

## “Reclaiming our Valley”

Hunter Communities Network

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PO Box 14 Singleton 2330

Melissa Anderson  
Planner  
Resource Assessment  
Department of Planning and Environment  
GPO Box 31 Sydney NSW 2000

Friday 15 March 2019

### **Submission of Objection**

#### **Rix’s Creek South Modification 10 (DA 49/94)**

The Hunter Communities Network (‘the Network’) is an alliance of community based groups and individuals impacted by the current coal industry and concerned about the ongoing rapid expansion of coal and coal seam gas exploration and mining in the region.

The Network objects to this proposed extension of time for mining activity on the Rix’s Creek South open cut mine site as lodged under Modification 10 (‘Mod 10’).

This proposal is pre-empting an outcome of the approvals process for the Rix’s Creek Continuation Project which we strongly oppose. This mining operation has a chequered history of illegal activity and poor environmental performance. The Bloomfield Group have demonstrated that they are not a ‘fit and proper’ company to be managing mining rights under the *Mining Act 1992*.

The mining operation has major land use conflict with the expanding township of Singleton, significant biodiversity corridors and water sources in the mid-Hunter valley.

The current approval finishes on 24 June this year. This deadline must remain in place with the required Mine Closure Plan, as due on 24 March. Any need of an extension in time should relate only to rehabilitation and final land form of the open cut site.

The Statement of Environmental Effects (‘SEE’) for Mod 10, as placed on exhibition for comment, provides no information on the proposed activity until March 2020.

There is no information about where current activities are being undertaken on the mine site or where they might extend to. Under the current approval these activities should be devoted to mine rehabilitation.

There is no assessment of air quality impacts under the new 2016 EPA Guidelines that implement the new National Environment Protection Measures for air quality standards. The entire Rix's Creek operations must be assessed under the new guidelines as part of the Mod 10 assessment process.

There is also no assessment of any additional greenhouse gas emissions beyond the currently assessed and approved life of mine that finishes on 24 June 2019.

The information provided in the SEE is completely inadequate and should not have been accepted by the Department or placed on exhibition during the NSW Government caretaker period.

Mod 10 must be rejected so that Rix's Creek South mine can be finalised and the workforce employed in rehabilitation activities.

The Hunter Region must start an orderly transition away from coal mining. The proposal to continue extracting 4.5mtpa until 2038 at Rix's Creek is not consistent with the principles of Environmentally Sustainable Development including the precautionary principle and inter-generational equity.

The Network recommends that Mod 10 be rejected on the basis of poor assessment and poor planning.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Smiles". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Convenor