

**Susan Morley**

**United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Project – RO42/17**

I'm writing to *object* to the United Wambo Open Cut Mine proposal. The cumulative impact of all mines approved in the Hunter Valley to this point has reached an untenable point - for local water systems, species and vegetation conservation, and for the remaining communities living in the mine zone. Enough is enough. Please do not approve yet another coal mine.

Climate change:

- It is irresponsible to be approving new coal mines in this era of climate change.
- Earth is past 400 parts per million CO2 equivalent.
- 360 parts per million CO2 equivalent is the benchmark for the stability of Earth's climate that has been recorded for millennia.
- According to an ongoing temperature analysis conducted by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) the average global temperature on Earth has increased by about 0.8 Celsius since pre-industrial times.
- At this increase we are already witnessing devastating sea level rise, and a breakdown to the climate relied upon for the survival of life on Earth.
- The current trajectory is leading to an untenable warming of 6C degrees
- We cannot afford to keep adding to the accumulated carbon in the atmosphere by digging and mining more coal.
- Short-term jobs and mining royalties can in no way justify the immediate and escalating impacts of devastating climate change.

Water impacts:

- The cumulative impact of three larger final voids across the two projects has not been adequately assessed, including long term costs of management
- The drawdown of base flows and alluvial groundwater associated with Wollombi Brook and the Hunter River will be increased. The cumulative loss of groundwater across the Hunter Region has not been included in the assessments.
- Remnant stands of threatened Hunter River Red Gums continue to lose sources of groundwater essential for drought resistance

Biodiversity impacts:

- United Wambo will remove over 250 ha of critically endangered and irreplaceable bushland that provides habitat for many threatened species.
- Three nationally endangered species already suffering cumulative loss of habitat due to Hunter mining expansion: Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot and Spotted-tailed Quoll. The cumulative loss of foraging and breeding sites has not been assessed.
- Impacts on biodiversity will be extreme and *not* able to be offset with like for like as these ecosystems and vegetation communities are already depleted.
- The biodiversity offset package for United Wambo has not been completed and will not replace essential habitat features.

- Remnant stands of threatened Hunter River Red Gums continue to lose sources of groundwater essential for drought resistance

Social & Health impacts:

- Increased heights and volumes of overburden will worsen air pollution.
- The Jerry's Plains air quality monitor has registered 5 exceedances so far in 2018 with existing operations. The nearby Warkworth monitor has registered 10 exceedances of national air quality standards since the beginning of the year
- The EPA Dust Stop Program and environmental pollution licences are not managing air pollution from existing mines in the area.
- Increased mine noise will impact on a least 31 additional properties in the area
- The cumulative social impacts of loss of privately owned land and farming operations has not been assessed

Poor PAC process

- Staging two public PAC events in Singleton in the one week shows a lack of respect for voluntary community resources and capacity to attend. Each of these processes is highly stressful for local people losing their land, water, amenity and environmental health. They should be afforded enough time to respond adequately and without so much constant pressure.
- This lack of consideration exposes the public PAC process for the cursory farce that it is.

Yours sincerely

Susan Morley

