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Commission Hearing
Independent Planning Commission NSW



26th February 2019

Re: Hume Coal Project SSD - 7172 – Berrima Rail Project SSD 7171- Rejection

After reviewing the Department of Planning & Environment evaluation of the Hume Coal Project (SSD 7172) and Berrima Rail Project (SSD 7171) and considering the points made in the Southern Highlands & Tablelands Regional Action Plan NSW 2021, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Wingecarribee Shire Draft Operational Plans 2018/19 and their affiliated Social and Economic plans relating to tourism and independent research, I felt compelled to talk at this hearing to reject the projects..

However I am not going to reemphasise the points already made or will be made at this hearing by experts confirming the flaws in the project geological assessment inadequacies, ground water aquifers and unconventional pine feather mining techniques proposals, but rather to raise from a personal perspective as a food scientist & technologist of nearly 40 years, an entrepreneur running several food businesses and a permanent resident to the Berrima region why I strongly reject these projects from a social, environmental and financial perspective. .

My family has owned a farm in Sutton Forest for over 50 years and I have been a regular visitor here ever since until I relocated my place of permanent residence from Sydney North Shore to Berrima mid last year. Over the last year I have been slowly relocating my business interests to the region. In the course of relocating I have got to meet many people like me with innovative business interests looking to escape the madness of Sydney's population explosion and congestion, seeking a more balanced lifestyle.

In part of my decision to move here I consulted a series of reports as to whether the region had viability for business growth in my food industry sectors(s).

The key drivers I sought for **my food industry sectors(s)** are:

- A **'clean and green picturesque'** image as **traceability/image** of food products and ingredients to **their source** is increasingly in demand, I demonstrated these at my talk
- The ability to attract suitable **staff (irrespective of age and skill base)**
- Steady and suitable **local customer / consumer base** to demand my services and products

To highlight salient statistics from the latest ABS data 2017:

- 49,649 residents live in the Wingecarribee LGA. Growth rate is 6.4% over 5 years
- Resident Age range growth over the last 5 years has clearly been in the 65 years and over: accounting for over 25% of the total residents and growing at near double the total resident rate at over 11%. Nearest other resident age category growing is persons aged 25-34 years which one has heard are drawn to the area by cheaper housing, health services and trades work. Many other potential working age ranges in the data were in decline.
- On the business front over 90 percent of businesses in this LGA have less than 4 employees (of which nearly 60% of these businesses are sole traders. Only 1.4% of businesses have more than 20 employees and that business sector has declined over the last 5 years.

- Out of over 5,350 businesses accounted for, key business areas and growth over the last 5 years
 - > Construction (17% of the sector and growth 8%) primarily in residential construction
 - > Agriculture businesses accounting for 10% of the sector has marginally declined in numbers as land is taken for housing to meet the State Governments dwelling numbers. However the areas that interest me in my businesses and willingness to employ is
 - > Manufacturing (partic agri-food) accounting for 6 % of the sector has grown by over 9%
 - > Accommodation and Food Services being 4% of the sector has grown nearly 12%
 - > Professional Scientific & Technical Services being 3% of the sector has grown by 9%
 - > Health Care and Assistance being 7% of the sector has grown by 7% in numbers
- In 2016 it was estimated 1.3 million visitors (over 1.13 million domestic and 34,000 international visitors) that spent approximately \$200 million during their stay on a wide range of goods and services in the Southern Highlands. It is estimated the expenditure supports around 2,300 full time equi jobs with approx a third dependent on tourism.

What I also found informative was that the Wingecarribee Shire was considered 'fit for the future' by this State Government. Being previously an elected Councillor in Sydney's Upper North Shore for 2 terms and being party to successfully defending our position regarding being fit, I recognise how demanding the key points were assessed to retain a stand-alone position; and thus I draw to the Commissions awareness contained within this Councils Draft Operational plans 2018/19 considerable emphasis on areas that appealed to my lifestyle choice and my business interests. ...and that does not include mining and affiliated services in any format.

To highlight just a few key Headings of the Council Delivery plans to emphasise the priorities contained under Sections:

- 4.1 Wingecarribee distinct and diverse natural environment is protected and enhanced
- Section 4.2.3: Encourage residents and businesses to source and produce goods locally
- Sections 5.1: Our shire attracts people to work, live and visit:
 - 5.1.1 Broaden and promote and range business and industry sectors
 - 5.1.2 Increase local employment opportunities for people of all stages of life
 - 5.1.3 Ensure tourism balances the economic benefits with impact on environment and community
 - 5.1.4 Provide diversity in tourism and attractions and experiences
 - 5.1.5 Promote Southern Highlands unique brand identity...
- Under Section 5.3 We support the productive use of our agricultural land and promote diverse and thriving local agriculture industry and its right to farm

To me this spells a strong interest/plan to utilise our competitive advantage in this clean and green picturesque environment with many small local produce and affiliated businesses not just satisfying the local community but also our thriving tourist trade and beyond; Particularly the tourist trade flowing on route from Canberra and Sydney. Not coal trains introducing a haven of health issues to do with dust (loading, holding and transporting), rail/road congestion and poor aesthetic appeal.

In none of these statistics and reports do I see an overwhelming need nor benefits that coal mining or coal trains will bring to the regions; nothing beyond what is already developing without their presence. If you think sporting clubs and other community organisations are going to reap ongoing support, my experience tells me the type of smaller businesses coming into the area will inject interest as they prosper with the aid of the local council and chambers.

I am a small business one of many now investing time and energy into this area. Please consider the damage these 2 projects will do to the reputation and desire for businesses like mine to invest in this area now and in the future.

I ask on behalf of my family and me that the commission and Minister rejects these two projects.

Yours, Sincerely



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