

Submission by Dr Gerard Brophy

Hume Coal IPC Hearing July 2021

My name is Gerard Brophy and I am a permanent resident of Berrima. I submitted my response to the Hume Coal EIS in June 2017. In this submission, I strongly objected to the proposed underground coal mine, the proposed stockpile area and the associated Berrima Rail Project. I remain firmly opposed to all three projects and I agree with the recent decision of the NSW Department of Planning that these projects cannot be supported on any grounds and, quite frankly, I am puzzled that a government decision to ban the projects has not been made. I remain of the view that these proposed projects offer very little benefit to the people of Berrima in particular and the Southern Highlands in general. In fact, very few people will actually benefit from these proposed projects other than Posco, a Korean based steel manufacturer. Local environmental degradation causing irreversible damage in exchange for the profit of a few offshore investors does not make any sense to me.

I am a composer of music who lives and works in Berrima and I have chosen to live in this unspoilt area for the the quiet and inspirational environment. The areas of concern that I worry about most are

Groundwater and surface water impacts

Amenity impacts (noise and air impacts)

Heritage, cultural landscape and other visual impacts

Economic and social impacts

Ecologically sustainable development concerns and greenhouse gas impacts.

To my mind, none of these areas of concern has been addressed convincingly by Hume Coal and all of these areas of concern would be adversely affected and in fact, degraded by these three proposed projects. The major concern about these projects is the impact that they will have on the supply of water both locally and for the Sydney city water supply. The destruction of the water table would be irreversible and it would have a permanent deleterious effect on both purity and supply. This must not be allowed to occur. The so called 'make good' arrangements proposed by Hume Coal are impossible to realise and are in fact meaningless. These measures would never, ever, ever return a degraded environment to its former pristine condition. The rapacious nature of the impact on the environment of Berrima by the proposed coal mining, stockpile and Berrima Rail Project will be irreversible and will be felt for millennia.

In late 2019 and early 2020, Berrima experienced catastrophic and devastating bushfires in the areas to the north and the south of the village.

If this situation occurs again, will the Rural Fire Brigade be forced to use valuable drinking and farming water to quench these blazes? I shudder to imagine such a nightmarish scenario.

No water, no life.

Yours sincerely

Dr Gerard Brophy
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