

I wish to lodge an objection to the Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy

I have lived in the Mudgee District (Mid Western Regional Council) for thirty years and have worked in the community sector until I retired five years ago. Our local community is experiencing the expansion of coal mining in our area. Therefore this policy has a direct impact on my life and my community.

I am increasingly concerned about the economic, health and social impacts that I am witnessing in my community from the spread of mining and the destruction of rural properties and villages.

I have seen firsthand the local communities of Wollar and Ulan being decimated. Now my community of Cooks Gap is next on the list. I have seen my friends dreams destroyed. Their years of hard work and resources wasted. On a personal level, my partner and I have a property that will soon be directly affected by the Moorlarben Stage 2 Open Cut Mine. I fear for our future.

For those of us who continue to live in the area, often with no other choice as we can't sell our properties for a reasonable return, are forced to endure noise and dust pollution with all the associated health risks. Our properties will suffer from loss of water. The biodiversity of our beautiful natural areas will suffer.

I am objecting to the Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy as it does not consider these cumulative impacts.

The Policy will not protect our health from air and noise pollution. It amazes me that the Policy allows for exceedance of the national standards for ambient air quality. It merely provides a poor 'choice' to either accept identified health impacts or sell to the mining company or at a loss.

The Policy fails to recognize the impacts not only on our health but also our economic future. There is no safeguard to fully compensate the value of a farming business if land is acquired. The Policy does not recognize the issue of 'stranded assets' when landholders (like us) are not identified for 'voluntary' acquisition but cannot sell our property on the open real estate market because of mine impacts.

The Policy does not take into account the socio-economic impacts on our rural towns and villages. The research clearly shows the detrimental impacts are wide spread and significant. Why should government ignore these studies? From just an economic aspect this is poor planning. The cost to the state and national health budgets will be huge.

For The Policy to give precedence to the mining industry over all other considerations and to allow mining operations exemption from complying with relevant assessment criteria is unjust and shortsighted government planning.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my objections to the proposed "State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Gas Exploration and Mining) 2014"

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