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PRESENTATION TO THE IPC – RE: BYLONG COAL PROJECT  
MUDGEE, WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER, 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Robin Hawkins and I am speaking on behalf of my 93 year old mother, Pamela Hawkins, and her extended family. My mother has owned a cattle property in the Bylong Valley since the early 1970's. Unfortunately she cannot attend today so has asked me to present her concerns regarding the proposed Bylong Coal Project. She and the rest of our family are opposed to the proposed Coal mine.

Our primary concern relates to having a reliable water resource for all agricultural interests in the Bylong Valley. For years now we personally have experienced a degree of uncertainty about getting sufficient groundwater for our livestock and crops. Despite having an irrigation licence, we are no longer able to irrigate any of our lucerne paddocks. Ever since our shallow alluvial well dried up back in about 1997, we have had to rely on water from deeper bores, the deepest of which is 102 metres but this is currently unusable due to a decline in groundwater levels owing to extended dry conditions.

Groundwater in the Bylong Valley is already a very precarious resource. To place further demands on its supply, should in our view, be unthinkable. We are also concerned that dirty mine water could jeopardise the quality of the existing groundwater.

My mother, with the wisdom and experience gained from an already long life, realises the importance of jobs particularly for young people leaving school. She however recognises a great futility in creating jobs that are relatively short term and offer no long term security or future. It would be far better and more responsible in her view, to be encouraging our young people to train up and move into jobs in renewable energy industries, where at least there will be a meaningful and hopeful future for them. To be looking for job opportunities in coal mining is really short sighted.

The digging of a new coal mine in such a beautiful iconic place like the Bylong Valley, in our view, constitutes environmental vandalism. Given the vast scientific knowledge about the impact of coal mining on our environment and climate change, its impact on our health, and the reality that the world is moving away from coal fired power, the Bylong Coal Project should NOT be approved.

Thank you.