

Submission to the IPC on Hume Coal and Berrima Rail Projects

POWC – Protect Our Water Catchment

POWC are a group of activists who seek to protect the Sydney Water Catchment from destructive development projects.

We assert that our water security is of primary importance. We seek to uphold the legislative obligations of WaterNSW, to identify and eliminate threats to our water supply, including developments that fail the test of *Neutral or Beneficial Effect* on water quality and quantity.

We reject the concept of *Offsetting* both permanent damage to the natural catchment lands, and to the built system of water supply, by way of temporary compensatory payments. We reject the idea of negligible impacts on water quality by recognising the extent of pollution flowing from mining damage. We see these effects as cumulative. We ask that consent bodies such as the IPC take a wider view on environmental damage of development proposals.

The recent decision on the Dendrobium mine has highlighted the legacy of poor planning leading to an impasse between coal extraction for corporate profits and the protection of our natural assets. We support the IPC in recognising the deficiencies of the planning approval process in this instance.

POWC has a special concern about multiple mis-managed water bodies and aquifers in the water catchment. We care about the Thirlmere Lakes, for the upland swamps, for Upper Nepean drinking water reservoirs and the Special Areas. We care about the catchments of Woronora and the Upper Nepean dams - Cordeaux, Cataract, Nepean & Appin. We care about Dharawal National Park, for Heathcote National Park, for the Royal National Park. We care for Blue Mountains pagoda country, the Newnes swamps, and we care about all of the vast Warragamba catchment, including the distant corner of Moss Vale that this mine will impact.

We see water catchment as an entirety and we are afraid that the mining operations all assessed individually are, in concert, far more damaging than the IPC is able to judge. We look to the bigger picture. Every past approval has set a precedent for further destruction, every new approval will do the same.

POWC support the advice given by the DPIE to the IPC recommending against approval of the Hume Coal and Berrima Rail Projects.