

Submission Guide: Ulan Coal Mine Amended Modification 6

Deadline: Tuesday 27 January 2026

Lodge objecting submissions here: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/modification-6-underground-mining-extension>

Background

Glencore Ulan Coal Mine is in the Mudgee Region with current approval to mine 20 million tonnes of coal per year through underground mining until 2033.

An approved underground mine expansion through Modification 6 (Mod 6) was overturned by the NSW Land and Environment Court in November 2025. An amended project was resubmitted to Dept Planning and put out for public comment over the Christmas holiday break. This expansion extends the life of Ulan Coal Mine to August 2035 and facilitates a much larger expansion called Modification 8 (Mod 8). Together disturbing 2,368 ha of new country.

Mod 8 was out for public comment in November. It proposes to extend mining until 2041 and disturb a large new area of bushland and farmland, causing further impacts on water sources.

The two expansions must be assessed together as a new project to fully understand the cumulative impacts on climate, endangered species, cultural heritage and water.

Glencore Ulan Coal Mine is within the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWOREZ). Any further expansion of coal will slow the transition to ensure a safe climate.

For more information go to: <https://mdeg.org.au/ulan-mine-modification-6/> and overleaf

Key points of objection:

1. Must be assessed together with the Ulan Mod 8 proposal as a new project to provide robust cumulative impact information.
2. The amendment report still fails to fully identify the impacts of the increased greenhouse gas emissions on the local environment, community and economy, as required under NSW planning law.
3. The proposal will produce an additional 18.8 million tonnes of coal and when combined with Mod 8 (additional 43 MT) there will be over a 45% increase in total emissions above current approved operations at Ulan Mine.
4. There is no assessment of cumulative impacts from existing mine approvals or expansion proposals across the three Mudgee Mines: Ulan, Moolarben, Wilpinjong
5. The cumulative loss of threatened species habitat, significant Aboriginal cultural heritage values, water from the landscape and flows to creeks and rivers, and threats to amenity and livelihoods of neighbours has not been assessed
6. The proposal is within the CWOREZ and is competing for regional workforce urgently needed for new industries in the Central West
7. The proposal will place further pressure on already stressed surface and ground water sources within the Murray Darling Basin

To lodge your submission of objection by Tuesday 27 January:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/modification-6-underground-mining-extension> [You have to create an account through the Planning Portal. This takes a

couple of simple steps that generates a personal login for future use. Once you have an account you can lodge a submission for any proposal of interest.]

More detailed information

1. Amended proposal

This amended Mod 6 proposal has finalized the mine plan and identified exactly where the surface infrastructure will impact native vegetation. The previous approval overturned in the Land and Environment Court had nine different options for surface infrastructure – demonstrating that a mine plan had not been completed.

Subsidence from underground mining, as well as clearing for infrastructure development (roads, pipelines, bores, ventilator shafts) has a significant impact on the landscape.

The amended proposal fails to fully assess the impacts and focusses on a very narrow update of new information.

There is no recognition that the Mod 8 proposal is dependent on Mod 6 before it can proceed. It is essential that both proposals are assessed together as a new project. Modifications remove independent scrutiny of the quality of impact assessment and remove community merit appeal rights in the Land and Environment Court.

2. Greenhouse Gas Assessment

Glencore does not publicly report methane emissions and maintains that Ulan Mine is a low emitter, therefore there are no feasible means to reduce fugitive methane emissions.

The assessment does not meet the requirement of the NSW EP&A Act to assess the environmental, social and environmental impacts of all GHG emissions, including Scope 3, as ruled by the High Court under the Mt Pleasant Mine (Denman) decision.

3. Environmental impacts

The proposal will impact on threatened species habitat particularly Large-eared Pied Bat, Eastern Cave Bat, Powerful Owl, Barking Owl, Southern Myotis.

The Large-eared Pied Bat and Eastern Cave Bat have ongoing cumulative loss of habitat across the three Mudgee coal mine operations, including in the proposed Moolarben Open Cut 3 extension. These cumulative impacts have not been assessed for Serious and Irreversible Impact (SAII) on these threatened microbats.

The cumulative loss of Box Gum Woodland critically endangered ecological community across the region as an SAI entity is not assessed

4. Water Impacts

Subsidence or land collapse caused by underground mining damages groundwater systems that store water in the landscape.

Groundwater provides base flows to rivers and creeks. This mine expansion when combined with Mod 8 will cause a significant additional loss of flow to Talbragar River – does not report cumulative loss of flows from current approvals. The Talbragar River is a major tributary of the Macquarie River in the Murray Darling Basin that flows in below Burrendong Dam. These flows are directly connected to the internationally significant Macquarie Marshes.

5. Aboriginal cultural heritage impacts

The cumulative loss of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Ulan area is not assessed. There is ample evidence of continuous Wiradjuri occupation of the region with spiritual connection to country. A significant number of cultural heritage values will be impacted, particularly when combined with Ulan Mod 8 impacts.

6. Not Justified

There is no need for extended coal mining in the region to provide local jobs. Mining is competing for skilled labour urgently required in the construction, housing and renewable energy industries. There is a major labour shortage in the Central West with local workers needed for the CWO REZ construction.

The NSW Government has prioritised the Central West Future Jobs and Investment Authority to manage the transition away from coal mining. The Mudgee region has many opportunities to diversify the economy.