

Maules Creek coal mine Modification 4: Objection

This application is a travesty of the Planning process.

Maules Creek has breached their Approval Conditions so many times that it is now one of three mines in NSW given the highest rating for Environmental risk

That this mine should expect special consideration to allow more noise than predicted and approved in their original EIS is unconscionable.

In 2011 the Environmental Impact Statement that assessed the impact the mine was likely to have on the environment and assumed certain noise levels coming out of the trucks, plants and other equipment at the mine and modelled the effect on surrounding residents based on those “sound power levels.”

The Planning Assessment Commission that granted approval to the mine was particularly critical of the Department for adopting an “artificially high” background level against which to measure change in noise caused by mining projects. In some cases, this meant doubling of noise experienced by mine neighbours.

Whitehaven’s most recent annual environmental review in 2016 admitted that the company was not compliant with this “sound power level” condition. That report also details non-compliance with blast level criteria and blast monitoring requirements.

This plainly illustrates that nearby residents are experiencing unreasonable noise already and any application to increase this noise will be at their expense

The Environmental Assessment provided refers to modelling conducted to assess the impact of the proposed modification, but does not supply that modelling for public scrutiny. This indicates that they are not able to meet their compliance levels

The Rejection of this modification must demand compliance with the 2011 Approval Conditions and a stop on the depopulating of the local community as a way around achieving noise compliance.

The argument that money would be better spent on other mitigation measures is false. Money must be spent on achieving the sound power level condition *as well as* the other mitigation strategies – as long as these strategies don’t involve the lowering of health outcomes or the removal of farming and community members.

This company must be held to their commitments and promises they made to the local community and the wider community of NSW when it obtained its approval, not be given a free pass by government because they can’t achieve the conditions of that approval.

It is not reasonable to sacrifice yet another rural community to the wishes of coal mining

This modification must be disallowed and the company forced to comply with their original conditions of consent.

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