Dear Independent Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the planned Bylong Coal Project. I firmly believe there will be major impacts from any coal operations and object to the project on the both personal and environmental grounds.

I have spent a significant part of my life on my grandparents and parents properties in the Bylong Valley and Rylstone. In addition to this, I was married in Rylstone last year. Experiences I have in the region have shaped me as a person and inspired an appreciation of the importance of nature and conservation. Having young children myself who are already developing this same connection to the land breaks my heart to think it may not be intact for them to appreciate. By standing by and agreeing to this project we are wrecking their future and quite frankly that is just not fair.

With what we know about the imperatives of climate change, we know that the world must transition rapidly to a low carbon future. This will mean that we must adopt renewable energy sources to meet our energy needs. As I am sure your committee is aware the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has concluded that a 1.5 degree global warming rise is within reach albeit with a transformational effort to cut emissions to net zero, encompassing the phasing out of coal by 2050. Hence further destruction of the pristine Bylong Valley natural resource lacks the foresight required as to transition the world to renewable and low emissions energy options.

Further to this I understanding there are Aboriginal cultural sites in the area with no plans of preservation. Given our countries history of destroying our first peoples’ land and culture it sickens me to discover this is continuing in 2019. As a doctor I see the impact that these sort of decisions have on the health of Aboriginal people everyday.

Finally as a doctor I am aware of the significant health impacts of coal production: mining, disposal of contaminated water and tailings, transportation, washing, combustion, and disposing of post-combustion wastes, produces pollutants that affect human health. I am aware that communities in which coal mining or burning occurs suffer significant health impacts. Any mining in the region would expose far reaching residents, flora and fauna to the damaging effects of noise, coal dust and light.

It is for these reasons I urge you to not approve the Bylong Coal Project.

Regards,

Dr Louisa Martin (MBBS, Bach.App. Sc (Hons)