

To whom it may concern,

I object to the proposed United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Project and Associated Modifications MOD 3 and MOD 16.

CONTEXT

My particular concern is the consideration of cumulative impacts should project/these modifications be approved.

Across the Hunter in general, and now in this already heavily developed area in particular, cumulative impacts are a significant issue.

Indeed, it's obvious that there are likely to be synergistic negative impacts of this project and the neighbouring Hunter Valley Operations South Modification 5 proposal. That these are being considered separately with no obvious mechanism to provide input on the projects *jointly* underscores this very point. (It should also be no surprise, then, that this submission I am making today is substantially the same as the one I have submitted in relation to HVOS Mod 5.)

VOIDS

The assessment of the impact of larger voids across this project and the neighbouring Hunter Valley Operations South Modification 5 is simply inadequate. What will the contribution be to the loss of all-too-critical base flows to Wollombi Brook and the Hunter River? Loss of groundwater across the region is of genuine concern (as recent reporting of the experiences of Hunter farmers during the drought will attest). And just what is planned for longer-term management (project life and beyond) of these voids and their impacts, and how will this be funded? This total-cost perspective needs to be properly considered.

AIR POLLUTION

Local monitors in Jerrys Plains and Warkworth have recorded numerous exceedances of national air quality standards since the start of the year (and it's only February!). That such exceedances continue to occur with such frequency indicates substantial failure in the EPA's Dust Stop Program. The proposed development will only make things worse. The increased volume and height of associated overburden will be a significant contributing factor in this regard.

BIODIVERSITY

Across the two projects (this and the neighbouring HVOS proposal) impacts on biodiversity will be significant and, I believe, unable to be offset. Expressing loss as small-sounding percentages is unhelpful in this context. When the absolute amount of (contiguous) relevant habitat is already small, even very small percentage reductions can – and will – have disproportionately large impacts.

Yours sincerely,



CRAIG SHAW