

Independent Planning Commission
ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au
2 August 2019

RE: KEPCO Gateway Certificate

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is my concern that KEPCO is relying on an expired conditional Gateway Certificate in an attempt to progress its development application for the Bylong Coal Project.

I feel this expired certificate is invalid and if this application is progressed in the absence of a new gateway certificate it represents a failure in the environmental planning and assessment process.

The Bylong Valley has some of Australia's most productive soils. Further it provides economic benefit from equine activity and contains one of the best tourist routes in NSW. These economic benefits could be well developed if outside the "shadow" of proposed expansion of coal mining in the valley via flawed processes.

It is ludicrous and not in the public interest if a Gateway Certificate lodged around six years ago and which failed on all but one assessment criterion is considered a valid Gateway Certificate.

Further having done some travelling in the Hunter Valley I have no confidence that agricultural land can be returned to equivalent production after coal mining. From my observation some supposedly "restored" land even struggled to support native vegetation planted as part of a habitat restoration project.

As Australia grapples with a changing climate on already very dry landscapes I do not agree that valuable agricultural land should be jeopardised by any future proposed unproven mine rehabilitation strategy.

I urge that KEPCO be required to re submit an application for a new Gateway Certificate which must pass all assessment criteria before being approved and valid in any future development application. Such an application should be rigorously assessed in the reality of whether current rehabilitation strategies have been able to properly demonstrate over time that agricultural land and soils can be properly restored post mining.

Yours sincerely
Cathy Merchant
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