

“Reclaiming our Valley”

Hunter Communities Network

Tony Pearson
Chair of Panel
Independent Planning Commission
Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2100

ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au

Friday 9 August 2019

Dear Mr Pearson

**United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Project (SSD 7142)
Submission to proposed condition**

The Hunter Communities Network (HCN) is an alliance of community based groups and individuals impacted by the current coal industry and concerned about the ongoing rapid expansion of coal and coal seam gas exploration and mining in the region.

HCN has objected to the proposed United Wambo project on the grounds of cumulative impacts on water sources; air, noise and blast pollution; health and amenity; biodiversity and community.

We strongly oppose the approval of this very large disturbance footprint in an area of the Hunter valley that is already over-saturated with super pits.

The conditions of approval on all current mining operations fail to protect the environment and society from an increasing cost burden to health, loss of other industry opportunities, permanent damage to water sources and sterilisation of land for future use in the form of final voids.

The economy of NSW is currently suffering the effects of the most intense drought on record. Major inland centres such as Dubbo, Tamworth and Bathurst are threatened with loss of water security during the coming summer period. The high evaporation rates and loss of seasonal rainfall can be attributed to climate change, as predicted.

The current mining and power industry in the Hunter region are also under threat of losing water security, if the drought persists.

The cost of this current intense drought to the agricultural sector, associated businesses and regional communities is greater than the perceived public benefit of royalties and taxes predicted to be generated by the United Wambo mine.

While we commend the Commission for considering a condition relating to improved management of greenhouse gas emissions, we do not support the proposal for an Export Management Plan in the form published on Friday 2 August 2019 for public comment.

For the proposed condition to have regulatory teeth and effect an outcome that prevents increased damage to the global climate, it needs to be improved by adding:

1. *‘to the **reasonable** satisfaction of the Planning Secretary*
2. *a) signatories that are meeting their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement*
3. *b) signatories that are meeting the 5 yearly ‘ambition’ mechanism under the Paris Agreement*
4. The condition needs a review requirement to allow the Export Management Plan to be updated in terms of the Paris Agreement ‘ambition’ mechanism

HCN appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed condition and commends the Commission for the transparent manner in which deliberations are being made.

However, we continue to maintain that the United Wambo project is not an environmentally sustainable development and cannot be approved under the objects of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Bev Smiles
Convenor