Independent Planning Commission Level 3

201 Elizabeth Street

SYDNEY. NSW 2000

23 July 2021

Dear Commissioners

**Hume Coal Project SSD 7172 AND Berrima Rail Project SSD 7171 - Second referral**

I write on behalf of the Committee of the Exeter Village Association (EVA) with membership of over 200 members who reside or own property in the villages of Exeter or Sutton Forest. As a Committee we wish to express opposition to Hume Coal’s applications (SSD 7172 and SSD 7171).

EVA’s objections are based on similar grounds cited for the refusal of the Rocky Hill mine by the Land and Environment Court, referred to as being “in the wrong place at the wrong time”.

This project is similarly in an inappropriate location, inconsistent with current and proposed rural/agricultural/tourist uses in the area, not in the public interest and questionable in terms of mining methodology and environmental risks.

The potential impacts of water drawdown affecting numerous landowner bores are understated and severe, with dubious prospects of “making good” the loss of water to any landowner.

There remains serious doubt over how the geology will react to an unproven method of extraction, and considerable concern over the leaching of polluting chemicals/minerals into the aquifer from slurry waste deposited in the mine voids, or spill into nearby watercourses. This has potential to degrade not just local, but also Sydney’s drinking water catchment over the 23-year life of the mine.

Whilst there would be some revenue gained by NSW Government from coal extraction and limited employment opportunities, it is considered that greater income and employment from existing uses and planned expansion in the absence of the mine would more than compensate. Moreover, there does not appear to be a need for more coal in a global sense, given the extent of existing mines and approval for future mines, and would add to global emissions, contrary to the Paris Agreement for limiting climate change.

EVA requests that the Commission refuse the project on the basis that it is not ecologically sustainable since it is not able to avoid:

* Environmental harm to the locality and an important drinking water resource for the Sydney region,
* Adverse economic and social impacts on affected landowners and the community,
* Compromising the way of life in the Southern Highlands, the occupations and the future investment plans of landholders and tourism operators in the area,
* The unproven mining methodology pointing to potential unforeseen negative consequences.



Linda O’Connor

Secretary