


Richard Smith  
OAKWOOD



20 January 2026

To the Independent Planning Commission,

I write to formally object to Yancoal's proposed expansion of the Moolarben Coal Mine.

I am told the project places an estimated 675 hectares at risk from clearing and mining, delivering an additional 30 million tonnes of run-of-mine coal and approximately 25 million tonnes of product coal to 2038. This expansion would generate an estimated 64 million tonnes of additional greenhouse gas emissions, directly undermining climate commitments and increasing long-term environmental harm.

The proposal would also cause unacceptable ecological damage, including the clearing of 113 hectares of Koala habitat where breeding individuals have been recorded, and 80 hectares of Regent Honeyeater habitat, also supporting breeding females. Both species are already under severe pressure and further habitat loss is indefensible.


Water impacts are equally concerning. Groundwater drawdown of 2–6 metres or more, potentially lasting up to 25 years post-mining, threatens Moolarben Creek, a critical drought refuge for local wildlife.

The expansion would also damage Wiradjuri cultural landscapes, including sacred and culturally significant sites, representing an irreversible loss of heritage.

Finally, the project lacks a credible economic justification. Coal mines in the Mudgee region have carried job vacancies for years, demonstrating that this expansion is not necessary to support regional employment. The mine's location within the Central West further amplifies the long-term social and environmental risks.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose approval of the proposed Moolarben Mine expansion.

Sincerely,



Richard Smith