

Friday 19 May, 2017

To the Planning Assessment Commissioners of the Bylong Coal Project.

I attended the recent PAC Public Hearing in Mudgee, and due to having many sincere concerns about this Project, some of which are listed below and suitably outlined in previous and other Public Submissions, I would like to propose an alternative to the approval of a 'greenfields' coal mine in Bylong Valley.

I propose instead, that the Bylong Coal Project is not approved by PAC.

As you are no doubt aware, Seoul is one of the most polluted cities on Earth due to coal-fired power stations. South Korea's new President Moon Jae-In has a cleaner energy policy that aims to progressively phase out coal and nuclear power. The South Korean long-term coal import growth rate has been reduced by up to 50% virtually overnight. We expect thermal coal exports to South Korea to reduce significantly over this period, making the Bylong Coal Project a stranded asset.

I propose that all land acquired by Kepco should be resold or given back to former and/or new residents of Bylong Valley, and that Tarwyn Park be heritage listed and designated as a Centre for the study of Natural Sequence Farming, as it is recognised by the United Nations to be a vital Sustainable Agricultural model for the 21st Century.

Please do not approve the Bylong Coal Project, as it is not in the greatest interest or benefit of the NSW public. Now is the best time to focus attention on industry growth and employment opportunities in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, tourism and education sectors, to name just a few more desirable, feasible and viable industries. This would represent a smarter, brighter and more prosperous future for the public of NSW.

As referred to above, below is a non-exhaustive list of primary concerns not adequately addressed by DA, EIS, RTS, Required Conditions or PAC Public Hearing:

- Negative social and political impacts: including intentional fragmentation of community, legal 'gag orders' preventing freedom of speech, exhumation of graves, discounting the value and significance of aboriginal sites and cultural practices, loss of trust in public office,(including people, policy and procedure), civil unrest, boycotts, protests, blockades, arrests.
- Negative environmental impacts: including loss of strategic agricultural land, habitat for threatened species, cracking of watercourses, toxic slurry and waste management, groundwater drawdown, coal dust, fugitive methane emissions, land subsidence, collapse of iconic cliffs and landscapes, impact on climate change.
- Negative economic impacts: including outdated economic data modeling and assumptions, over-estimation of employment opportunities, non-local employment preference, burden on public purse for private infrastructure requirements, lack of rehabilitation planning (legal commitment, demonstrable track-record, budget and timeframe), rapid shifts in global energy market preferences and requirements.
- Negative tourism impacts: including the repositioning of Mudgee as a mining region rather than a food and wine destination, destroyed scenery, degraded roads, tainted produce, no local shops, mine noise and pollution, heavy vehicle traffic and intimidation by mine security utes.

Peter Dowson

Centennial Park, NSW, 2021

Disclaimer: In making this submission, I do not agree or consent to the extinguishment of the right of a Third Party Merit Appeal via PAC holding a Public Hearing.