

To: the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project SSD - 10418

OBJECTION

16.3.21

from People For Heritage, Upper Hunter, Inc.

PFH UH Inc is an association of Upper Hunter residents who value the continuation and enjoyment of our local heritage, built and natural, ancient and recent.

Heritage of all categories disappears into MACH Energy's projected extension of its open cut mine.

Natural heritage is relegated to 'offsets', a concept which allows biodiversity diminution. Biodiversity in this local area has been rich but is now diminishing. It cannot be successfully relocated. State policy wishfully imagines that "with time, an offset can be equal to the destroyed." As if one area is as good as two, even were they equal in biodiversity. The continuous land connections needed by all organisms for the survival of an ecosystem are eroded to a critical sparseness as it is. All we have left, needs protection.

Aboriginal heritage in the mining pit zone is revealed in the EIS as being dense and widespread; it is evidence of ancient use of the ridge climbing from river to escarpment, for millenia. Some of that identified evidence has been researched and removed, most has not. There was consultation with local people, so well documented that its quantity is impressive. It is wrong that such extensive content could be found, discussed with Owners and dealt with by a report, but then destroyed utterly apart from saved items. If coalmines can do this with human heritage, no wonder that our wonderful animals are being extinguished by ruthless advance, for pointless 'profit'.

Local farming over the last few hundred years has resulted in many homesteads and artefacts being found in the general mine area. They have been treated similarly, but in addition the farmers have been evicted and prevented in many cases from retrieving what they have built, used, lived in. Some cases of maintenance and reuse are recorded, but the Heritage Study's recommendations for the 'maintenance in-situ' of at least one homestead, have been disobeyed.

People for Heritage Upper Hunter Inc. objects to the extension of the Mount Pleasant Mine.

The background to the total heritage of the Upper Hunter comprises not just our escarpments on the West, and the rising Barringtons to the East, but also **the bounding ridge to the South**; the very ridge which this proposal plans to mine out and destroy, carving a high cut in its approach to the summit of Mount Pleasant itself. The rock emplacement bunds intrude through into the Upper Hunter Valley! This is a shocking and irretrievable precedent.

The Castlerock ridge is landscape Heritage of prime importance. It gives us access to a unique valley panorama. The cut in this ridge would be seen 25km from Scone. Distant views are also our heritage. The vast bunds intruding north and east take distant views away from thousands of people.

* From a heritage point of view, the Mount Pleasant extension should not go ahead, and most definitely not through the ridge carrying Castlerock Road.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this Application.

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