To whom it may concern,

This is a submission to strongly object to the Bylong Coal Project. The Bylong Valley, which I have visited many times, is fertile agricultural land, is rich in heritage value and is the birthplace of Natural Sequence Farming which has recently been lauded as best land management practice across the country during this crippling drought. It also borders on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. For these reasons and many more – including the small consideration of climate change - this site is utterly incompatible with the intentions of a coal mining project.

The loss of 400 ha of prime agricultural land consisting of fertile soils overlaying good groundwater cannot be rebuilt on mine rehabilitation. There is no precedent for this scale of prime land reconstruction anywhere. Likewise, the proposed reconstruction of 65 ha of critically endangered ecological community on the rehabilitated open cut mine site is an unproven risk.

It’s time the government and assessors privileges the food security water sources and agricultural land Australia is lucky to have, rather than allowing foreign companies to dig it up and contaminate it.

I believe the Department of Planning final assessment report fails to adequately consider threats to the Bylong River and connected groundwater, and having spoken to local farmers, it has definitely not factored in threats to other water users and agricultural production.

The Bylong Valley has been an important source of drought fodder for many years. This production is reliant on an adequate source of water to grow lucerne and pasture.

There is no clear or properly costed justification for Bylong Coal Mine. The long term environmental, social and economic impacts including loss of farming capability into the future have not been considered.

In conclusion, we cannot squander our agricultural and natural assets for short term profit. This mine will be ruinous for the Bylong Valley and threatens the existence and livelihood of all those who reside there.

I urge you to stand up to protect this spectacular valley from a project that will only leave us with poisoned land and a mess to clean up.

Yours faithfully,

Darren Byers

Sydney, NSW