



Healthy Rivers Dubbo

PO Box 216

Dubbo NSW 2830

heathyriversdubbo@gmail.com

ABN 11 988 241 202

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Submission

Preliminary Regional Issues Assessment Hawkins Rumker

Healthy Rivers Dubbo (HRD) is a grass roots community network dedicated to providing a strong voice for our local rivers, aquifers and wetlands in the Murray-Darling Basin for the benefit of wildlife, plants and people. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and acknowledge that this land was never ceded.

HRD is strongly opposed to the Hawkins Rumker area being opened for coal exploration.

Water:

The 2017-2019 drought was the most severe on record. The area almost ran out of available surface water supplies. Ninety towns in regional NSW were at risk of evacuation¹.

The coal industry uses about 383 billion litres of fresh water every year, which is enough for 5.2 million people².

There is no extra surface water available for an expansion of very thirsty coal mines. We need to protect our water sources for the environment, First Nations rights to water and town water supplies.

Climate change is already having a big impact on inflows into water courses. The NSW Draft Regional Water Strategy for the Macquarie Castlereagh catchment explained we could see a reduction in inflows by 50% under modelled climate change scenarios by 2070.

Groundwater reserves are already being over extracted, with a recent report from the Natural Resources Access Regulator finding one-tenth of groundwater users are in breach of their licence conditions³.

Coal mining poses an additional risk to our 'unseen' groundwater sources. Mining has the potential to fracture the rock substrate and lower water tables.

Once the bed of a creek or stream is fractured the surface water is lost to that environment forever.

The risk to water supplies from contamination is unacceptable.

¹ <https://thefifthestate.com.au/articles/day-zero-might-mean-tough-choices-for-90-towns-looking-at-new-locations/>

² <https://www.acf.org.au/water-is-vital-for-life-coal-is-taking-too-much>

³ <https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/nrar/news/bore-audit-puts-focus-on-groundwater-compliance>

Climate Change:

NSW has a target of becoming net-zero by cutting emissions by 35% from 2005 levels. New coal mines would negate the government's own targets.

Coal is dead as a power source. We don't need or want new coal mines. We want renewable energy using minerals that are responsibly and environmentally soundly sourced.

The NSW government should be injecting resources into improving the lithium recycling process, not being stubborn and mining for more low value, unwanted coal.

The G7 has agreed to end government support for new coal power by the end of 2021. Do not dig up anymore.

Melissa Gray

Convenor

Healthy Rivers Dubbo