The proposed development of the Hume Coal mine represents a real and looming threat to the safety and security of the surrounding environment, in particular the water supply and ground water quality and purity.

This will affect the livelihoods of many and potentially do catastrophic and irreparable damage to the water supply relied on by many farms and agricultural businesses in the area, not to mention the environment. All of which are conected to the tourism business and supply the area with substantially more jobs than the alleged three hundred that will supposedly be generated by this propossed project.

'*Both the Department and Dol Water (Department of Industry – Water) consider that the predicted drawdown impacts on this aquifer would be the most significant for any mining project that has ever been assessed in NSW*'.

Any mitigations offered by the proposed by Hume Coal frankly fall short when weighed against a sustainable water supply in an increasingly arid and drought prevalent climate, and once the damage is done (such as at Thilmere Lakes) it cannot be undone.

The Mine's design is not widely known, uses untested and unproven methods and proposes to store mine water underground, a deeply unconventional practice that further endangers the water supply and safety of the environment when an accident almost certainly occurs, no mine has ever operated without a single incident and were that water to escape into the wider system the results would be absolutely disastrous.

'*The Department considers that the various safety risks may lead to the transfer of additional mine water to the surface and a need to discharge into watercourses. The Applicant has not assessed this issue or proposed a water treatment plant*'.

'*The Department, the EPA and Water NSW consider that any discharge of mine water (whether treated or untreated) may result in significant impacts on surface water*.'

The method proposed may also cause the "sterilisation" of the coal, which would impact the quality of the coal produced and further negatively weigh the risk/reward balance which already falls strongly against the implementation of this project.

Coupled with this is the fact that the coal is very near the surface, which further heightens the environmental risks associated with the project.

'*The Department notes that there are fundamental difficulties in efficiently recovering the coal resource for this project, particularly due to the shallow depth of the coal and the risk of environmental impacts*'.

This is an area of high tourism that relies on not only it's local food and wines, but also the abundant natural beauty spots which bring huge quantities of tourists to the area, this project presents an

unconscionable threat to the environment, agriculture, and the wide swathe of the population who's lives and livelihood both directly and indirectly rely upon it's safety and stability.

The proposed mine works would not even be particularly profitable, paling into insignificance in it's value brought into the community when weighed agains all that it risks and the vast majority of capital generated by this mine will not go to either the community or indeed the country being that it is owned wholly by the Korean company POSCO (which has paid a paltry $208 million in income tax over *17 years*, a tiny fraction of the *billions* it generates for itself *every year*).

'*Importantly, even the Applicant's estimated net economic benefits of $373 million is relatively low in comparison to many other coal mining projects in the Southern Coalfield and across NSW*'.

To summarise; Hume Coal's unconventional mine design presents a range of uncertainties and safety risks, as well as the likelihood of significant and disatrous impacts on water resources. Consequently, the proposed project site is not suitable for the development of a new coal mine.

The economic benefits estimated by Hume Coal's EIS cannot be realised without significant adverse impacts on the environment and the local community, particularly in relation to groundwater impacts.

The economic benefits cannot outweigh the likely adverse impacts on the environment and community, they fall short by a wide margin.

NSW Department of Planning & Environment have stated there is a threat of serious harm to both groundwater and surface water resources, and there is currently considerable scientific uncertainty about the level of environmental damage to both and as such represent the very real possibility of catastrophic and irreparable harm.

As a result, the project should not and indeed cannot logically be considered an 'ecologically sustainable development', the 'precautionary principle' (that it is better to be safe than sorry) is triggered.

Consequently, based on all information currently available and the potential risks weighed against the comparitively minor gain, the project is not in the public interest and should not be approved.