**No one wants coal here: Ninety-nine percent of more than 2000 submissions oppose new coal near Rylstone**

The NSW Berejiklian Government’s plan to open new parts of the state to coal mining faces unprecedented opposition after 99 percent of the more than 2000 submissions received by the Planning Department opposed the proposal.

The submissions were part of the Hawkins Rumker Preliminary Regional Issues Assessment (PRIA) process that closed on August 18.

An email (attached) sent from the department to the Rylstone Region Coal Free Community group this week confirmed that of the 2,064 submissions, 2,048 objected to the land release, 15 supported it, and one submission was listed as a “comment”.

Deputy Premier John Barilaro last year flagged the state’s intentions to open more than 60,369 hectares of land to coal mining around Rylstone, Kandos and Lue for coal exploration and exploitation.

The Hawkins Rumker PRIA is the first part of that land release, with second - Ganguddy-Kelgoola – still to come.

The department received submissions through an online portal, via email, paper hard copy and voicemail. Due to COVID, it also held seven Zoom consultation sessions in lieu of traditional “Town Hall” style meetings.

Online submissions can be found here: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/hawkins-rumker>

RRCFC spokesperson Janet Walk said, “More than 99 percent of submissions are against opening the Rylstone region to coal exploration. This is a thumping rejection of the government’s proposal to release the Hawkins Rumker area for coal exploration. It is the result you get before a corporate interest that buys out and divides the community gets involved. It has expressed what people truly think about coal mining. The Hawkins Rumker PRIA represents the wrong mine in the wrong place at the wrong time.

“The impressive number of submissions for a PRIA is the culmination of weeks of incredible work by the RRCFC and other organisations such as the Lock the Gate, Getup, The Wilderness Society, the Nature Conservation Council and the National Parks Association.”

Lock the Gate Alliance NSW spokesperson Georgina Woods said, “"This is an overwhelming response from the community considering only four months ago, so many locals had no idea the Berejiklian Government planned to sacrifice this region to coal mining.

“The economy of the region surrounding Rylstone – the region the NSW Government wishes to sacrifice to coal, is built almost entirely on agriculture and tourism. What we’ve seen in every other part of the state is that when coal mining moves in, these industries suffer.

“It is no surprise so many locals were eager to have their voices heard and spoke out so clearly against what is a clearly unacceptable plan from the government.”

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**About RRCFC**

The Rylstone Region Coal Free Community (RRCFC) is a self-funded, non-politically aligned community group committed to protecting the region around Rylstone, Kandos and Lue by stopping further exploration of coal and approval of new coal mines in our region. Our aim is to protect the land, heritage, culture and community for now and future generations by fully informing our community of the implications of the Hawkins, Rumker and Ganguddy-Kelgoola coal exploration releases. For more information about the RRCFC, visit [www.rysltonecfc.com](http://www.rysltonecfc.com); follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/NoCoalRylstone), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/rylstonecfc/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/rylstonecfc/).