

Max Smiles-Schmidt from Inana Ringwood Road Wollar.

Having lived on this property for approximately twenty years personal impacts in regard to the proposed Wilpinjong Mine expansion are present. Having first hand understanding of the impacts created by the existing Wilpinjong mine an approved expansion is irresponsible. The associated social, short term and long term environmental impacts have led to a strong dissent towards an approval for this proposal. The New South Wales Government has a responsibility to its population for continued environmental protection and sustainability into the future, looking past short term proposals that have such devastating impacts including the destruction of significant Aboriginal heritage sites, the decline in the Wollar community, the endangerment of local biodiversity and the loss of critically endangered habitats.

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.

The properties surround Wollar which have significant social impacts including:

-isolation, stranded assets, loss of connections in the village and increased threat during natural and vehicle accident emergencies

- no assessment of Low Frequency Noise (LFN) emissions propagated by Wilpinjong Mine either currently or for the proposed expansion

- no assessment of PM2.5 emissions on human health.

The significant social impacts on remaining Wollar district residents have not been addressed by Department of Planning or the Review PAC. The remaining community members should be included in the condition for Acquisition rights due to the failure of the proposed Social Impact Management Plan not mitigating current impacts.

The previous Planning Assessment Commission made note of the need for a long term strategic plan for the coal mines in the Mudgee region and for NSW. As approvals are based on case by case assessments; environmental longevity in NSW is at serious risk. A final decision on this project must be halted until the Review PAC recommendation to develop a 'high level strategic vision' for coal mining near Mudgee, and NSW more broadly, is conducted so that cumulative impacts of multiple mining projects in the area can be properly accounted for.

The changes to the noise assessment criteria in Appendix 6: Condition 1- Changes to the temperature inversion exemptions allow the mine to increase noise emissions in winter months. This is not a stringent condition which will weaken the regulation of mine noise.

Emissions from the Wilpinjong mine will exceed double the yearly emissions across NSW throughout its lifetime (140 Mt in 2014). As the NSW government has agreed to adhere to the Paris agreement to restrict global temperature increases these emissions place the potential for . 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 seven year life extension. Early in November the NSW Government released a Climate Change Policy Framework setting a broad commitment for zero emissions by 2050.

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.

The proposed biodiversity offsets do not meet current NSW policy, which requires that when critically endangered habitat is destroyed, it's 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 approval be granted, 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.