**Submission Opposing Yancoal's Moolarben OC3 Coal Expansion**

I write to formally object to the proposed OC3 expansion of the Yancoal Australia Moolarben coal mine.

## 1. Incompatibility with the Renewable Energy Transition

There is no justifiable reason for an existing, active coal mine to be permitted to expand at a time when New South Wales is actively transitioning toward renewable energy. The Moolarben mine operates within a declared Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), established to accelerate investment in clean energy infrastructure.

Approving an expansion of thermal coal extraction in a Renewable Energy Zone directly undermines the strategic direction of state energy policy. It sends a contradictory signal to communities, investors, and renewable energy developers who are expected to align with decarbonisation targets and long-term emissions reduction commitments.

## 2. Climate Impacts and Drought Vulnerability

NSW has experienced significant and well-documented climate shifts, including more frequent and earlier-onset drought conditions. These changes are already affecting regional communities and agricultural producers.

Government agencies are preparing drought assistance measures, and many local farmers are making difficult decisions to destock due to lack of rainfall and deteriorating pasture conditions. In this context, approving a water-intensive coal mine expansion is environmentally irresponsible and economically shortsighted.

## 3. Water Use and Resource Competition

Mining operations require substantial volumes of water for coal extraction, processing, and dust suppression. The region surrounding Moolarben simply cannot afford to cede scarce water resources to expanded mining operations—particularly during prolonged dry periods.

Water is fundamental to agriculture, food security, and regional economic stability. Unlike mining, agriculture provides ongoing, generational economic activity and sustains local communities long-term. In contrast, the majority of mining profits are not retained within the local area to future-proof agriculture or invest in regional resilience.

Allocating additional water to coal extraction during drought conditions represents a misallocation of a critical public resource.

## 4. Risk of Water Contamination

The likelihood of water contamination—particularly during drought conditions when dilution capacity is reduced—poses unacceptable risks to surrounding farmland and ecosystems. When soils are dry and water systems stressed, landscapes are less resilient and less able to recover from contamination events.

Any degradation of groundwater or surface water would have lasting impacts on agricultural productivity and the viability of farming enterprises in the district. During drought, there is no buffer capacity in the system to absorb or remediate contamination impacts.

## 5. Long-Term Regional Sustainability

The long-term future of the region lies in sustainable land use, renewable energy development, and resilient agriculture—not in the continued expansion of fossil fuel extraction.

Approving the OC3 expansion would:

- Undermine NSW's renewable energy objectives
- Increase pressure on scarce water resources
- Heighten contamination risks during drought
- Compromise agricultural sustainability
- Prioritise short-term extraction profits over long-term regional resilience

## Conclusion

For these reasons, I strongly object to the proposed OC3 expansion of the Moolarben coal mine. The proposal is inconsistent with the region's renewable energy future, incompatible with worsening climate realities, and represents an unacceptable risk to water security and agricultural sustainability.

I urge the consent authority to refuse approval of this expansion in the interests of environmental protection, responsible water management, and the long-term wellbeing of the community.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

17th February 2026