

Dr Catherine Reynolds  
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To the Independent Planning Commission,

**I very am glad to be able to put in an opposing submission to the Yancoal Moolarben OC3 Expansion.**

I have seen first hand the damaging results of the coal mining industry in my own backyard, with the Peabody Metropolitan Colliery now adversely impacting two separate water catchments: my drinking water supply in the Woronora Reservoir catchment; and the Hacking River catchment, where coal waste from Peabody's surface facilities has spread along kilometres of the river which runs through the heart of Australia's oldest National Park.

I know Moolarben is a different mine, in a different area, but in the course of talking with so many others about Peabody I have found normal people disgusted by so many different aspects of this industry.

My specific objection to Yancoal's Moolarben Expansion relates to climate impacts, and also the impacts on groundwater, and the environment.

The more extreme weather events we're now seeing everywhere are tremendously concerning. Insurance premiums are increasing everywhere. In my own area home insurance payments have gone up 87% since 2020.

I live in the Sutherland Shire and this whole area is surrounded by bushland, crown land and extraordinary National Parks. We were so fortunate to have dodged impacts from the horrendous 2019-20 bushfires, but I know we many not be so lucky in the future. I have a beautiful local koala population of around 300 animals. If we have a big fire go through this colony is likely to become functionally extinct.

Aside from the worry about such a loss, I am directly paying for this industry through increased home insurance premiums. I have another annual payment due shortly, and I wonder how much longer I will be able to afford to cover these amounts. I worry what will happen when I can't.

I, and the rest of my community are paying for mining with our increased anxiety levels about what the future will bring. My local Council has maps that show a sea level rise into the future. A significant proportion of my suburb will be underwater by 2100. All thanks to an industry that will never have to pay for the damage that it has caused.

I know Commissioners will have many submissions asking for this mine to be approved on the basis of jobs and growth, but it is the wider public that are covering 'negative externalities'. Please don't ask us to subsidise this industry. It is an unacceptable cost, and enough is enough.

Australians want a change, they see the impacts, and the writing on the wall.

I note that the recent Net Zero Commission Coal Mining Emissions Spotlight Report found that further expansion of the NSW coal industry is inconsistent with our legislated emissions reductions targets and the Paris Agreement. This Moolarben extension will generate a colossal 64.6 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over the life of this mine, around 58% of NSW's total annual emissions. This is terrifying. And that doesn't even account for the downstream emissions. I'd like to know what those impacts will be.

China is trying to do its bit, with their own coal share of power generation dropping from 73% in 2016, to 51% in 2025. China is now inspecting their own coal mines to make sure they don't produce more than their quota. The writing is on the wall for Australia's export markets, and Australians employed in coal mines here. Please don't prolong this pain. We don't need this mine, and we will do far better without it.

It's hard to choose between the worse impacts, weigh and measure the sort of damage this mine will cause otherwise.

I find the predicted groundwater drawdown shocking. We are one of the driest continents on earth and rely on water for everything - to lose an expected 2-6m of groundwater is totally unacceptable. With climate impacts this will further bake the surrounding area. It is not apparent that the likely damage has been adequately assessed.

Meanwhile, I haven't forgotten how in the depths of drought in 2019 trains were employed to cart 725,000 litres of water a day out to mines near Lithgow to keep them operating.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile there's the proposed clearing of vital habitat at Moolarben: 23 threatened species are found in and around the site.

As just one example of these species, we have less than 300 Regent Honey Eaters left in the wild.

I've copied here a photo by wildlife photographer Jan Wegener, so you can see what Yancoal proposes to destroy.

The Saving Our Species program has Taronga Zoo, BirdLife Australia, Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council, and Local Land Services all doing their best to build a Regent Honey Eater breeding program - all because Regent Honey Eaters are now so rare they're losing their song. They don't learn how to sing to attract mates, and in turn this threatens the future of the species.

Our country would be so much poorer to lose these beautiful flashes of gold across the landscape.

But Yancoal sees no value in this, and want to bulldoze habitat where these birds live.

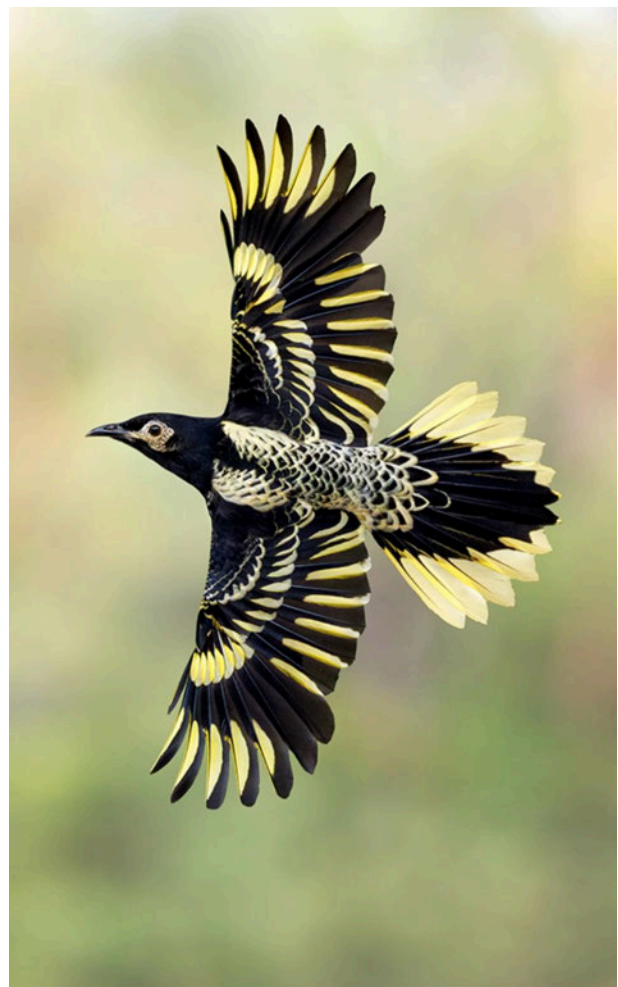
It is a travesty to think that biodiversity offsets might be used to green light this loss.

This whole area should be made part of the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve.

I ask the Commissioners to refuse this assessment, and ensure this precious area is retained for future generations.

Kind regards,

Dr Catherine Reynolds



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-08/water-train-saves-mine-and-jobs-in-lithgow/11392468>