

LETTER OF OBJECTION

To: Independent Planning Commission
BYLONG COAL PROJECT

I wish to strongly object to the proposed Bylong Coal Project.

I own a house in the Bylong Valley on a property belonging to my mother, who has owned and conducted a cattle breeding/grazing business there since the 1970's.

My two main reasons for this objection are:-

(1) Permanent Destruction of Groundwater Resources

This is my primary concern. Should the proposed Bylong Coal Project be approved, water security for our property, and all other farms in the Bylong Valley who rely on groundwater will be threatened. On our property, we rely on cattle water from two bores, and two dams. In the last six months one of our bores and one of our dams has dried up. If the second bore dries up, our property can no longer be stocked. We have an irrigation licence but are not able to irrigate at all due to the unreliability of our groundwater supply.

Increasing the demand on the existing groundwater resources through coal mining will endanger the viability of many other farms in the valley which also rely on groundwater resources.

Consenting to a coal mine in a prime agricultural valley where there is significant dependence on an already precarious groundwater resource is tantamount to environmental vandalism. Farmers in this valley are already experiencing great vulnerability in terms of water resources – why would you want to make that matter worse for them. We have seen the plight of drought stricken farmers in the media for many many months, and the concern expressed by both the current and former Prime Ministers and the NSW Premier and other NSW politicians. If this concern is genuine, I urge the Committee to demonstrate leadership and vision in its consideration of this Project and to not approve it.

(2) The Destruction of Prime Agricultural Lands.

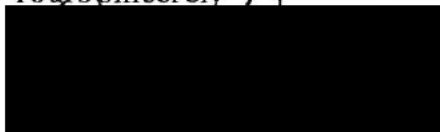
The Bylong Valley has historically been renowned for its rich, fertile and productive agricultural land. With the purchase of some of the most productive farming properties in the valley by Kepco, for the purpose of coal mining, the once renowned “food bowl” could become a “coal hole”. The result of this being a significant loss of agricultural productivity and the concomitant impact on climate change.

Concerns about climate change should, in my view, be high in the minds of the IPC. Giving consent to any new green field coal mine is simply adding fuel to the very real and escalating problem of climate change. This country cannot afford to continue to ignore the issue of climate change.

I am also very concerned about the destruction of Aboriginal heritage sites, with no plans to archive these sites, the noise and dust pollution that will impact on surrounding landowners and the decimation of what was once a very close and socially active community. Landowners who have sold their once thriving and productive properties, despite being vehemently opposed to the mine, have been silenced as a condition of their sale. This has added further strain to the remaining social fabric of Bylong.

Once again, I urge the IPC to demonstrate great leadership and vision and to reject the proposed Bylong Coal Project, and in so doing, acknowledge the dire consequences of coal mining on climate change.

Yours sincerely

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28/10/2018