

To whom it may concern:

I am deeply shocked and offended that an open cut and underground coal mine is being considered in my community- the Kepco mine.

Before I tell you some of my concerns I have a couple of questions which I would like answered please?

1. Why were people prevented from speaking out about the mine after they 'did a deal' with Kepco? This is otherwise known as gagging opinion and is something I believe is in the public interest to know this has happened. Can this be good for consultation?
2. Why is the mine near Berrima going to be 'passed' and the mines around Mudgee being accepted? Does this have anything to do with 'influential' people who may NOT live near Mudgee but do live near Berrima? The Berrima (don't know its name) is best practice by all accounts and the Kepco mine is destroying not only a local community (its done that) but now the wider economic and social structure of the wider community of Rylstone.

I grew up in the Bylong Valley during my adolescent years, having moved from Mudgee and Sydney and I now have a home in Rylstone. The Bylong valley is absolutely iconic in every way: the unique and beautiful environment; the native wildlife and flora; the fresh air; the peace; the safety; the feeling of community; the support from neighbours; the capacity to earn a living from the land with our beef cattle while also protecting much of the natural environment; the ability to pursue our interests such as bush walking and exploring; the relationship with the history and especially its aboriginal history which my family has always been strongly connected to.....I could go on.

After I left the area to pursue my studies and career overseas the thing that kept me going was the photos of the valley which my mother sent every week. These photos were of a pristine bush and valley environment with amazing blue skies. I don't want to get photos of mines, trucks, trains, dust and people. I can go to the Hunter Valley for that and what a medical, environmental, social and economic disaster that is.

Why would anybody destroy something so delicate and precious and irreplaceable for some short term gain. I know for a fact that the land can NEVER be rehabilitated to anything like its original beauty and worth, despite what they say. Where will we get our water from once the aquifers

are destroyed? We are totally dependent on underground water and rainfall. This system is so precious and delicate that it cannot be restored once it is gone. Is that the plan? So you eventually drive us all out as we will have no water to continue our farming.

Rylstone is a cultural centre very much on the move in a beautiful country way. It is attracting tourists who come via the Bylong Valley because of this a beautiful iconic drive. People will not come any more if there is a big open cut mine and all the related ugly infrastructure that goes with it. The cafes, wineries, Ganguddy, Festivals (Cementa), Futurelands, cultural evenings at Number 47, Yum Cha.....These are the things that will sustain this community....Kepco is driving the very backbone of our community away and silencing them in the process. This is all being done in the name of 'good community participants' by throwing money and sample bags around the towns. This is just blatant bribery. I don't need Kepco or any other mine. Stay in the areas you have already destroyed. Even those wonderful woman at the Bylong shop are now gone! Shame on Kepco!!!!

Leave our beautiful home alone and save the local community and in the long term the world. Wrecking one end of the valley will ruin permanently the whole valley. It is just absolutely wrong to say that the area of the mine is limited in size. It has already destroyed that end of the valley with areas for plant and other mining infrastructure. It used to be paddocks with grazing animals, trees, cattle and horse yards all surrounded by amazing hills etc. Now it is just UGLY!!!! What gets me is that this mine has not even been approved and it is already impacting negatively on our local beautiful environment and community. What will happen when it is approved? I dread to think?

The whole valley is being destroyed and I am sure that is the plan. STOP

Sincerely
M. Martin