

United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Submission

On behalf of the Nth Rothbury Residents Group, I object to United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine.

The last thing that the Hunter needs is more coal mining. Already the air quality in the valley is way below the national standard with Muswellbrook now voted the dirtiest town in the country largely due to coal mining in a national survey conducted by the Australian Conservation Foundation.

The incidence of respiratory illness in the Hunter is much higher than the national average according to Doctors for the Environment. Lung function tests in school children in Singleton came in way behind those done in nearby Branxton by Dr. Au from Singleton. Many Hunter valley residents experience respiratory ailments that clear up as soon as they leave the area.

If the costs of the health impacts of mining were included in the economic assessment of this mine, it would not be considered worthwhile.

The mining and burning of coal and its resultant CO2 emissions goes against Australia's and New South Wales' commitment to the Paris agreement to limit global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees. This is not an environmentally sustainable development.

Recently, at the climate Change Conference on Climate Change, Dr Richard Attenborough warned that our continued use of fossil fuels such as coal threaten our entire civilisation.

Two large final voids will be left in the landscape by this project. This is simply no longer acceptable to leave this legacy for future generations to deal with. If the mine is not economically viable without leaving these voids, it should not proceed.

With so many plants and animals under threat of extinction in NSW, it is not acceptable that 670ha including 527ha of woodland and grassland containing 247ha of critically endangered ecosystem will be cleared, putting further pressure on the threatened Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot and Spotted tailed Quoll. There is no equivalent offset area available to replace this. We particularly object to the proposed offset to re-establish critically endangered bushland on mine rehabilitation which is quite likely to fail in the short term with low rainfalls now commonplace. These will serve no purpose in providing habitat, if they are successful, for many years to come.

Further assessment needs to be done on the cumulative impact of groundwater drawdown on Wollombi Brook and associated groundwater dependent ecosystems and riparian vegetation. This impact is likely to be huge and has not been adequately assessed.

The overall cumulative impact of this and all the other mines already operating in the area has not been assessed. Jerry's Plains, Warkworth and Bulga communities are already suffering from too much noise and dust.

This project trades off human health, climate and environmental impact for short term company profit and government royalties, against well known, long term, environmental impacts and simply should not be allowed to proceed. If the costs of the health impacts of coal mining were included in the economic assessment of this mine, it would not be considered worthwhile.

For the above reasons, we contend that this mine should not be allowed.

Denis Rothwell

