

I wish to lodge my strong objection to the Bylong Coal Project.

As outlined below, the project will have a severe detrimental effect on: the local environment; Tarwyn Park; prime agricultural land; local aboriginal cultural heritage sites; important European heritage; and tourism revenue. To ignore these irreversible adverse effects is inexcusable, especially considering the financial benefits of the project are primarily in favour of a foreign company (KEPCO). Not only do the residents of NSW suffer the devastating consequences of such an open-cut coal mine, the long-term financial advantage to NSW and Australia is questionable at best. This project clearly fails the public interest test. This project only serves the interest of KEPCO, and the pitifully small projected financial gain to the state of NSW in no way outweighs the negative impacts detailed below.

Tarwyn Park is one of only five farms worldwide recognised by the United Nations as sustainable. Tarwyn Park is a unique living laboratory of Natural Sequence Farming methods and holds significant scientific and agricultural value. One must be sceptical of KEPCO's claim to continue using Tarwyn Park for agricultural purposes. As stated in the 'Bylong Coal RTS' document, they propose to install pumping wells on the property, with no concern or care taken for the groundwater levels. With the groundwater levels reduced, Tarwyn Park will no longer function as a sustainable farm, and Australia will lose its only UN recognised sustainable farm.

The proposed project will destroy large areas of prime agricultural land. This will affect not only the farmland directly within the project boundary, but also surrounding land. The coal project will result in severe depletion of groundwater and subsidence impacts on more than 1700 hectares. Just because KEPCO have acquired large areas of land, it does not give them the right to permanently destroy such fertile land.

The Environmental Impact Statement states that 239 Aboriginal archaeological sites and cultural features were identified. 144 of these sites are identified as being at risk from the Project. The report suggests that salvage methodologies will be carried out, but the report fails to acknowledge the fact that such sites are inextricably intertwined with the local area and landscape. They cannot simply be removed from the area and still maintain the same significance.

As part of the project, important European heritage will be lost, including a historic church, Upper Bylong Public School and historic homesteads and farm buildings.

Finally, the negative impact on tourism revenue will be significant. The 'Social Impact Assessment' document concedes that the "...Project will have an adverse impact on the character and amenity of Bylong Village..." and that this negative impact will last for 10 years. Whether the impact lasts for 10 years or is permanent is irrelevant, once the tourism is gone, it will never be back.

I humbly ask you to do your job as commissioners, and not simply "rubber stamp" this project. If the Bylong Coal Project is approved, the impact on the Bylong Valley will be irreversible. There will be no second chance. It can never be restored to what it is now. Future generations of Australians will only be able to experience the beauty of this area through old photographs, and will ask "who let this happen?". Please do your duty and reject the Bylong Coal Project.