

Hume Coal Project – Submission from Margot Derwent

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I moved to the Southern Highlands several years ago for tranquillity, health and an enhanced lifestyle quality in a beautiful environment.

Frequently travelling by train to Sydney, there are constant delays caused by coal trains shunting and other goods trains obviously having precedence over passenger trains. It is a rare day that the passenger trains which I take are running to schedule because of this. Adding more goods (coal) trains to the mix would make passenger train travel even more disrupted and unreliable.

The Hume Coal impact on the environment will be considerable, despite claims to the contrary. In addition to the obvious and visible, the fact that the proposed mine is located within the Sydney Water Catchment, the potential for future negative consequences is undeniable.

Bearing in mind that the coal from the proposed mine is for export to Korea, the Hume Coal project will inflict considerable negatives on the local residents who will reap absolutely no benefits. If coal mining is deemed essential to support exports, by the authorities, then they should take one of the mines that are closing in the state and around the country, where the infrastructure is already in place rather than destroying the beautiful countryside of the Southern Highlands and the quality of life and health for many residents who have significant investments in the region.

Hume Coal claim that they will provide jobs for locals. The truth is that there are very few 'locals' that have, or desire to have, the mining expertise required, so they will be bringing people from outside the area to fill these jobs. The infrastructure of the Southern Highlands is currently at bursting point with people who want to move to the region because of the lifestyle quality, not to become coal miners. In a setting as beautiful as the Southern Highlands, there are infinitely more suitable businesses that should be developed rather than coal mining.

In addition to these obvious concerns there are questions that seem to have not been addressed, such as the potential to expand the operation in the future, hideous and toxic stockpiling and with what will the mine be filled after coal is removed. The entire project is a recipe for a disastrous outcome for residents of the Southern Highlands.