

Moolarben Coal Complex OC3 Extension Project

To the Independent Planning Commission,

My name is Martin Smith, I am a retired professional engineer living in Cooma NSW and I am deeply concerned about the expansion of coal mining in our states, due to the environmental/climate impacts being felt in my area. I am active in land restoration projects, and am very much aware that the limited actions we are taking now will not be effective for at least a decade, by which time the nature which we are trying to re-establish may very well be gone for ever. Existing areas of natural land which are still flourishing should not be subject to deliberate degradation unless this is totally unavoidable i.e. that a very convincing case for this be provided and accepted.

I am writing to object to Yancoal's proposed Moolarben OC3 coal mine expansion near Mudgee on Wiradjuri Country.

I am concerned that this project would cause serious and irreversible harm to the environment, climate and community, and should not be approved.

In particular, I am concerned about:

- Threatened species and habitat loss, including the clearing of over 113 hectares of koala habitat where koalas and breeding have been recorded, as well as Regent Honeyeater and microbat habitat. No biodiversity offsets can replace habitat that is already supporting threatened species, and in any case biodiversity offsets have been demonstrated to be ineffective.
- Impacts on Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve, with mining proposed within 100 metres of the reserve and inadequate assessment of noise, blasting and vibration impacts.
- Water and groundwater risks, including long-term groundwater drawdown that could harm Moolarben Creek and groundwater-dependent ecosystems that are critical drought refuges for wildlife.
- Climate impacts, with the project producing an estimated 64 million tonnes of additional greenhouse gas emissions at a time when NSW is not on track to meet its legislated emissions reduction targets.
- Lack of public benefit, with no clear jobs justification for expanding coal mining in a region where renewable energy development is being prioritised.

The NSW Government cannot afford to approve new or expanded coal projects during a climate and biodiversity crisis. This proposal is inconsistent with the NSW Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023 and the goals of the Paris Agreement.

For these reasons, I urge the Independent Planning Commission to reject the proposed Moolarben OC3 Coal Mining Extension Project.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Martin Smith
Cooma NSW 2630
13 January 2026