

I acknowledge the local Aboriginal people as the traditional and true owners of the land on which this hearing is taking place, and I thank the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak.

I oppose the mine.

My great-grandmother Jessie Murray was born in Taree in 1864, the second of 14 children all born in Taree, Nahiabac and Gloucester. She had more than 100 first cousins. My grandfather was one of eight born in Nahiabac. I've got literally hundreds of relatives in this region, including some who live on farms scattered among the hills between here and the coast which have been handed down through generations since the 1800s.

I live in Taree with my husband and I work part-time in my husband's business, which services clients throughout the region, including here in Gloucester.

I like to be as involved as I can be in my local community. I'm a past and present member of various local environmental, social welfare and special interest groups. I'm also a volunteer literacy tutor at Taree TAFE, I've served as a public reserve trust board member, and I'm an active member of a local branch of a political party.

I know a lot of people throughout the area and I've never met anyone who wants this mine.

We don't want it because we don't want Gloucester to become like the Hunter Valley, where farmland and communities have been eaten up by the rapacious spread of huge, noisy, filthy open-cut coal mines and where residents are now warned on certain days to stay indoors because of the coal dust in the air.

We're worried by the very real threats to our drinking water and for the conservation of the Manning River generally. Commissioners will be aware of MidCoast Water's concerns, outlined in their response to GRL's revised EIS, about the inadequacy of the proposed mine's water management system.

While the mine presents unacceptable social and environmental threats locally, its prospect looms against the backdrop of bluntly dire warnings from the world's leading scientists about climate change, widespread environmental damage and the harm to humans and all biodiversity which is being caused by coal mining and the continued use of fossil fuels.

At the same time, the world is on the brink of a revolution in renewable energies. What a tragedy if this beautiful valley was to be destroyed, and with it the all the opportunities that exist – if only we could have some vision and intelligent planning - to develop a prosperous future through renewable energy, tourism and niche agriculture.

The NSW Government and the MidCoast Council both sensibly oppose the mine.

As a mother and a grandmother, I appeal to the Commissioners to refuse GRL's request for the mine to go ahead to help ensure a better, safer future for us all.

Thank you.