

# Wilcrow Pty Limited

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Level 26, Governor Philip Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
Sydney NSW 2000

Planning & Assessment  
Department of Planning, Industry & Environment  
Parramatta NSW 2124

Dear Sir/Madam

We are writing to object to the Mount Pleasant Optimisation proposal. We seek that an Independent Planning Commission reviews the proponent's technical reports, particularly water and final void impacts, Hunter River impacts, and cumulative impacts on water, air quality and dust.

For nearly forty years we have owned "East Rossgole" a 2700 acre grazing property which sits on and below the Rossgole Plateau directly to the north of the Mount Pleasant mine and which is adjacent to the proposed expansion of that mine.

The existing mine, and others in the area, have already done considerable damage to the local environment with worsening air quality, depleting groundwater and rendering much of the beautiful Upper Hunter pastures a blasted lunar landscape.

The proponent has assembled over 6,500 pages of technical information which cannot possibly be assessed by anyone, let alone the community, in four weeks.

This proposed expansion is coming at a time when demand for coal is declining, and major companies like BHP and Rio are leaving the industry. Major economies around the world, including our largest coal export markets, are committed to dramatic emissions reductions to reach net zero by 2050 (or 2060 in the case of China).

In the light of this, there is a real, and growing risk, that the proponent may not in the future be able to meet its obligations to remediate the landscape it has already devastated, let alone what it plans to devastate in the future. There is no confidence that the level of financial security that has been provided to cover remediation is sufficient or that its sufficiency is being regularly reviewed in light of changing costs and other circumstances. The proponent is a private company itself a subsidiary of a private overseas family owned company.

Leaving aside whether the remediation could be effected or paid for by the proponent the vast remaining void represents a massive risk for the community with an irremediable permanent disruption of local water resources all at a time when we know we are experiencing a hotter climate and as a consequence reduced water availability.

Turning to air quality, the proponent has already conceded that air quality and noise exceedances occur due to the cumulative impact of both Mt Arthur and Bengalla Mines. This underlines why the mine should not have proceeded in the first place

and should not be allowed to increase its extraction rate or its length of operation. Enough damage has been done to the environment and the community.

The postcode 2333 has the worst air quality in the state. This area includes Muswellbrook and Kayuga and just west and south of Aberdeen. The expansion and extension of this mine the subject of this objection will make the air quality much worse and spread it further north to Aberdeen and further towards Scone.

For example, on 1 March 2021, air quality with no drought, recent rain and no bushfires in north west Muswellbrook close to Mount Pleasant, had a PM10 of 113, more than double the NEPM standard of 50 and WHO standard of 20. On Monday March 8, the PM10 figure at the Muswellbrook North West Monitor (closest to Mount Pleasant's existing operations) reached a staggering 224.6. We believe the further expansion of Mount Pleasant would pose a serious risk to public health – particularly for the more than 10,000 residents of the Muswellbrook community.


The current Hunter Regional Plan highlights the significance of other industries – agriculture, thoroughbred breeding and tourism. For example, the Upper Hunter thoroughbred industry is one of the top three Centres of Breeding Excellence in the world (with Newmarket and Kentucky). It is the second largest concentration of breeding studs in the world (after Kentucky). It provides a significant number of jobs (75,000 direct and indirect combined) as does the coal industry (110,000) but these jobs will continue long after the coal industry; as indeed will the business of growing food.

The application to expand this mine should be refused. Its extension should not be considered in the absence of comprehensive cumulative air quality and water assessments and without a thorough review by the Independent Planning Commission. The continued expansion of the coal mining industry in the Upper Hunter is at odds with the environmental objectives of the NSW Government. It threatens the viability of other industries with long lives ahead of them and it imperils the health of the people of the Upper Hunter.

Yours sincerely



**Hon Malcolm Turnbull AC**  
Director



**Lucy Turnbull AO**  
Director