

BUSINESS HUNTER

19 May 2025

State Significant Developments
NSW Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure
4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy St
Parramatta NSW 2150

By email: Submitted via Planning Portal

SUBMISSION: Modification 5 Bloomfield Colliery Continuation Project

Business Hunter welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Modification 5 Bloomfield Continuation Project. The Environmental Impact Statement submitted by Bloomfield Colliery supports an application for mining to continue at two areas for a further five years beyond the current Project Approval, until 31 December 2035.

Business Hunter is the peak business group in the Hunter region. We serve more than 4,400 member and affiliate businesses operating across the region, representative of industries spanning all sectors and all sizes of business, from start-ups through to leading regional organisations and corporations, many with national and international profiles.

Business Hunter supports the Bloomfield Continuation Project on the grounds that it will provide significant economic and employment benefit to the Hunter region and immediate community with minimal, if any, adverse impact. The continuation will prolong for a relatively modest period activities that have been undertaken on the mine site since the 1850s, without an escalation in current production levels, nor the requirement of additional equipment or infrastructure.

Coal mining remains a critical part of the Hunter region's economy. The NSW Minerals Council's 2023-24 Expenditure Survey indicates that mining companies support almost 16,600 jobs in the region and the industry contributes \$8.8 billion to the Hunter economy. The flow-on benefit through indirect support of associated industries such as food and hospitality, professional services and transport pushes this substantial contribution even higher.

While the region is undergoing economic diversification and energy transition that will yield new jobs and industries in the renewable energy sector, the mining industry will continue to be a significant major economic contributor for some decades to come. Coal remains the largest source of electricity generation in NSW and more than 90 per cent of the state's coal is exported, with demand from key Asian markets expected to continue.

Business Hunter advocates strongly that if economic and social transformation in the Hunter Region is to be successful, we must evolve the status of new opportunity and industry in addition to, and not instead of, the activity of existing industry. Applications of this nature facilitate this outcome. We seek to ensure communities, industries and governments can navigate the complex shift toward net zero with confidence and stability. Continuation projects such as that proposed by Bloomfield are needed to meet demand and ensure

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economic and employment stability while coal remains such a significant part of the state and region's energy and export mix.

The continuation will provide ongoing employment for Bloomfield's 95 fulltime-equivalent staff, its contractors and staff of supply companies, as well as returning ongoing royalties to the state of NSW. This is significant in an area that experiences higher unemployment than the NSW average. Additionally, community support is provided through financial and in-kind donations made to more than 50 community organisations annually through the Bloomfield Group Foundation.

We note that a series of specialist technical studies were completed as part of the Environmental Impact Statement indicating that the continuation of operations can be undertaken and managed to meet the requirements for air quality, noise and blasting. A biodiversity offset strategy has been developed to address ecological impacts associated with the disturbance of vegetation. Bloomfield has also indicated that the proposed modification will provide an opportunity to improve the mine's final landform by reducing the size of the final void and rehabilitated slope angles, making it more suitable for grazing purposes post-closure.

Business Hunter is of the strong view that where applications can demonstrate they meet the requirements set out in the respective legislative and regulatory frameworks, they should be approved subject to appropriate conditions. On this basis, we encourage the NSW Government to support Modification 5 Bloomfield Colliery Continuation Project as a responsible measure that underpins energy, economic and community stability.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Should you wish to engage further on this matter, please contact me at bob.hawes@businesshunter.com or on 02 9466 4665.

Yours sincerely,



Bob Hawes
CEO, Business Hunter