

Spoken Submission by Penelope Charles – local resident
To the NSW ^{Public} Planning Assessment Commission Hearings
Gloucester Soldiers Club
15 November 2017

Thank you for coming to Gloucester. We are grateful for the opportunity to share our fears and concerns with you.

Welcome to our beautiful valley – I do hope you will take the opportunity to admire the glorious vista from the Mograni lookout and see for yourselves the valley in question.

My name is Penelope Charles and I have lived in this area for 7 years. We were looking for a country environment where we could be part of a great community, grow some food, breathe some fresh air and appreciate the views. We chose this place above others because of its thriving, welcoming community, its exceptionally high level of facilities for a town of its size, its train station, its great main street, and its plentiful summer rainfall. It was definitely the best choice – apart from the threat that now hangs over us.

My concern here is acceptable risk. I have first-hand knowledge of preparing risk assessments and I know the difference between cursory tick and flick and genuine, brave, ^{well researched,} honest examination of *real* risk.

I have experience of mining towns from early childhood. I have seen first-hand, for example, the economic depression in suburbs closest to the mines. It doesn't surprise me that most workers at the Stratford and Duralie mines lived kilometres away - in Gloucester, and towards the coast.

I see the risk - that when the mine is right up to the town, the workers will live further away.

There are in fact multiple risks from the proposed Rocky Hill mine: *Here are a few*

- That too much water will be taken from a much needed local supply;
- That during heavy rainfall, contaminated ponds will overflow;
- That deep open-cut mining will destroy river flows;
- That the level of diseases like asthma and cancer, already too high in this area, will increase even more;
- That our air quality will be regularly compromised, as it is in the Hunter Valley;
- That regular inversion layers in this valley will exacerbate the coal dust fallout over homes and pastureland;
- That prevailing winds will ensure coal dust is a constant companion in town;
- That noise will reverberate unbearably across the valley between the Mograni and the Bucketts;
- That trends in falling mine employment will continue, and the promised jobs will either never eventuate or be short-term;
- That existing flourishing industries and employment will be seriously damaged or destroyed:

- That business entrepreneurs and their young families and self-funded retirees that have provided such a boost to this town will no longer want to live or invest in the dirty unhealthy environment of a mining town;
- That if miners do come to town, even for a short time, they will push rents and home prices of local properties (that are further from the mine) above the level that locals can afford;
- On the other hand, that the values of properties overlooking the mine, and those impacted worst by its noise and pollution will crash, destroying the lifesavings and the ability to support themselves, of those who own them;
- That with falling prices and less demand for coal predicted to continue world-wide, the mine will fail, or be closed early;
- That local businesses will be tempted to over capitalise to catch the mining dollar only to miss out to bigger external companies who can offer cheaper tenders, or be caught "on the hop" if the mine were to fail or be closed early;
- That the promises made about the coal mine, (especially about protections, levels of employment and training), are not realised, as they have not been realised in so many other places;
- That the mine, once finished will not be suitably rehabilitated.
- That if the mine falls victim to current market trends and becomes a tax write off, then we, the people of the country, will *all* pay for it.
- That we will listen to the spin of those who have a vested interest in this mine and fail to see the evidence of other places, of market and technological trends, and of expert research;
- *That the objectors are correct and we will end in a very sorry state*
- That history will condemn us for the short-sighted, ill-advised legacy we would leave our children by chasing a dirty unhealthy industry whose time must past;
- That class actions down the track, against loss of economy, health, environment and community and the ability to make an independent living: could cost government dearly;
- That we will fail to grasp the real opportunities that are here right now. Elsewhere agriculture, tourism, tree-changing and clean long-term industries are already growing prosperity. We could be too.

Too many risks. Too many examples from elsewhere that these risks can be realised. Too much advice from experts and evidence from research that this mine is a liability. Too many viable businesses and opportunities at stake.

I must agree with all those who have examined this proposal and recommended that it not proceed. Ever.

Penelope Charles
15.11.2017