

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PAC Enquiries Mailbox](#)
Subject: Submission to Bylong Coal Project: OBJECTION
Date: Wednesday, 17 May 2017 10:52:04 PM

I object to the Bylong Coal Project for the following reasons:

1. The Bylong coal project is unacceptable and must not be granted consent.
2. It will cause the loss of 319 hectares of strategic agricultural land and nearly 700 hectares of land that is mapped as part of the equine critical industry cluster. Such lands should be permanently and securely made off-limits to any kind of mining activity.
3. The coal company, KEPCO, owns and controls nearly half the available water in the Bylong River water source and intends to redirect this water from irrigated agriculture to open cut mining. Over 440 hectares of land that currently supports irrigated agriculture will no longer do so if the mine goes ahead.
4. The impacts of this project on agricultural land and water are the worst ever seen for a coal mine proposal in this state and could have far reaching consequences. There must be a limit to where mining can occur. Open-cutting strategic agricultural land and equine critical industry cluster land clearly crosses a line that must not be crossed.
5. Analysis conducted at the insistence of the Department of Primary Industries shows that the volume of water proposed by KEPCO to be drawn from the alluvial aquifer could exceed its recharge, leading to depletion of the groundwater source.
6. Extensive water use by and groundwater inflows to the coal mine and its close proximity to the Bylong River will cause extensive and severe draw down of the productive Bylong alluvial aquifer, well beyond the minimal impact criteria of NSW's Aquifer Interference Policy. In some places, for one of the models used, the drawdown of the alluvium exceeds 10 metres.
7. KEPCO's assertion that this dramatic exceedance of the Aquifer Inference Policy criteria does not count because the mining company has purchased the properties that will be affected by this damage is not acceptable: the Bylong water source should not be subjected to this depletion for just 23 years of coal mining, leaving the Valley potentially unable to support productive agriculture into the future after the coal mine has been exhausted.
8. The Department of Primary Industries has expressed concern that in dry conditions, there may be insufficient water to run the mine and has warned that some neighbouring bores may become non-viable as a result of the profound.
9. Even KEPCO has agreed that the potential to reduce the availability of groundwater to agriculture during dry years is likely.
10. The Department of Primary Industries is also concerned about flow on impacts to agricultural productivity in the Bylong Valley and the broader region as a result of the mine and the extensive areas of agricultural land and water now owned by the coal company.
11. Among the properties now owned by KEPCO are a former thoroughbred breeding property that has already been displaced by the coal mine proposal and historic Tarwyn Park, former home of Melbourne Cup winner Rain Lover and the living laboratory where Peter Andrews developed Natural Sequence Farming practice of regenerative agriculture.
12. The area targeted by the mine also harbours significant Wiradjuri cultural heritage, including artwork and an ochre quarry. The Wiradjuri heritage of the area has already experienced profound loss from three nearby coal mines and the Office of Environment and Heritage is warning of "permanent intergenerational consequences" if the loss of these sites continues.
13. The mine will also remove 180 hectares of habitat for the critically endangered Regent honeyeater. The Recovery Plan for this species specifically states that "Any breeding or foraging areas where the species is likely to occur" including the area where this project occurs, is "critical to the survival" of this species. The Mudgee-Wollar area is specifically mentioned, and the Plan says that, "It is essential that the highest level of protection is provided to these areas and that enhancement and protection measures target these productive sites."
14. In the six years since KEPCO moved into the Bylong region, it has bought up tens of thousands of hectares of strategic farmland, floodplains, thoroughbred properties, historic properties, homes and facilities in the region and caused substantial social and economic dislocation. In the short period KEPCO has been gobbling up the Bylong Valley, the Bylong Mouse Races have ceased, thoroughbred activity has ceased, the Bylong Upper School has ceased and many people have vacated the Valley, leaving it barely socially and economically viable.

15. Remaining private landholders will be left socially & economically stranded and may lose access to water supply.
16. Heavy mine vehicle traffic is proposed to travel through the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve and Wollar village between Bylong and Mudgee. This is a popular tourist drive. Road conditions are very poor and road safety will be threatened by a massive increase of daily mine traffic and heavy vehicles.

Given that the world accepts the science of climate change no government can claim they did not know the dangers of coal and all fossil fuels and attendant operations. This makes the potential of future litigation a highly likely probability as younger generations grow up and realise what we have bequeathed them in terms of the catastrophic filthy legacy that are coal mines and all fossil fuel industries.

Given the abundant evidence that we are all privy to, any government that approves such a project as the Bylong Coal Project is culpable of ecocide and associated social and cultural devastation. To allow such a project is unconscionable. To approve such a project does not meet our obligations to our future generations.

The Bylong Valley is a spectacular part of the Upper Hunter where productive alluvial soils are surrounded by dramatic sandstone escarpments. It is a landscape rich in the paintings, shelters, arefacts and ochre quarries of the Wiradjuri people. It hosts a 'living laboratory' of the experimental Natural Sequence Farming technique, mastered at historic Tarwyn Park by Peter Andrews. It beggars belief that you, the New South Wales government, would even for a moment consider ripping up these rich agricultural soils and drawing down a productive aquifer till the water might run out altogether.

I object to the Bylong Coal Project and remind you again that the world no longer has an appetite for such projects and already we are seeing litigation being commenced by young people who recognise how their futures have been significantly compromised by today's greedy politicians and multi-national companies.

Kind regards,
Sue Abbott (resident of the Upper Hunter)

[REDACTED]
SCONE NSW 2337
AUSTRALIA

[REDACTED]