

Emma Belfield  
Objection to Wilpinjong coal mine

12 April 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

My family has operated a sheep grazing property on the Northern Tablelands for over 160 years. I count my lucky stars that no gas or coal company has ever found reason to disrupt our beautiful farming community, world renowned for its fine wool production.

I object in the strongest terms to the proposed expansion of the Wilpinjong coal mine. Peabody's operations in the Hunter catchment have already had severe negative impacts on the community and environment, and they should not be given any opportunity to further the damage.

There has been a total shift in the stated reason for the expansion – moving from supply to the Bayswater Power Station, on to now include increased export capacity.

I set out the grounds for my objection in brief below:

It is unacceptable to destroy a further 800 hectares of land.

It is unconscionable to bring a mine to within 1500m of the village of Wollar.

The Wollar community is trenchantly opposed to this expansion, and I add my voice to theirs in making this submission in opposition to the proposed expansion.

The social impacts of the current scale of operation has not yet been properly assessed – how then can an expansion be under consideration?

This proposed expansion is set to take place outside of any wider planning process – we know that the Planning Assessment Commission has identified the need for a long term strategic plan for the coal mines around Mudgee.

The site of the proposed expansion would utterly destroy Aboriginal cultural heritage values, with inadequate consultation to date with Traditional Owners.

The proposed offset arrangements are entirely inappropriate – the company has proposed to use 'rehabilitated' land from areas already mined. This shows an utter contempt for the biodiversity offset provisions in NSW law, such as they are.

And finally, 2017 is no time to be expanding our coal mining operations – the imperative to act now on climate change demands that we begin the transition away from polluting fossil fuels like coal. There is no time to waste.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Belfield