audit and a Road Conditions Audit) was undertaken in 2006 (J. Wyndham Prince Pty Ltd, 2006). Roads included in the RAS included (**Figure 1**):

- Ulan Road between Mudgee and the intersection with the Ulan-Wollar Road;
- Ulan-Wollar Road between the Project and the intersection with the Ulan Road; and
- Wollar Road between the Project and the intersection with Ulan Road.

The objective of the RAS was “*to identify the most appropriate traffic route for both construction traffic (including oversize-overmass vehicles) and operational traffic to and from the Wilpinjong Coal Project*” and included (for each of the above roads) an assessment of:

- traffic flows;
- road safety and signage;
- pavement conditions; and
- structural integrity of bridges, causeways and culverts.

The following documents and data were utilised and/or examined as part of the RAS:

1. “Appendix K Wilpinjong Coal Project Road Transport Assessment” (Trafix, 2005) -Wilpinjong Coal Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (WCPL, 2005).
2. 1:25000 Topographical Maps.
3. Video Data Capture dated 25 Nov 2005 and 16 February 2006.
4. Dial Before You Dig utility search papers.

Other specific reference documents, papers and manuals utilised during the course of the RAS are detailed as follows:

- “Road Environment Safety Guidelines” (Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA], 1992).
- “Road Design Guide” (RTA, 1999).
- “Traffic Engineering Manual” (RTA, 1994), Part 3 – Speed Zoning, Part 5 – Delineation, Part 8 – Guide Signs, Part 12 – Tourist Signs, Part 18 – Truck Routes.
- “Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice” (AUSTROADS, 1988), Part 1 – Traffic Flow, Part 5 – Intersections at Grade, Part 9 – Arterial Road Traffic Management, Part 12-Roadway Lighting, Part 14 – Bicycles.
- “Interim Guide to Signs & Markings” (DMR, 1978) and Australian Standard (AS) 1743-2001 “Road Signs-Specifications” (AS 1743).
- “Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice” (AUSTROADS, 1988).
- “Rural Road Design Guide, A Guide to the Geometric Design of Rural Roads” (AUSTROADS, 2003).
- Guide to Traffic Generating Developments, Version 2.2, RTA, October 2002.



- “Unsealed Road Manual – Guidelines to Good Practice” (ARRB Transport Research 2000).
- “Pavement materials in road building – Guidelines for making better use of local materials” (ARRB Transport Research 1999).
- “Pavement Design – A guide to the structural design of roads pavements” (AUSTROADS 1992).
- “A guide to the visual assessment of pavement conditions” (AUSTROADS 1987).

Based on the investigations undertaken, the RAS concluded (J. Wyndham Prince Pty Ltd, 2006):

- The Wollar Road pavement is generally in poor condition and would require massive remediation and reconstruction to cope with the Project related traffic.
- Wollar Road should not be utilised as the main access road to the Project during the construction period.
- The Ulan Road and the Ulan-Wollar Road is the preferred access route for both the construction and operational phases of the Project.

Following the RAS and in consultation with the Mid-Western Regional Council (MWRC), the majority of construction traffic generated by the Project has utilised the Ulan Road and Ulan-Wollar Road (rather than the Ulan Road and the Wollar Road) to access the Project.

As outlined above, this Traffic Impact Assessment assesses the potential impacts associated with the continued use of the current access route into the operational phase of the Project.

This traffic impact assessment draws on information provided in, and assessments undertaken for the RAS (J. Wyndham Prince Pty Ltd, 2006), the *Wilpinjong Coal Project Road Transport Assessment* (TRAFFIX, 2005) *Moolarben Coal Project Environmental Assessment Report* (Moolarben Coal Mines Pty Ltd, 2006) and traffic assessments undertaken for the Ulan Coal Mines (Kinhill Stearns, 1983; Kinhill, 1998; Martin and Associates, 2005).

## 2.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

As outlined in Section 1, a road safety audit was undertaken as part of the RAS (J. Wyndham Prince Pty Ltd, 2006). The road safety audit was undertaken with specific reference to the procedures and guidelines outlined in Part Two of the RTA's Accident Reduction Guide entitled "Road Safety Audits" 2005 and with reference to the "Road Safety Handbook for Road Safety Audits" (SAA HB 43) as published by AUSTRROADS and Standards Australia (J. Wyndham Prince Pty Ltd, 2006).

Each road (including Wollar Road, Ulan Road and Ulan-Wollar Road) was examined relative to current design standards for both day and night traffic conditions in terms of:

- the horizontal and vertical alignment;
- road and shoulder widths and batter treatments;
- speed zoning and clear zones;
- emergencies, breakdown emergency and service vehicle access;
- culverts and drainage structures;
- guard-rail;
- street lighting;
- positions of trees and poles;
- traffic merge and diverge conditions;
- road marking;
- signposting and delineation along the route;
- intersection control and channelisation;
- pedestrian features;
- provision for cyclists;
- adjoining land uses; and
- freight and bus movements.

The outcomes of the RAS and road safety audit are provided in Sections 2.1 to 2.6.

### 2.1 Intersection Performance

#### 2.1.1 Wollar Road

Turning lane facilities at intersections and driveways is generally limited or non-existent. Consequently left turns are either made from the through lane or over adjacent gravel or grass shoulders. At most intersections, traffic avoiding right turn vehicles utilise unformed shoulders as a slip lane.

### 2.1.2 Ulan Road

Turning lane facilities at intersections and driveways are generally limited or non-existent. Consequently left turns are either made from the through lane or over adjacent gravel or grass shoulders. At intersections other than Cope Road, Ulan Coal Mine access and Ulan-Wollar Road, traffic avoiding right turn vehicles utilise unformed shoulders as a slip lane.

### 2.1.3 Ulan-Wollar Road

Intersections along the Ulan-Wollar Road and respective features include:

#### **Ulan Road with Ulan-Wollar Road (Austroads - Type 'B')**

This intersection comprises a typical RTA type 'AUR' formation with pavement widening for an unprotected right turn from Ulan Road. It is noted that edge lines and lane lines separating northbound from right turn traffic have not been provided. The intersection does not provide an auxiliary left turn lane into Ulan-Wollar Road for southbound traffic.

#### **Ulan-Wollar Road with Murragamba Road (Austroads Type 'A')**

This intersection comprises a typical RTA type 'BAR' 'Y' junction configuration although no line marking has been provided. There are no auxiliary lanes for turning and shoulders are inadequate width to enable separation of eastbound traffic from right turn traffic into Murragamba Road. Sight distance to the intersection is restricted by a crest on the western approach.

## 2.2 Road Safety

### 2.2.1 Wollar Road

#### *Road Hierarchy Form and Function*

Wollar Road (Main Road 208) is a designated tourist drive consisting of a two lane rural road providing direct access between Ulan Road and Wollar. The section being assessed is 33 kilometres (km) long between Ulan Road and the currently approved Project access road. The section (20.3 to 30.5 km) of winding road through the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve is approximately 10.2 km long.

#### *Alignments & Design Speed*

A speed limit heading north-east from Ulan Road along Wollar Road has not been specified, accordingly 100 kilometres per hour (km/hr) maximum limit is assumed. Although the road horizontal and vertical alignment geometry appears to meet 100 km/hr design speed there are sections where stopping sight distance and free travel speed is limited by a combination of horizontal curves, intersections, driveways, causeways, adjacent heavy timber and overhang, high grass road verges and vertical crests.

### ***Road Cross Section***

The road cross section is generally inconsistent with varying batter slopes, lane, shoulder, table drains and clear zone widths. Road shoulders have been constructed from various materials. Some shoulders are substituted by grass verges. Shoulders are noticeably narrow through the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve area.

### ***Drainage***

Road surface drainage facilities appear generally adequate, however there are six (6) causeways (Chainages 1.73, 3.83, 8.03, 11.93, 12.43 and 31.93) located in low lying areas along the route which are currently in a poor to fair condition rating.

Road shoulders overgrown with grass weed would restrict water shed from the road surface which would contribute to pavement failures and broken edges. At intersections and driveways drainage provisions are limited. Protruding headwalls at driveway crossings would be unsafe for errant vehicles.

### ***Safety Barrier Fencing***

Issues relating to Barrier Fencing include:

#### **Stoney Creek Bridge**

Old timber crash rail over structure combined with 'Armco' Guardfence on approaches.

#### **Cooyal Creek Culvert**

The bridge culvert at chainage 33.7 adjacent to Kaness Flat Road only provides a pipe rail barrier over the structure. No guard fencing has been provided on approaches.

#### **Munghorn Gap**

No safety barriers are provided through Munghorn Gap.

## **2.2.2 Ulan Road**

### ***Road Hierarchy, Form and Function***

Ulan Road (Main Road 208 – 214) is a two lane rural road providing direct access between Mudgee and Ulan. Ulan Road links with the Ulan–Cassilis Road and the Golden Highway (State Highway 27) to the north of the Project. Speed zoning is 100 km/hr.

### **Very Poor**

Pavement comprises of numerous defects and localised repairs of potholes and heavy patches. Vehicle ride is very rough. Road requires urgent remediation at current traffic volumes. Increased traffic volumes will result in extremely rapid degradation of pavement and seal.

A summary of findings for each road is provided in Section 2.3.1 to 2.3.3.

#### **2.3.1 Wollar Road**

Wollar Road from Ulan Road to Wollar is a sealed road being approximately 38.7 km long and is in a poor to fair condition (Table 2).

**Table 2**  
**Wollar Road Pavement Rating Over 38.7 km**

Rating	Length (km)	Percentage of Total Length
Very Poor	1.9	4.9
Poor	7.5	19.4
Poor to Fair	11.2	28.9
Fair	6.0	15.5
Fair to Good	5.1	13.2
Good	7.0	18.1

- Section 20.74 km to 25.82 km north-east of Ulan Road is in a low lying area prone to waterlogging.
- Section 25.82 km to 29.98 km north-east of Ulan Road through the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve is not appropriate for oversize/overmass vehicle passage. The preliminary geotechnical risk assessment of this area is a high potential for slope instability due to the presence of large sandstone talus and boulders.

#### **2.3.2 Ulan Road**

Ulan Road between Wollar Road and Ulan-Wollar Road is a sealed road approximately 32 km long and is generally in good condition (Table 3). There are some small isolated sections of pavement failure and the road has recently undergone some shoulder widening and pavement rehabilitation works over some sections.

Two short sections both 200 m long located South of Nimoola Lane and Mrs Large's Gate are in poor to very poor condition.