

## WHY WRITE A SUBMISSION?

- When the government receives a large number of submissions, they will hear a collective reinforcement of opposition.
- They will hear many voices raising the same or similar concerns.
- Every submission makes stronger our case to stop coal exploration.

## HOW TO MAKE A SUBMISSION:

- Use the information provided below to help your argument and craft your submission.
- Don't feel you have to include all the points! Choose the ones that mean the most to you.
- **[DOWNLOAD THIS](#)** IF YOU WANT A TEMPLATE TO LODGE A WRITTEN LETTER
- Once finished, go to this webpage: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/hawkins-rumker> and click on 'Make a Submission' at the bottom of the page. Fill in your details. Paste your completed submission in the text box provided.

## KEY POINTS FOR YOUR SUBMISSION:

### MAKE IT PERSONAL:

- Let them understand how it will impact you personally. Share your concerns.
- Introduce yourself — Where you live and anything else you want to mention. Include your professional capacity if you feel it is relevant — e.g. you are a farmer, tourist operator, resident, regular visitor, etc
- Raise issues you feel most strongly about We have provided a range of points organized under topic headings you can use to help you. You are welcome to draw on any of the information you like, use as much or as little as you need. Please remember to change it a little so it's in your own words and your submission is considered an original individual submission.

### STATE WHAT YOU ARE ASKING FOR:

- For example: I am opposed to the Hawkins and Rumker areas being opened for coal exploration. This is a precursor to coal mining and needs to be stopped now.

You can click on any of the hyperlinked points if you want further information

## THE EFFECTS ON WATER SOURCES

- One of the greatest threats is to our region's precious water supplies.
- Mines have a [significant negative impact](#) on the water resources of a local area.
- Even exploratory drilling can [crack and drain underground aquifers](#). The supply of water in creeks and rivers decreases.
- Once the water is gone, it is lost forever.
- Coal mining consumes approximately [653 litres for each tonne of coal produced](#).
- Open cut and underground coal mines [have caused water contamination](#) and [have destroyed biodiversity in waterways](#).
- Subsistence from [exploration and mining can crack rock substrate and lower water tables](#).
- The Rylstone Dam catchment is in the proposed exploration areas. The upper catchment of the Cudgegong River feeds into the water supplies of Rylstone Dam and Windamere Dam.
- The proposed release areas threaten the water supply for the towns of Rylstone, Kandos, Charbon and Clandulla; water flow to Mudgee may also be negatively impacted.
- This region recently came out of a long drought. What will happen in our next drought if there is a coal mine using so much of our water?

- Without water, there is no life. There are no communities. There is no agriculture, no tourism. With what will we fight bushfires?

#### THE EFFECTS ON NATIVE ANIMALS AND PLANTS:

- There are a lot of [endangered flora and fauna species](#) as well as endangered ecological communities which could be lost. [NSW BioNet](#) has recorded 293 threatened or endangered species in the Mid-Western Regional Council LGA.
- Waterways would be disturbed or destroyed, and this would lead to a loss of fish habitat and threatened fish species.
- The riparian meadows along Reedy Creek and Breakfast Creek could be lost. The Swamp Grassland and Sphagnum Bog in the central part of Coxs Creek is thoroughly unique and would be under threat.
- Mines would transform our beautiful area into an unsightly, industrialised one and negatively impact on the value of the amazing World Heritage area on our doorstep.

#### THE EFFECTS ON ABORIGINAL HERITAGE:

- There are a significant number of [Aboriginal heritage sites](#) within the areas, including art and ceremonial sites, that are at risk.
- Many of these are not yet officially documented. The existing [Hawkins Rumker Review of Environmental Factors](#) incorrectly states there are no known Aboriginal objects or declared Aboriginal places in the area. This is despite the documented official records as well as local knowledge pointing to many more sites.
- [Significant sites have already been destroyed by mining](#) and our laws are inadequate to protect these sites.

#### SOCIAL & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:

- Air, water, soil and noise pollution, do not stay within the boundaries of the coal mining sites. Underground mines must bring the coal to the surface
- The [Hunter Valley is now considered a pollution 'hotspot'](#). It has some of the highest rates for [respiratory and cardiac conditions](#) in NSW.
- There would be a lot more traffic, including heavy vehicles on our local and rural roads.
- The quality of our roads is already very poor and they are not suited to increased or heavy load traffic. Historically, mines in this council area have been loath to put money into fixing any traffic issues created by their presence.
- Noise and vibration will dramatically increase with blasting, heavy earthmoving equipment and machinery operating in the mines 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Coal is likely to be transported on uncovered trains, trucks or overhead conveyors running through our towns, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Air quality would be reduced due to coal dust from blasting, mining and transporting coal.
- Mines would transform our beautiful area into an unsightly, industrialised one and [negatively impact our mental wellbeing](#).
- The transient and shift work nature of miners can often result in an increase in [violence](#) and [crime](#) in the affected and nearby communities.
- [Socioeconomic divides form](#), as locals are often unable to compete with the high wages of miners who drive up housing and other costs.

#### THE EFFECTS OF LOCAL ECONOMY:

- Large areas would be affected coal mines. The proposed Hawkins Rumker coal release areas cover approximately 32,700 ha of land and would directly affect 180 landholders.

- There will be a loss of agricultural lands, farms would disappear or lose their water, and productive agricultural lands would be dug up or left fallow.
- The people in the region have built long-term sustainable economic stability for this region. This revenue stays in the pockets of our local businesses. Businesses that have helped build the tourism industry in the region include vineyards, olive groves, horse studs, beef and sheep farms, eco-tourism, short stay accommodation, restaurants, cafes, antique shops, soft furnishings and knick-knacks for example. These businesses are incompatible with mining: tourists do not come to see coal mines.
- Mines provide a flow of revenue to governments and their (mostly foreign) owners, however, [the flow on to local businesses and local communities is generally not seen](#).
- The Hunter is the biggest coal export terminal, [yet they only contribute to two percent \(2%\) of State Revenue](#); the rest goes overseas.
- Mining is a specialist industry. People with the skills tend to follow the mines and [very few additional local jobs are created](#). Like many industries, [mining is becoming more automated](#), requiring fewer people. Over the next five years, [mining is predicted to create just 0.4 percent of new jobs](#) across all of Australia.
- Just the threat of new mines being developed decimates many of the existing businesses as people stop investing or move away – even if the mine ultimately does not get approved. This has already happened in nearby Ulan, Wollar and Bylong.
- [The cost of living, especially housing, is often driven up to levels locals can no longer afford](#), 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. This is the very reason strategies such as [transitioning communities dependent on coal mining in NSW](#) are required.

#### QUESTION WHY WE NEED MORE COAL:

- NSW government's own [net-zero goal](#)
- NSW government's [2021 Intergenerational report](#) forecasts decreased royalties from thermal coal as international demand falls, both globally and from two of our major coal customers, Japan and South Korea.
- The Reserve Bank of Australia anticipates [international thermal coal demand to decline](#) in the long-term as renewable electricity generation becomes more viable
- The [International Energy Agency](#), called for an immediate ban on new oil, coal and gas development
- The [G7 agreed to end government support for new coal power](#) by end of 2021
- World wide trend to move to sustainable energy sources
- The premise supporting the release of these areas undermines and contradicts more recent government policies.
- It even contradicts its own strategic statement about [the future of coal](#). 'Opening up the Hawkins and Rumker areas is diametrically opposed to the stated intent of "giving our coal-reliant communities time to adapt". **This region is not reliant on coal.** This reasoning is analogous to stating drug rehabilitation is needed while introducing heroin to a community.

#### ISSUES WITH THE PRIA PROCESS ITSELF:

- The problem with a 'provisional assessment'. If only a preliminary assessment is done, the full extent of the social, economic and environmental impacts on the areas remains unknown and recommendations made for release of the areas for exploration based on incomplete information. This will be putting landholders and residents in a state of limbo, unsure if their

homes and livelihoods will be lost. As it is, some people are wondering if they will bother rebuilding after the fires when they may lose it all again, this time permanently.

- DPIE has said the PRIA will be a desktop assessment. However, there is limited data for the area, so conclusions may be drawn without sufficient detail available.
- The depth of assessment does not sufficiently address issues that would come to light with a full Environmental Impact Statement. **Water** is likely to be a huge issue as the Hawkins Rumker Ganguddy-Kelgoola areas are instrumental to the health of the Cudgegong River and all that relies on it downstream. This is unlikely to be addressed in a 'preliminary' assessment.
- The [Hawkins Rumker Review of Environmental Factors](#) prepared by the Government is fundamentally flawed. The geographical area does not correctly represent the Hawkins Rumker area, and it also states there are no known Aboriginal objects or declared Aboriginal places in the area, and no threatened flora and fauna. One questions how the government can assure that any future exploration licenses would include *"strict environmental management conditions to protect native vegetation, fauna, land, water resources, heritage and community values"* when their own exploration approval failed to do this.
- Lack of transparency - No transparent method has been provided for how the Government will weight and evaluate the submissions.
- This submission process is the only time the community will have any say in the process until we are presented with the NSW Cabinet's decision.
- Lack of real community consultation. The PRIA process is as a result of the Independent Commission Against Corruption recommendations that there should be community consultation. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has been aware of these coal release areas for over a year, yet it has only issued notices for consultation in June 2021. The community consultations occurred after the submission portal was already open. . In-person consultation was capped at four groups of 50 people, with one of these to be held in Mudgee (there are over 3000 people in the greater Rylstone region). With COVID outbreaks in Sydney, the in-person consultation moved to an online format, with less than one week's notice. This area has poor internet connectivity and the people here are not highly internet savvy. Expected participation dropped rapidly with the move to online meetings.

MENTION ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF!

NOW SUBMIT YOUR CONCERNS:

CLICK HERE TO UPLOAD YOUR LETTER OR COPY AND PASTE THE TEXT IN THE BOX PROVIDED:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/hawkins-rumker>