

**Independent Planning Commission Hearing
Hume Coal Project SSD 7172
Moss Vale
26-27 February 2019**

My name is Bruce McGowan. Together with Patricia Manolas I am the owner of a 100 acre farm at Sutton Forest. The farm adjoins the southern side of the Illawarra Highway – immediately opposite the southern boundary of the Hume Project area.

We welcome the DPE Assessment Report recommendation that the Hume Project should not be approved. In my earlier written submission I covered many aspects of the Project that are detrimental to our community. However, I feel it is important for me to express personally to this Hearing our particular concerns that adequate measures will be implemented by Hume to ‘make good’ any reduction or disruption to our water supply..

We raise Angus cattle with **an average herd of 30 cows, 30 calves and a bull.** The herd consumes on average **2,600 litres** per day. We have an licenced bore and a holding tank of **17,000 litres**, equivalent to **6.5 days** of consumption. When we are absent we have the farm monitored at least twice per week to check on cattle health and most importantly water supply. If something goes wrong we have very little time to correct the problem before cattle may die.

Our farm operation is completely dependent on a reliable and regular supply of uncontaminated water and in particular on the bore. Drought periods over the last 20 years has resulted in paddock dams becoming redundant and even a previously reliable spring dried up for months last winter and looks to be drying out again.

We have serious reservations about the 'make good' measures advanced by Hume, namely:

- Payment to cover increased pumping costs for bores forecast to decline in depth by 2-5 metres (expected to occur in 15-20 years time).
- Increasing the depths of more impacted bores at sometime in the future depending on drawdown (probably in about 15 years).
- Bore replacement or alternative supplies for the most impacted bores.

The implementation of these measures will require detailed negotiation and legally binding agreements between Hume and the individual landowners.

Many questions arise.

How will a single landowner negotiate such complicated matters with Hume who would be in an overwhelmingly strong negotiating position once it has project approval?

When will these negotiations and remedies take place?

Immediately or in 10-15 years time when some bores are forecast to be impacted but when the project is nearing the end of its life when Hume may be less inclined to respect its obligations?

What groundwater model will be used as a basis for negotiation and future monitoring? Will any future deviations from the modelling forecasts be accepted by Hume or contested as being due to factors other than the mine operation.

The practicality and logistics of bore replacement and alternative supplies will in many cases be extremely problematic

Who will pay the landowners' legal costs?

Will landowners be compensated for any disruptions to their water supply caused by the project or will Hume require that once initial agreement is reached the landowner would have no further recourse?

The proposal for recompensing extra pumping costs is not a 'make good' measure insofar as it does not allow for the fact that lower aquifer pressures will not only increase pumping power consumption but will decrease bore pump flow unless the pump is changed or modified. Will the costs to maintain current capacity be accepted?

Finally, will Hume accept provide a backstop of alternative water supply in all cases where a proposed 'make good measure' does not maintain the bore capacity at its current level? How quickly could such supplies be agreed and implemented?

We are heartened by the DPE's recognition of the difficulties and its conclusion 'that the make good arrangements are not suitable or practical for the scale of impacts for this project'.