

I **object** to the proposal of coal mining in the Bylong Valley for the following reasons:

1. The Independent Planning Commission has a duty to consider the IPCC 1.5 degrees report that was handed down on the same day as the Bylong final assessment report. Keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees means phasing out coal in OECD countries like Australia and South Korea. The burning of coal needs to be phased out by 2030. On the topic of coal mining in Australia Nobel prize-winning economist Professor Stiglitz stated that it would be "fundamentally short-sighted" not to be thinking about the serious climate change impacts in Australia and around the world. According to Stiglitz "over the long term, the real wealth of a country is based on the skills, the ability and the innovation of its citizens. That is going to depend on the investments that you put in to your people, not on coal".
2. This mine has a life span up to 2044 and is not consistent with NSW Government policy which states that, "The NSW Government endorses the Paris Agreement and will take action that is consistent with the level of effort to achieve Australia's commitments to the Paris Agreement." Large scale renewable energy projects in the Midwestern Regional LGA such as the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm which will provide clean energy, employment, opportunities for innovation and skills acquisition exemplify the type of action the NSW Government should and could be taking to meet its commitments.
3. The Bylong Valley has been an important source of drought fodder for many years. This production is reliant on an adequate source of water to grow lucerne and pasture. As a landholder I have experienced the stress associated with the scarcity of stock feed during drought conditions. I have witnessed the psychological stress and financial strain on family, friends and the wider community of sourcing feed from interstate. Water requirements for coal mining as well as groundwater impacts equate to further loss of water available for the production of drought fodder which given the unreliability of rainfall, the shortening of seasons and the soil moisture deficit is in ever increasing demand.
4. Without a comprehensive Cost Benefit Analysis there is no clear or properly costed justification for Bylong Coal Mine. The long term environmental, social and economic impacts including loss of farming capability into the future have not been considered.
5. The Department of Planning final assessment report fails to adequately consider:
 - threats to the Bylong River and connected groundwater, threats to other water users and agricultural production
 - threats to state significant heritage landscape values of Bylong Valley
 - threats to the Wollemi National Park and Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area
 - cumulative loss of Aboriginal cultural heritage, biodiversity and community in the region
 - threats to ongoing farming enterprises including the pioneering Natural Sequence Farming techniques at Tarwyn Park; from personal experience, techniques which are presented to university students as an example of best practice in soil management and soil sustainability.

The Bylong Valley is a spectacularly magnificent landscape. No price tag can be placed on its amenity. Its natural beauty lies in stark contrast with the landscapes of the Upper Hunter ravaged by decades of open cut coal mining. It is my very deep wish that the Bylong Valley does not suffer the same fate as those now sad, unrecognisable landscapes which fill observers with a stunned disbelief in the human capacity for destruction and flagrant disregard for the very thing upon which we rely for our existence. Alternatives to coal for energy generation abound here and overseas. This mine is not necessary.

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