

11/10/2017

Carolyn McNally
Secretary
Department of Planning and Environment
carolyn.mcnally@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms McNally,

Re: Maules Creek Coal Mine Project Application Number: 10_0138 Mod 4

The proponent Whitehaven Coal, are seeking to remove a section from Condition 12a, Schedule 3 from Planning Approval 10_0138 regarding the Maules Creek coal mine. That is the deletion of the wording and requirement to-

“ensure that all equipment and noise control measures deliver sound power levels that are equal to or better than the sound power levels identified in the EA, and correspond to best practice or the application of the best available technology economically achievable;”

I object to the Mod 4 and Whitehaven Coal removing a specific requirement for continuous environmental noise improvement by maintaining or reducing mining equipment sound power.

Whitehaven Coal have not been able to achieve the noise levels as determined in their original approval. We are now constantly having interrupted sleep due to excessive noise. This noise is of a low level reverberation/growl type at night making sleep almost impossible. This has meant that we are never really without the impact of noise disturbances.

I believe that the impact on the residents in our area was never considered to the point where we were ignored as being in an impact zone. This has meant that the requirements for the operation to ensure noise levels are not exceeded has never been complied with, except when there is an Independent Noise Audit being completed.

Personal decibel meters have recorded 76 decibels, 9 kilometres from the Whitehaven Coal Mine at 9:30 at night. The NSW EPA have these reports. Is this acceptable?

The relentless noise coming from this mine is impacting our lives as it stands now. They have not been able / willing to comply with the regulations determined for their approval, and now instead of mitigating or diminishing their exceedances they wish to have the original restrictions modified to allow the extreme noise pollution to continue.

It is not acceptable that, instead of working to comply with the very generous conditions set out in the approval process, Whitehaven Coal strives to make a mockery of the Mining Approval process in NSW.

The media coming from Whitehaven Coal is ‘all about’ Community Engagement and Partnership with Local Residents but the truth is that Whitehaven Coal could not care less for the Local Residents. If they did care, they would be motivated to work within the guidelines of the approvals instead of trying to have conditions slackened.

Whitehaven Coal declares to have strong compliance with noise monitoring, but this cannot be challenged or checked because of their secrecy.

It is worth noting that we, the local residents, know when the EPA are in the area doing some 'independent' noise audit monitoring. How do we know? Whitehaven Coal Noise levels are significantly lower than ordinary, to the point of being very noticeable. Is this a coincidence, that the noise pollution they claim they can't control and need to have restrictions removed to continue, can be controlled when there is an audit or monitoring occurring.

Our home is outside the zone of affectation, but I can assure you we are well and truly impacted/affected by the Noise and Dust that is being generated by this Mine.

Our family has lived in this valley for over 165 years, for us to leave the area would be impossible. Why should we? The purpose of the PAC and Department of Planning and EPA is to ensure that the rampant abuse of environmental considerations is not left unchecked.

I worry about my 5 children and the environment they are having to live in. The lifespan of this operation is 30 years. What irreversible damage will this company do to the lives of the local residents and the environment, if they are not held accountable for their actions?

In conclusion, I respectfully ask the Department of Planning to consider the impact on the lives of my family. We must live with unceasing excessive environmental noise (and toxic dust) emitted from this mining operation. I request that you deny the request by Whitehaven Coal to have the deletion of wording and requirement for continuous environmental noise improvement by maintaining or reducing mining equipment sound power.