

## **Wilpinjong Coal Mine Expansion - Objection**

The expansion of this mine is objectionable on a number of fronts:

### **Impacts**

The cumulative impacts of coal mining in NSW have not been sufficiently taken into account, if they have been taken into account at all. The impacts include:

- Health impacts due to dust, noise, mental health due to stress and loss of community and family connections
- Financial impacts from loss of land and property values, and people moving away to avoid the other impacts, decreases economic opportunities and destroys long term prospects.
- Social impacts come from destruction of local communities, in this case Wollar, with people losing connection to the place where they were brought up and to the people they have relied on for human interaction which is so vital to our wellbeing as a species. The detrimental effect of this on individuals and families can be enormous.

The expansion of this mine would be yet another example of one company's interests taking precedence over the interests of a whole community of people.

### **Long term consequences**

Coal mines are by their nature short term. Once the coal is mined, the company moves on or closes down. The land and the people left behind have to live with the consequences of the destruction. Rehabilitation is extremely difficult and very costly to even attempt. The amount of money put aside by mining companies for reparation is not sufficient and companies often walk away, leaving others with the mess. The system we have is broken and worthwhile rehabilitation does not happen. Only one company to my knowledge, are actively rehabilitating the mines while they are still active. I would therefore ask the Commission to consider the long term consequences of yet more mining and the almost inevitable long term scar that will be left in the landscape as a result. Once the land is gone, it is gone. Short term profits and a small number of jobs do not compensate for this.

### **Environment**

The impacts on the environment are of course, also wide-ranging. Destruction of habitat, health impacts on flora and fauna from dust, noise and stress, species loss and so on, in most cases, cannot be reversed. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations not to prioritise short term interests over long term ecological preservation. Humans cannot live without an environment that gives us clean water and clean air and the more we pollute our environment the more likely we are to feel the consequences in the future.

### **Climate Change**

The absolute priority of any decision-making authority should be to stop emissions from fossil fuels by whatever means possible. This is not something to be ignored. It is an imperative if we are to stay below 1.5°C warming. There is a lag effect of between 10 and 50 years whereby emissions generated now will still be in the atmosphere and contributing to warming. This is too often ignored. Climate change is already contributing to weather

events, to the acidity and warming of our oceans, which in turn impacts on all living things in the areas affected, including the Great Barrier Reef. Numerous reports have cited the economic consequences of not acting. We cannot stop climate change now but we might be able to slow it down. Fossil fuels must stay in the ground if we have any hope of doing this.

I ask the commission to carefully consider all of the above when making your determination.

Thanks you

Janet Ellis  
30<sup>th</sup> March 2017