

Independent Planning Commission

135 King Street,

Sydney NSW 2000

Re Moolarben Coal Complex OC3 Extension Project

SSD- 33083358

Dear Commissioners,

I write this submission against the proposed expansion as a concerned resident of the State of NSW and as a grandparent concerned about the future of not just my granddaughter but all future generations as they will be greatly affected by climate breakdown caused by the burning of fossil fuels. There is also the loss of wildlife and destruction of bush habitat that will be caused by the proposed expansion of the project.

The proposed extension project, which involves the partial expansion of the existing open cut operations, as well as four new open-cut pits along the floor of the Moolarben Valley, should be deemed unacceptable by the commission as its next hearing on the matter for the following reasons:

Yancoal has refused to implement a recommend 500-metre buffer around the proposed extension to help protect wildlife and the neighbouring Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve.

The proposal also threatens Wiradjuri cultural heritage.

The amendments being proposed come too late to be considered by the Planning Commission given the hearings should not have been postponed.

The amendments do not reduce the footprint of the mine, which is already very large, and do not reduce their effect on the many threatened species in the area in terms of loss of native habitat.

The Moolarben Coal Mine is already the largest producing coal mine in NSW, and the proposed expansion threatens koala habitat, microbats and regent honey eaters. It will also come within 100 metres of the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve, one of the oldest proscribed conservation areas in the state.

In addition, at least 48 threatened species have been recorded in the 480 hectares of native vegetation to be cleared under the terms of the proposal.

There would also be around 400 hectares of nationally endangered Box Gum Woodlands cleared if the extension were to go ahead.

As a bushwalker and life-long conservationist, I would rather see the area under consideration by the Commission kept in its natural state and not become an open cut mine as the biodiversity loss cannot be offset. There is also the critical issue of water contamination at the headwaters of several major river systems.

The Commission should also note that the proposed extension does not take into consideration the findings of the Net Zero Commission, which found that any further expansion of coal mining is not consistent with the NSW Climate Change Act. As well, the Denman Court of Appeal Decision should be considered and acted upon, where it was found that decision making involving the approvals of coal mining should take into account their emissions in downstream usage and their effect on local climate, which could otherwise not fully take into account the true costs of such proposed extraction of coal.

The proposal involves net zero creation of jobs and comes at a time when the International Energy Agency, only this week, called out that coal production globally had peaked, leaving a question mark over how coal mining regions will manage the transition away from fossil fuels. See Renew Economy – IEA calls peak coal even as “Age of Electricity” takes hold to boost global power demand - <https://reneweconomy.com.au/iea-calls-peak-coal-even-as-age-of-electricity-takes-hold-to-boost-global-power-demand/>

For the above reasons, I would urge the Commission to refuse the application for the proposed extension.

Thank you for considering my submission.

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