

IPC PUBLIC HEARING
WEDNESDAY
TUESDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2019
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MOSS VALE SERVICES CLUB

Samantha Bailey, resident of Sutton Forest, *Commercial Fitout & Refurb Project Manager*
Current President of Sustainable Southern Highlands Inc.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Sustainable is a not for profit community association established in 2015, primarily to fund legitimate, independent, professional research into the pertinent science, facts and potential outcomes of proposed initiatives within the Highlands – the major one obviously being the proposed Hume Coal mining project.

Sustainable is supported by individuals and businesses who are similarly concerned that decision making critical to the sustainability of the Highlands environment, economy and community needs to be based on facts supported by research – we have raised funds within the community to fund research and studies related to groundwater, pollution, heritage impact, water modelling, potential contaminants, hydrogeology and more – a cost of over \$200k.

There are some points that we would like to briefly comment on in order that the Commission have a clear understanding of some of the concerns within our community.

In no particular order:

It has become apparent that there remain significant concerns around the safety of the mining method proposed by Hume Coal. We note that this appears to be a view shared by experts, including Prof Galvin, and we are particularly concerned that Hume Coal has elected to NOT share their risk assessment, not just with the community but also not with the Department of Planning, nor the Commission. Given that their proposed method has not been used elsewhere, despite their assertions to the contrary, and that the Department's own expert has stated that it in fact appears to be "pillar extraction ... the most hazardous form of underground mining that there is" this would seem to be of paramount importance.

The community have grave concerns about the potential permanent and irreversible impacts to the aquifer and the probable resultant loss of groundwater. Similarly, we do not believe that they have provided sufficient nor satisfactory explanations as to exactly how they will manage the potential contaminants in the slurry they are proposing to pump back into the mine voids and the subsequent impact on the aquifer and local bores, or the ongoing monitoring of this.

We were particularly interested to note in one of the publicly available transcripts that their peer review has been done in accordance with the Murray-Darling Basin Guidelines 2001, and not the Australian Groundwater Flood Modelling guidelines – which given recent events on the Murray-Darling would warrant alarm bells.

And it is of course particularly pertinent that we are part of the water catchment area and we are fairly sure that all in this room, and indeed the wider Sydney area, would be somewhat concerned as to what could potentially end up in their water.

Hume Coal have little or no respect for the community & authorities, evidenced by just one of their recent Facebook posts deliberately worded to incite division within the community – and it is of

particular interest to note that a respondent on that thread commented – at this point I must apologise and point out that these are not my words - and I quote “the Department of Planning is a complete wank”, a comment that the Hume Coal Facebook administrator extraordinarily chose to ‘like’. A screenshot has been provided.

Perhaps the most contentious issue of all is make good – our understanding is that Hume Coal will be attempting to enter into agreements with landowners based on what could potentially happen to their bore in the forthcoming 5 year period(s) – no-one in their right mind would agree to enter into an agreement of this nature – and, that make good will be on the basis of landowners electing to opt-in. They will have to deal with 70+ landowners in this regard and judging by their past record and poor relationship with directly affected landowners that is not something that will go smoothly, nor well.



Notwithstanding the rules that DoI Water has around make good to the aquifer it is also abundantly clear from the transcripts that there are serious concerns about Hume Coal’s ability to do this.

The NSW Government owns the water resource (on behalf of the people) and is responsible for its management – our understanding is that the data on which Hume Coal has relied in putting its mine plan together has not been fully shared with those responsible for making the call on whether to approve the project or not – so it is difficult to understand how on earth approval could be given without having full information ...

Hume Coal’s appetite for risk would seem to be far higher than the community’s, and there are many in the community who strongly believe that this mine will have significant and long term adverse effects on the Highlands, economically, socially and environmentally.

In the transcript of the Commission’s meeting with the Department of Planning & Environment we have noted that a closing comment was made by yourself Prof Fell that the Commission & Department were “both in the same game, and that’s doing it right for the State”. We sincerely hope that you will do what is right for the State and uphold the Department’s recommendation that this mine is not in the public interest and should NOT be approved.

Thank you.

  the Department of Planning is a complete wank. "...the most significant for any mining project that has ever been assessed in NSW." Huh!? Open cut (and not just coal) mining that completely removes said aquifers?

Like Reply 15h



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Hume Coal Project



