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Department of Planning
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Scanning Room

MANGOOKLA COAL CONTINUED OPERATIONS PROJECT.

Application No: SSD 8642

Our property is located at 590 Yarraman Rd., Wybong (Property ID 148). We have Mangookla Coal buffer land as a direct neighbour. We have mitigation rights, but not acquisition rights with the Mangookla mine which has been operating for 9 years. We have had our 35 acre property for 43 years. We purchased this land fully aware that it was so far out of town and knowing it would be a 100 Km return trip for me to go to work. We considered it necessary in order to insulate ourselves from the coal mines around Muswellbrook. My late father and I built everything up from a bare block. We are still 3 generations living here. The Grand Children know nowhere else. The house is on a hill in direct line of sight of the Pit, which is only 2.4 Kms away.

NOISE PREDICTIONS MODELLING MCCO PROJECT:

Yet again, this ordinary citizen wades through and tries to understand another EIS, which just get bigger and more complex each time. It feels like such a waste of time, because it will be all the same concerns, which I have previously raised. These concerns are never personally addressed and you hear nothing. But, with the EIS approved and the passing of time, to me, the concerns I had highlighted, have become fully realised.

I marvel at the hours and expense which must be incurred, researching, investigating and correlating. I try to understand the complexity of the "predicted" computer noise analysing modelling. But, in the end, the immensity is just too much and I give up. Just how much it must cost the Proponent to have the Consultants undertake this massive investigation? Who could possibly fully understand and digest all of that? I do realise that this is a compulsory requirement for the EIS by the Planning Authority. It ticks the box and so that requirement has been fulfilled.

What has happened to common sense and the senses? I could save the Proponent a fortune by simply utilising a document called a "TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP". Sitting in the office, you could trace out from the proposed mine site and follow around the ridgeline contours which surround the site to form the "natural amphitheatre." Any residence within that natural amphitheatre must be affected to some degree. Mine planners are fully cognisant of this same principle when they propose "Bund Walls", to hideaway the visual and to mitigate noise and dust.

In our situation, our house sits on the rim of a ridgeline forming the natural amphitheatre looking over to the mine. The computer modelling engaged for the original EIS (for the now current mining operations,) calculated the dust and noise for every season for every year of the expanding mine operations. The computer huffed and puffed and finally determined where the dust and noise would stop. It drew an "imaginary line" across the flat valley floor. We look over this imaginary line reposing on the valley floor, but, look up, and beyond and you can see the non-imaginary mine workings. The Computer says, that the well trained dust and noise will suddenly get very weak and be NOT able to crossover this line. Many years ago, we were told by the Mine that we were 200 metres too far away from this "Line" to be affected enough for us to be considered for acquisition. With the progression of the Mine, we feel that we are significantly affected and time has revealed that this fortress imaginary line can be easily and often breached.

I really take issue with the noise modelling plan which sets a night time baseline of 35 decibels.

At night-time, prior to the mine, on those special, magical nights, there was simply NO noise. (Anyway, what I call noise) The "sound experts" say however, there is always noise. For instance, the sounds of frogs, crickets, birds, barking, mooing and occasional vehicle. To me, these are "natural" sounds you expect to hear and are not only pleasing to hear, but also necessary to hear when you live in a farming area. A Mine owner or manager may love the noise of dollars being made, whilst a pre mine resident may find the noise upsetting. It is only ones perception that differentiates between sound and noise. We like to sleep with the windows open for the fresh country air and also to be attuned to any untoward and maybe dubious external occurrences. Rather than being insulated inside with the stuffy air conditioning running to mask outside noises.

We have the lawful right to complain to the mine about intrusive noise. I have registered noise complaints on occasions when it becomes too upsetting in the quiet of the night. However, I can't answer how many decibels it is, or just exactly what is making the noise. How can you identify individual noise sources when it seems to me to be the sound of an invading army. I am basically registering a complaint, so that they realise there exists some nearby privately owned residences who are having trouble sleeping. I do not expect the mine to change their operations just because they are upsetting us.

The Mine has approval to be operating here and you can't dig and transport coal quietly. I fully understand that they are legally permitted to make noise.

As the slowly approaching army became closer and closer, the night time noises became more intrusive. We finally accepted the Mine's offer for noise mitigation on our house. They installed air conditioning and insulating bats in the ceiling. However, they refused to double glaze the noisy side facing windows and therefore the noise is still intrusive in the house. The master bedroom directly faces the mine site.

The Mine have their "Real time noise monitoring stations", that we are told will alarm and alert the operating crew if they are exceeding allowable noise levels. There is a monitoring station, NCO4 between us and the mine site. However, whilst we are in direct line of sight of the workings, NCO4 noise station is not in direct line of sight of the mine workings. It is offset to the side and has an intervening ridgeline shielding it, which I would venture means it may receive less noise than we do.

The noise is not of great concern during the day, it's just when you are trying to get peaceful, restful sleep at night. Admittedly, the perception is emotionally linked to "how it used to be."

AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IMPACT:

What another complex document and a massive investigation. Had to give up and rely again on common and natural senses.

"Cumulative Affects". This is something I have real issues with. Every new mine EIS that I have seen consider they will NOT be adding to the Cumulative Affect. (This is probably not the forum for this issue because it involves every new mine.)

How can the planning authority accept blindly that with each new mine there is NO "accumulating affect"? Do they honestly believe that as each mine comes on line the total affect is not directly added to? Take a look at Muswellbrook Township and see the amount of dust in the air and around the houses due to the super pits of Mt Pleasant, Mt Arthur, Bengalla and Muswellbrook Coal, all

surrounding the poor town. In this scenario, the town is in the middle and the mine bund walls form the amphitheatre. I reckon, if there was only one mine, the town would be 1 quarter as dusty.

I have NOT requested a "First Flush System" for our rainwater tank, as I believe that NO amount of first flushing water will be effective in dislodging and flushing clean the house gutters. As I climb onto our roof yet again to regularly scrape out bucketful's of thick caked dust, I look out into the Mangoola Pit and recall the Consultants overwhelming dust study that I believe exonerates Mangoola Coal. There is no farming tilling operations here anymore because Mangoola do nothing with their purchased farms other than running cattle. So, whose dust is it in my gutters?

Even within Mangoola's operations, it is ludicrous to believe that the new proposed mining site will not add to the dust from the concurrently operating original site. They will be exposing an additional area of disturbed land. You cannot mine without creating dust, so maybe the dust just rises directly over the pits and roads and then settles back down to where it came from. Unlikely? So there must be an accumulating affect.

CUMULATIVE AFFECTS OF SALINE WATER DISCHARGE:

Once again, it seems to me that all new mines are allowed to participate in "The Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme." Each mine considers they will NOT be adding to the "Accumulating" affect. Each year, with each new mine, the amount of salty water waiting to be dumped into the Hunter is INCREASING. How can this NOT be a Cumulative Affect? Because there has not been a fresh in the Hunter for a very long time, the saline water is accumulating in the dams at the mines, waiting for the time it can be dumped. This has got to have significant effect on the River before it can get to the ocean?

MCCO PROJECT SALINE WATER:

Years ago, there was a very active professional group of concerned residents, volunteering their time, who formed the "BLACK JACK MOUNTAIN LANDCARE GROUP." This well intentioned group's charter was to rehabilitate the extensive salt pan degraded plain of Big Flat Creek. Many years, many hours of volunteered time and labour, much government grant money and all to no avail. The salt pans of Big Flat creek are still degraded. The MCCO will see a coal mine pit running along adjacent to the salt pan plain of Big Flat Creek.

Maybe MCCO will achieve what the Landcare group couldn't? Drain the salty water plain? Or will the quantity of salt water become a huge problem?

SPINY BURR GRASS:

The area of land which occupies the proposed mine site is infested with spiny burr grass. This invasive weed propagates by travelling on tyres of vehicles driving through. Activity such as soil disturbance and the saving and re-use of top soil will continue to spread it far and wide.

LIFESTYLE AMENITY AND PROPERTY VALUE:

We are 3 generations now living here and the Mine has been operating for many years. Compared to our pre-mine life at our property, we consider that we are now severely impacted visually, by dust, by noise, by loss of community and property values. When I first built here, it was an area

designated on Council LEP as "Scenic Rural Beauty". They had to change the LEP. There was NO night time noise. We had a vibrant social community centred on the local hall. (OK, some nights there was music and laughter coming from the hall)

As part of the "Clean-Up Australia Day", we had it organised that most landholders cleaned up their road frontage. Eventually, we had the area almost litter free. Now, the mine owns the houses and land. The litter continues to build up. There is something that goes hand in hand with "ownership". Owners care and have a sense of pride and a feeling of belonging to their place. Renters are transient, it's not their home and they don't seem to become involved with the community. The houses that are not rentable are being vandalised, stripped and one has been burnt. The better quality rented houses are looking shabby. Compared to pre-mine times, I feel I am living in a third world country.

My hobby throughout my working life was improving our property. I could not bear to see what I have worked for all this time, being rented.

Who would want to buy a bush property so far out of town, just to be living next to an Industrial Zone?

The Mine management seem to think it is OK to be living near their mine. Maybe one of them would be interested in purchasing?

EMPLOYMENT:

I was a community representative on the inaugural Community Consultative Committee (CCC) for the proposed Anvil Hill Mine which later became Mangoola Glencore. I was proud of our efforts in achieving a Memorandum of Understanding with the Muswellbrook Shire Council. This MOI was that the Mine, "would endeavour as much as possible to employ LOCALS in their workforce."
(I wonder how many mine employees actually live in close proximity to the mine?)

Here is a golden opportunity for the managers to purchase and live locally.

I think it is a positive thing that Mangoola will continue to provide employment to the current workforce through the proposed MCC project.

REALIGNMENT OF WYBONG PO ROAD:

Mangoola owns every property along the PO Road. For the few private property owners it serves at the end, I really do not think it is worth the expense. In addition, it will only be a problem when they apply for another extension to mine further West.

CONCLUSION:

I had deliberately begun this submission by NOT indicating whether I was for or against the MCCO proposal. My reasoning was that if I have gone to this time and effort to expose my feelings, then I did not just wish to have this simply counted as a yes or no and cast aside without further scrutiny. I trust that someone who actually cares in authority and is able to make changes will read this. I do not mind who gets to read this. Mostly I am sure readers will just have a laugh, but there may be some who are in the same position and will understand.

If the MCCO project is approved, I especially have sympathy for the property owners who will find themselves in the same position we have been subjected to since mining began. Even though the Computer says you will be OK, be prepared for an uninvited lifestyle change.

FOR:

- . Continuing employment for the current employees.
- . Practical utilisation of the current heavy machinery.

AGAINST:

- . Devaluing of Property and inability to sell.
- . Further loss and fragmentation of community.
- . Further road traffic intensity and danger.
- . Inconvenience caused by road closures due to construction and blasting.
- . Yet another "Extension". When will it all be finished?

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