**STATE PLANNING COMMISION**  **HUME COAL MINE PROJECT
SUBMISSION OF PATRICIA MANOLAS**

**JULY 2021**

My name is Patricia Manolas. Together with Bruce McGowan I own a farm at Sutton Forest which borders the south-eastern boundary of the proposed Hume Coal mine.

I wish to register my strongest opposition to the Hume Coal mine and request that the State Planning Commission recommends the cancellation of this project for good. This prolonged and stressful process over so many years has taken its toll on our community.

The DPIE report confirms the many serious environmental risks and consequences posed by the project. I will not repeat these matters as they have been well documented – but I can confirm how sad it would be to despoil such a lovely area much loved by all who live here and all who visit here.

My plea is based not on clinging to the past for an older generation but of preserving a future for our children and grandchildren. My childhood in Sydney was very happy as we had many open spaces to explore in our suburbs, dirtying hands, knees and faces, falling out of trees, excitedly riding bikes into neighbouring suburbs – adventures that were accepted by our parents provided we were home by dark. All this is no longer possible in Sydney for a variety of reasons and children are the poorer for it. The Southern Highland still provide those opportunities for children and many more young adults recognise this.

The younger generation of adults is increasingly conscious of the need to look after the environment and the need for a healthy work/life balance. My daughter is a case in point. She is 34 years old and has 3 young and energetic boys. Her husband has a successful professional career as a business consultant and currently they live in Tokyo. They envisage that they will move back to Australia in the next few years and are evaluating their options. Rather than moving back to suburban Sydney where they both grew up they are very taken with the idea moving to the Southern Highlands because of its many advantages including good housing prospects, good schools, great community spirit and above all a beautiful, untarnished countryside in which a family can enjoy a healthy, energetic outside life. They believe that they can achieve this without sacrificing her husband’s career as the current rapid advances in technology are making business communication and remote working a reality.

My daughter is not alone in seeking such a life – not a life opting out of society but energetically engaging in a community – she has friends who are of a like mind. The idea that the area could be irreparably damaged by a coal mine, a ‘sunset industry’ in their eyes, is bewildering to them and is making them hesitant to move here eventually. They fear that such an operation would set a precedent for approval of other destructive industries which would be able to claim “if a risky and polluting industry such as Hume can proceed other similarly harmful industries should be allowed”.

Please do not allow our beautiful area to be despoiled for later generations. Please do not allow it to be a thin edge of the wedge but plan for this community to be an example of a successful balance of healthy workplaces and a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle.