

Personal Moolarben submission- objection

Submission: Moolarben OC3 Coal Mine Extension Project, Project Number SSD33083358.

I write this submission as a retiree with 40 years' experience in the field of education. I have visited the Mudgee area often and have friends living in the area, especially close to the current and proposed mines.

I have three main grounds for objecting to the approval of this extension:

- The destruction of the environment and the natural aesthetics of the Mudgee greater area
- The impact of climate change to the local area and our commitment to the Paris agreement.
- The disrespect of the traditional owners of this area

The destruction of the environment and the natural aesthetics of the Mudgee greater area

Already the footprint of the three major mines in the area is 70 sq km of above ground destruction. All that is left in that area is huge ugly voids and the loss of any resemblance of the farmland, bushland and natural formations, which existed before. That loss is forever and will not be restored.

The new proposal will cut right up to the borders of Munghorn Nature Reserve. This reserve needs to be expanded as a refuge for the many endangered and critically endangered animals within and outside its borders. I ask that authorities study the map and see how ideal it would be to incorporate this planned expansion into the reserve. This area needs to be protected from the day and night dust and blasting that the mine, coming right up to its borders, would involve.

This proposal includes clearing 113 hectares of koala habitat (one mother and joey sighted right in the middle of a proposed pit): 80 hectares of Regent Honeyeater habitat where breeding pairs have been sighted (only 250-350 breeding pairs in existence); and up to 401 hectares of the nationally endangered Box Gum Woodland ecosystem. To allow this habitat to be destroyed would be unforgivable.

The proposed 5 metre drawdown of the alluvium is alarming as deep-rooted trees and the ecosystems that depend on them will be threatened. The sandstone cliffs, roosting sites for endangered bats are unique and if damaged by the adjacent blasting will not be able to be repaired.

The impact of climate change to the local area and our commitment to the Paris agreement.

I have been assured by the present NSW government that NSW will meet its Net Zero commitments, yet the Net Zero commission has clearly stated that NSW is not on track to meet that promised obligation. Further in its

<https://www.netzerocommission.nsw.gov.au/publications/coal-mining-emissions-spotlight-report> it has stated clearly; “Continued extensions or expansions to coal mining in NSW are not consistent with the emissions reduction targets in the Climate Change Act or the Paris Agreement temperature goals it gives effect to”.

This coal mine expansion undermines the promise of Net Zero of our government and decision makers.

The proposal also does not have regard to the landmark Denman Decision.

<https://www.johnsonlegal.au/newsfeed/denman-aberdeen-muswellbrook-scone-healthy-environment-group-v-mach-energy-and-independent-planning-commission>

This was a unanimous decision of the three justices of the Appeals Court. I was privileged to be in the court when the case was presented. So now failing to account for Scope 3 emissions and the resultant pollution and climate damage, in the local area and beyond, can no longer be allowed. Also, on the same day the decision was given the International Court of Justice (ICJ) gave its ruling on the obligation of source nations to take responsibility for Scope 3/ downstream emissions.

<https://envirojustice.org.au/what-the-icj-ruling-means-for-australias-environment-laws/>

The disrespect of the traditional owners of this area

The traditional custodians, who have been guardians of culture and country have already witnessed the wiping out of 70 square kilometres of destruction of sites and artefacts of their country. The proposed further destruction of 55 heritage sites cannot be justified. It is time to show respect to custodians and save this proposed area from blasting and annihilation.

In conclusion, I restate my strong objection to the Moolarben OC3 Coal Mine Extension Project, Project Number SSD33083358. Any one of the three areas discussed above should be grounds for the rejection, let alone all three.

