



Goulburn River Stone Cottages

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Submission: Changes to State Environmental Planning Policy for mining

As a society we must recognise the urgent need to act on climate change. The future of the coal and gas industry is strictly limited by structural market changes and the laws of physics. Now is the time to embark on an equitable and just transition. Government policy must provide equity and sustainable alternatives for coal affected communities moving to a post-coal future and protect our natural resources - water and biodiversity - without which the land becomes sterilized.

We support the proposal to remove clause 12AA of the SEPP and that this change occurs promptly after Submissions close (21 July) and recommend the government adopts the following amendments to the SEPP to improve balance and fairness.

1. Water resources should be protected - prohibition in an expanded Part 9A must include alluvial aquifers, and 2km around fourth order streams and irreplaceable GDEs.
2. The Major Projects Offset policy must restore the “like-for-like” principle on all offsets and limit the use of mine-site rehabilitation and complementary measures for offsetting.
3. Part9A of the SEPP needs to be amended so that it also makes open-cut coal mining prohibited development within the exclusion zones currently applied to coal seam gas.
4. The 2km exclusion around urban areas and residential zones should be extended to apply to all household dwellings (including rural) - for both unconventional gas and coal mining.
5. The list of critical industry clusters needs to be expanded to include additional clusters identified through a systematic consultative process.
6. Further exclusions for coal and gas should also be listed in Schedule 1 of the SEPP, including drinking water catchments, significant regional aquifers that provide base flow to rivers, critically endangered vegetation communities and high value private conservation areas.
7. Part 12AB (Non-discretionary standards) constrains consent authorities from adopting more stringent environmental standards than the SEPP allows. This is irresponsible and is leading to poor environmental and social outcomes. The action of this provision must be reversed so that development cannot occur if it breaches the standards, but consent authorities are free to adopt more stringent standards where appropriate.
8. Similarly, the “voluntary” land acquisition and mitigation policy is fundamentally unjust and must be repealed or dramatically altered.
9. Communities should have the right to appeal poor decisions. The Minister and Planning and Assessment Commission must ensure that the next mining projects being considered have full merits appeal rights retained (e.g. Bylong Project)
10. Environmental data required as part of approval conditions and EPLs for monitoring and assessment of coal mining impacts should be made publically available within a limited time frame accessible from government managed and verified database (e.g. website such as BOM or NSW Office Water).

Yours Sincerely,

CD & JE Imrie