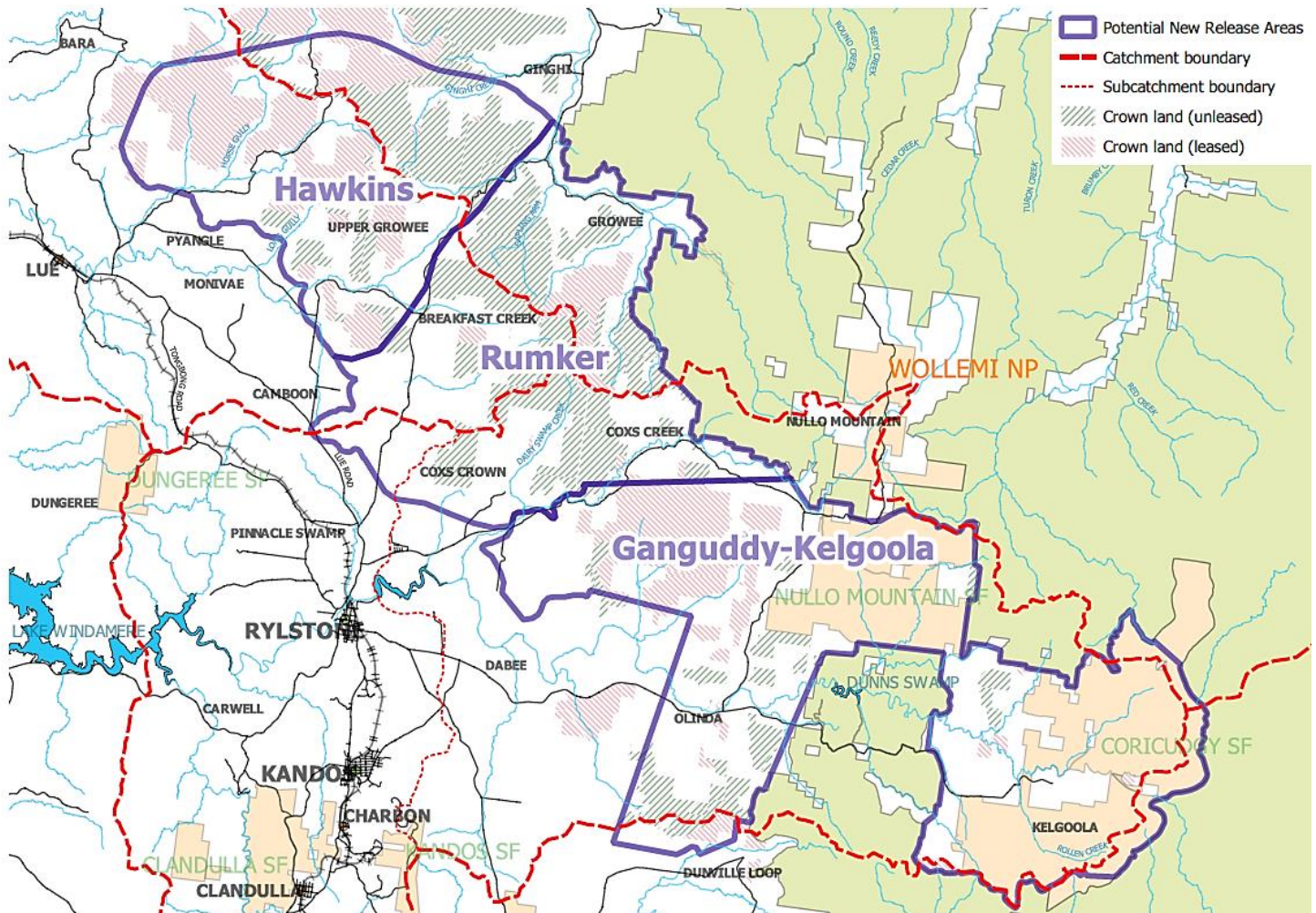


# Time running out to oppose proposed new coal mine release areas



The Preliminary Regional Issues Assessment (PRIA) is the second step of seven for issuing new exploration licenses. The PRIA for the Hawkins and Rumker areas has begun; Ganguddy-Kelgoola is next (see map). The PRIA is the **only time public engagement is sought. Public submissions close in just over two weeks (July 28, 2021).** After this step, no feedback is provided to the community until a decision is made.



## Busting myths

- It's never going to happen here; don't worry you don't have to do anything:*** False. **It is already happening. The only time you can have input is now. If we do nothing, then it WILL happen.** There are coal reserves in this area and there will be interest from multi-national companies who want to exploit coal resources before more sustainable options take over.
- Coal mines create lots of new jobs for communities:*** False. Mining is a specialist industry. People with the skills tend to follow the mines and very few additional local jobs are created<sup>1</sup>. Like many industries, mining is becoming more automated, requiring fewer people<sup>2</sup>. Over the next five years, mining is predicted to create just 0.4 percent of new jobs across all of Australia<sup>3</sup>.
- Mining is good for the economy:*** Misleading. Whilst mines provide a flow of revenue to governments and their (mostly foreign) owners, the flow on to local businesses and local communities is generally not seen<sup>1</sup>. The Hunter in the biggest coal export terminal, yet they only contribute to 2 percent of State Revenue; the rest goes overseas<sup>4</sup>. The tourism industry and local agriculture in our region are booming. This revenue stays in the pockets of our local businesses. People do not come here to see coal mines.
- I live in town; it won't affect me:*** False. The entire region will be impacted. Air, water, soil and noise pollution, do not stay within the boundaries of the coal mining sites. Health effects are already being felt

as people experience anxiety and stress about the threat to their region<sup>5</sup>, economic stability and devaluing land values. Open cut and underground coal mines have caused water contamination<sup>6, 7</sup> and have destroyed biodiversity in waterways<sup>7</sup>. The Rylstone Dam catchment lies within the exploration areas; these water supplies also feed into Mudgee. Once our water and soil are lost, we can't get them back. Previously known for its clean air, the Hunter Valley has been identified as a pollution 'hotspot'<sup>8</sup> and has some of the highest rates for respiratory and cardiac conditions in NSW<sup>9, 10</sup>. Traffic incidents increase from mine workers travelling to and from work<sup>11</sup>. Mines can be associated with increased rates of alcohol and drug abuse, violence, sexual assaults, and other crimes in adjoining communities<sup>1, 12, 13</sup>. The cost of living, especially housing, is often driven up to levels locals can no longer afford<sup>12</sup>, as they cannot compete with the high wages miners receive. Local towns close once the mines move on as they no longer have the income from the mines they were dependent on; and unemployment and associated issues such as crime, increase.

- ***It doesn't matter if they do exploratory drilling:*** False. Exploratory drilling risks disturbing our underground water table. These underground aquifers can be cracked and drained<sup>14</sup>, resulting in springs and bores disappearing. Once the water is lost, it is lost forever.
- ***The Government have already completed a Review of Environmental Factors:*** True a report has been conducted but it is fundamentally flawed. This report states that there are no known Aboriginal objects or declared Aboriginal places in the area, and no threatened fauna and flora<sup>15</sup>. Forty-five Aboriginal heritage sites and 28 threatened species are already known from government databases<sup>16</sup>.
- ***Coal demand is increasing:*** False. Australia exports 75 percent of its coal to Japan, South Korea and China. These countries have followed other countries in a worldwide trend and committed to move away from fossil fuels, which will result in decreased demand for coal<sup>17, 18</sup>.

## How can I have my say?

Make a submission to the PRIA - every single voice matters. (Go to <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/hawkins-rumker> and scroll all the way to the bottom of the page).

## Who can help me with more information and to help me with my submission?

The Rylstone Region Coal Free Community (RRCFC) is a local community group. We have a range of information and materials available to assist people understand what is going on and are available to help people one-on-one with writing submissions. We are self-funded and are not affiliated with any political parties. We are not against coal mining per se, and are not aiming to shut down coal mines, however, we oppose new mines being opened when the existing coal mines are not operating to capacity and there is already enough coal approved to meet the next 30 years of demand.

## What are other ways I can contribute also?

People can contribute in lots of different ways: putting up signs in their front windows or on their gates to increase awareness; spreading the word with their contacts; joining in community activities to help raise awareness and support others with writing submissions; by voicing their objection to their State Parliament Members. Please let us know of other ideas you have also.

## For more information, please contact us on:



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**Keep an eye out for us - we will be running stalls in Rylstone and Kandos over the next few weeks to provide information and to help people write submissions**

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