

I object to the Bylong Coal Project.

I submit that the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) must reject the Bylong Coal Mine.

The assessment of the merits, as a whole, of this Project, particularly with reference to NSW Government Policy on action on climate change clearly shows that it should not proceed. NSW Government endorses the Paris Agreement and will take action that is consistent with the level of effort to achieve Australia's commitments to the Paris Agreement. The transition from the coal based economy, the global energy market, is underway. The IPC must accept responsibility for the part it must play.

The Department of Planning Final Assessment Report (FAR) deems the Project to be approvable. This FAR has not assessed the climate change risk. It certainly cannot be approved for the period until 2044. The most recent IPCC report purports that there is a 12 year window for action to constrain global warming to 1.5 degrees. This is only achievable with radical fundamental structural change. The IPC must consider this mine in the historical context of this IPCC report. Planning for a future not based on a coal economy must be the bottom line consideration.

The deficiencies in the Department of Planning Preliminary Assessment Report (PAR) and the express concerns of the Commission have not been adequately addressed in the FAR.

The Upper Bylong Valley with its outstanding scenic, agricultural, and heritage values is still under grave threat from this proposed underground and opencut mine. The threats have not been adequately considered by the FAR.

The subsidence problem has been recognised but the extent of the potential negative impact has not been appreciated. It will be too late after the cliffs have crumbled. The relationship of the groundwater and agricultural productivity, particularly during drought, is recognised to a degree by valuing Tarwyn Park for its pioneering work in Natural Sequence Farming but the loss of future farming capability has not been accounted for. The impact of the coal mine on Bylong River and the associated groundwater remains of concern. 'Compensatory Water Arrangements' cannot mitigate the impact on the Goulburn and Hunter River systems and downstream water-users.

There is a cumulative impact at the regional level of the loss of biodiversity. This has not been assessed. The destruction of over 250ha of Endangered Ecological Communities, including Critically Endangered Ecological Communities is not really offset by asserting they can be reconstructed on the rehabilitated mine site. There is no evidence that this is possible. The impact on biodiversity also cannot be said to be offset if there is a deemed protection area that is a subsidence area.

The Development Application for a coal mine in the Bylong Valley by the Korean company KEPCO should be rejected. It is not in the public interest to approve the extraction of coal for the next twenty-five years. There is no social licence for new coal mines. It would be a mistake to approve this mine, it has not been justified. The FAR focussed more on a mine plan proposal with or without an open cut mine rather than the overall consideration and weighing up of the social, environmental and economic impacts of the mine. I ask the IPC to reject this DA, the Bylong Coal Project would cost too much.