

Independent Planning Commission – Bylong Valley Coal Mine

(Statement read by Barry Hadaway, [REDACTED] Budgee Budgee)

I object to the Bylong Valley Coal Mine because it is not an Ecologically Sustainable Development.

ESD is defined in the **NSW Protection of the Environment Act (1991 – Section 6(2))**
The Act requires that:

- **The Precautionary Principle should be applied**
- **Irreversible damage to the environment should be avoided**
- **The present generation should ensure the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained for the benefit of future generations**
- **Those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance or abatement**

The most serious and urgent environmental issue we face is climate change.

Climate change is very much an issue of intergenerational equity.

We are told that projects such as this are good because they will create some short term jobs.

However, whatever benefits are claimed will come at an enormous cost to future generations.

NSW planning processes pay lip service to the principles of ESD while acting in a way that ignores Climate Change and intergenerational equity.

We cannot ignore these issues if we want our children to have a future.

The proponent's *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment Report* states:

- the proposed mine will produce 124 million tonnes of coal over 25 years, and;
- the project will create close to 200 million tonnes of greenhouse gases in CO2 equivalents

The report uses the tired argument that this mine alone won't have much of an impact on global warming.

The latest IPCC Reports tells us, if want to maintain a liveable environment and limit warming to 1.5 degrees:

1. Emissions need to be reduced by 45%, on 2010 levels by 2030, and;
2. Emissions need to be reduced to net zero by 2050.

Rather than falling, Australia's emissions have increased in each of the last 3 years. Australia needs to rapidly reduce its emissions. Opening another coal mine ~~would~~ *would make as much sense as* ~~be like~~ hosing a bush fire with petrol.

We have already seen the effect of 1 degree of global warming. We experience increased temperatures, lower rainfall, longer and more serious droughts. We are seeing storms of increasing ferocity. Sea levels are rising and will inundate coastal areas. The great river deltas – the most fertile and productive food growing areas of the world will be inundated and destroyed.

Just one of these deltas, the **Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta**, which makes up much of Bangladesh, is home to an estimated 143 million people. Parts of the delta are already being affected by saltwater intrusion. A sea level rise of only half a metre will displace an estimated 6 million people.

This is one delta of many that will be destroyed by rising sea levels. Hundreds of millions of people will be displaced and could face starvation.

This isn't science fiction. It isn't a theory. It isn't something in the distant future. Climate Change is real and is starting to have a disastrous impact now.

We all depend on the natural world for our survival. Our children and grandchildren need a healthy environment. What will our legacy be?

We have to take action on Climate Change now. We have to make a start.

I understand that the members of the Independent Planning Commission are required to consider social and economic factors as well as environmental factors – the triple bottom line.

However, in practise the triple bottom line concept is fatally flawed. Time and again a so called 'balance' is achieved by condoning environmental damage in exchange for short term profits, ^{and} ~~for short duration jobs, for a few quick bucks.~~

We have to stop sacrificing the environment. Continuing to sacrifice the environment is directly counter to the principle of intergenerational equity.

There is no way the proponent of this development can mitigate or offset the damage the project will do in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Approving this proposal would be counter to the principle of polluter pays.

The proposed project, through greenhouse gas emissions, would cause irreversible damage to the environment.

The Precautionary Principle should be applied.

It is absolutely crystal clear that **Object 1.3** of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act is **NOT** met by the proposal.

Approval of this project would be directly counter to the principles of ESD as stated in the Protection of the Environment Administration Act.

I urge the members of the Independent Planning Commission:

- To apply the principles of ESD,
- To acknowledge the extreme environmental damage done by coal mining through its affect on our climate, and,
- To reject the proposal to mine coal in the Bylong Valley.