

To the planning commission,

My name is Aakanksha and I'm a 40 year old marketing professional and I'm very concerned about the expansion of coal mining projects and continuous reliance on fossil fuels exploitation, the impact they have on the climate as well as biodiversity, and our incessant focus on the short term while not bearing enough responsibility for the long term and the future of our communities and planet.

I'm writing to you to object to Yancoal's proposed Moolarben Coal Complex OC3 Extension Project near Mudgee in Wiradjuri Country. I'm concerned this project will cause harm to the environment, climate and community where we should instead be preserving and protecting what has already been exploited for a long time.

In particular, I'm 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.
- 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 amendments just proposed by Yancoal do not reduce the clearing of native vegetation at all and are far too late in the process for consideration now. 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 recommend that the Moolarben OC3 Coal Mining Extension Project be refused.

Thank you for considering my submission

Sincerely,

Aakanksha, InnerWest 2050