

Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW

Sarah Clutton

Bowral NSW 2576

Dear Sir/Madam

I refer to your email to me dated 2 August, providing the opportunity to comment on additional material provided by Hume Coal about the Hume Coal Project and Berrima Rail Project (SSD 7172 & SSD 7171)

I would like to provide the following response to the letter of Mr Stephen O'Donoghue of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

I remain firmly opposed to this coal mine. In providing this response, I would like the Independent Commission to consider the vastly changed circumstances of the Wingecarribee Shire that have occurred over the past nearly eighteen months, since the onset of the Covid19 Pandemic. As you may be aware, there has been a huge influx of new residents coming to live in the area. On a recent ABC radio broadcast, announcer Nick Rheinberger quoted a statistic of 20,000 new residents to the region. This sounds an unlikely possibility, but if this is the case, this represents an increase of something in the order forty percent of statistics currently cited about our population. In any event, there has been an incredible influx, and certainly there is a crisis in housing, and a lack of stock for rental or purchase in the real estate market.

In order to assess the true numbers of residents affected by this project proposal, which will have a substantial effect on how the government should consider community impact, tourism and jobs etc, I suggest that given there is a Census **this coming week**, the commission require the updated numbers to be considered before coming to any conclusions.

In response to Mr O'Donoghue's letter I note as follows:

Point 1:

The increased rail movements, as set out, are concerning. On rail lines such as Sheepwash Road at Glenquarry, there is significant and ever-increasing traffic, and increased movement at peak morning and afternoon traffic times would be very concerning for residents. Not to mention the hourly, nightly rail movements that will impact the many houses that are near the train lines.

Point 2:

The idea that approximately 90 bores will be impacted should be reason enough to disallow this project. That is 90 very high value properties that will become, essentially unsaleable.

Point 3:

The “applicable criteria” spoken of in relation to air quality means little on a windy day with uncovered coal mounds.

As we know from reports of the NSW Health Department, “There is convincing evidence from [scientific] literature for a link between exposure to particulate matter and adverse health outcomes. Particulate air pollution is consistently and independently related to serious health effects, including lung cancer and other cardiopulmonary mortality.”

Particulate matter from coal mining is of grave concern. We have just experienced three solid weeks of unbearably windy weather in the Southern Highlands and these formerly unusual weather events are increasing. This coal is extremely close to townships and the covering of loads can only limit some dispersal of particulate matter. There will be uncovered coal at many stages in the processing. Why is the Government choosing to put our community’s health at risk?

The World Health Organisation considers clean air a basic requirement of Human Health and Wellbeing. It is why many of us moved to the area.

Point 4:

I make no comment on the VPA, apart from saying that a contribution of \$2.1 million over the life of the project seems the most paltry, insignificant and ridiculously small amount, when compared to the profits that will be going to a foreign entity at the expense of our local community. This is a small proportion of value of many single properties that will become worthless when their water sources are gone.

Point 5:

It is of grave concern that the agricultural food production figures of Wingecarribee being relied on to assess impact, were taken from a report that is **ten years old**. In the last decade, small agricultural producers and providores have moved to the area in droves. Wineries have flourished. Farms have changed and grown.

The figures coming out for the Judith Stubbs & Associates report about Tourism figures seem ridiculously low, particularly in light of recent tourism surges in the last 2- 5 years. Saying there are only 196 tourism related jobs in the Moss Vale and Berrima area is patently ridiculous. Are they including the many, many private homes that have, in very recent years begun renting cottages and spare rooms on Airbnb (and employing cleaners, gardeners etc)? Weekends in the Highlands see a complete lack of available tourism beds. Staff are hard to find in terms of keeping up with demand. There are so many jobs going unfilled in

this area, every day. Using the idea that we need to create mining jobs in townships that cannot get job ads filled is ridiculous. We cannot find staff for all the jobs that are going. Yes, the miners will come from out of area because they will be well paid, but we have jobs for locals here. Plenty of them.

When was the Judith Stubbs and Associate report undertaken? Why is the Government not also requiring an independent report?

Point 6:

I make no informed comment.

Point 7:

I make no comment, except to express disbelief at the short-term pursuit of coal by a Government that is ignoring the science in terms of environmental degradation and investing in clean alternatives.

I hope the Commission will take into account very recent changes in the population of this LGA when considering this current material, and that it will rely on current information. I also hope it will take a considered approach where independent reports are not provided alongside those reports paid for by Hume Coal.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Clutton

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Tel: 