

## **Objection to Wilpinjong Expansion Project.**

I am objecting to this project on the grounds that it is short-sighted and puts short-term monetary gain before people's lives and well-being. It is damaging environmentally and will only contribute to the climate emergency we are facing, and from a legal perspective none of the proper consultations and review processes have taken place.

The social impacts of the project on the community of Wollar far exceed any other social benefits the mine may bring. These impacts have not been properly assessed by the proponent, the Department, nor the previous PAC, and they must be properly assessed before any determination is made. The proposed Social Impact Management Plan does not mitigate current impacts from the mine, notwithstanding future impacts if the expansion is approved. At the very least, if the project were approved, all remaining residents of the Wollar district must be offered acquisition rights. What kind of future do these residents face once their community is fragmented? They must be compensated proportionately with what they will be losing if this project goes ahead.

The Review of this project by the previous Planning Assessment Commission identified "the need for a long term strategic plan" for the coal mines around Mudgee, and for NSW generally. This is urgent need, as the current assessment approach fails to properly account for the cumulative regional impacts of multiple mining operations. The current PAC should delay its determination of the Wilpinjong Extension Project until the "long term strategic plan" recommended by the previous PAC has been completed.

In addition the usual disregard for cultural heritage is on display here. The costs to Aboriginal cultural heritage of this mining project far outweigh any perceived benefits it would bring. The Rocky Hill complex contains an ochre quarry, rock art sites, and significant artefacts, but will be entirely destroyed by the proposed Wilpinjong mine expansion. The PAC Review recommended that further consultations with Aboriginal stakeholders should be conducted, and this (at the very least) needs to be undertaken before the project is determined. This consultation process must not be tokenistic in nature.

The proposed biodiversity offsets don't meet current NSW policy, which requires that when critically endangered habitat is destroyed, its offset must be "like for like". That is, the same area of the same remnant ecosystem must be protected somewhere else. The proponent has not attempted to do

this. So-called “supplementary measures” (such as paying into a fund) must only be a last resort, according to the policy.

More than half the offset credits for the Wilpinjong Extension will be on land that has been mined and rehabilitated. This makes a mockery of biodiversity offsets, which were already of dubious value in protecting biodiversity and preventing loss of species. Using previously mined land for biodiversity offsets must not be allowed.

I support the recommendation of the Department that there should be no final void left in the proposed new pit. Additionally, should the project be approved, it should require the proponent to backfill the voids in the currently approved pits, in line with community expectations and world's best practise mining rehabilitation.

Finally, I believe we have a responsibility to act in accordance with the Paris Agreement and reduce our carbon emissions as a matter of urgency. We have the ability to do this and do not need more coal mines. This expansion does not take any of this into account and is based purely on profits with no thought for the future health of the land and people. Climate Change impacts from the production of 13 million tonnes per year until 2033 are too great and have not been adequately considered. The world is now beginning to transition away from coal in order to meet pollution reductions needed to ameliorate climate change. There is no need for this coal mine to be given a six year life extension.

Please make the right decision here and prevent any expansion of Wilpinjong.

Tiffany Paterson.