

Malcolm and Helen Swords
'The Lagoon's'
Lagoon Road
Ulan NSW 2850

24 February 2012

Mining and Industry Projects
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure,

We strongly object to the granting of Stage 2 of the Moolarben Coal Mine development. It contains land that we own and consists of previously determined agricultural land with valuable works and structures and would seriously affect the running of our agricultural enterprise. (Refer to previous letters of objection)

We objected to the granting of Stage 1 and the first Stage 2 development application.

We feel that this preferred project report has not addressed all the issues raised from Moolarbens first lodgement for stage 2 adequately.

We feel there are still many issues unresolved from stage 1 and that these are compounded with the stage 2 application.

As you are already aware from the numerous objections already made by us, our farm has been owned by the Swords' family since 1865 and has had an enormous amount of work, money and time spent on it to make it the productive agricultural enterprise it is today. All our family's history is tied to this land and area. The valley is used to produce fat cattle, fine wool merino sheep, oats and lucerne, improved pastures with grazing only paddocks retaining a balance of native grasses. Our flats used to stay green and productive all year round, but in recent years have dried off in dry times. The hills provide timber for fencing and milling purposes when needed, and habitat for native species of flora and fauna. There are also pockets of undisturbed ecosystems, providing a balance for our farming activities and native animals and plants. We have also spent many hours keeping it free of certain noxious weeds and feral pests.

In preparing this submission, we reread the ones we have written with our concerns if the project was given consent (Stage 1) **and they have all happened.**

We were concerned about:-

- The Ulan and Cope roads becoming congested and dangerous with the increased traffic – they have deteriorated and become dangerous and will continue to get worse
- Noise levels greater than predicted from traffic and mine – many more people have been affected than they proposed with their initial studies
- Dust levels – greater than they predicted and more people affected than first proposed
- Blasting impacts – they have had several exceedances and one “ plume” affecting the Ulan school and its students Vibrations have been felt from both Moolarben and Wilpinjong which is 15 kms away

- Disintegration of the local environment – many people have moved away. No wealth has been put back in to Ulan and surrounds. Instead of a rural outlook, remaining residents are looking at a mine site
- Devaluation of property – the prices people are offered to sell to the mine do not truly reflect replacement property value locally, in a non-affected mine area
- The area known as The Drip should be protected at all costs because of its cultural heritage, aesthetic and environmental values – NOW Moolarben Coal hold freehold title over this area (China and Korea) and will probably be made inaccessible for the public to enjoy as mining advances that way!
- We were told that the hill at the southern end of open cut pit 1 would be left intact – in recent time, this hill is being worked on and disappearing. If removed, our whole valley will be opened up and exposed to increased mining impacts, as well as exposing residents left in Ridge Road and beyond.

There are many issues of concern to us in the preferred project report on display for Moolarbens Stage 2. We ploughed through the 3 large volumes of “data” containing modelling and predictions of noise and dust levels, air quality, blasting and subsidence impacts, water modelling, creek diversions, loss of aboriginal and cultural heritage, rehabilitation and came to the conclusion that unless you have been trained in these areas it is impossible to understand what all the maps etc mean. The outcome implies there will be no adverse impacts on surrounds – no difference to environment than before mine was there – all based on models, not fact.

- Closure of Carrs Gap Road – provides us access to property on Murragamba side - which we still own!
- Lagoon Road disappears on some of the maps – is that planned for closure too?
- We are already listed as Subject to Acquisition from stage 1 so results for us don’t count – it is assumed that we will be acquired and go
- Offsets don’t have same ecosystem/type as one destroyed. For example Dunn Dunn is an agriculture enterprise and going to be planted back to native veg/more ag land lost. Will these offsets be properly managed or will they become weed/pest/fire hazards.
- We were told in stage 1 that ag land lost would be rehabilitated back to ag land in this proposal it is to be rehab back to native veg and used as a wildlife corridor. There has already been too much ag land lost to mining
- Power supply to our dwellings runs along the corridor of the proposed OC2
- Ground water studies incomplete
- Spring fed water holes and dams will be affected with proposed dewatering for UGs
- Subsidence – rock falls likely/ cliff faces – unsafe – if UG2 proceeds it would render our hill country dangerous and unsafe because of subsidence of around 1.3 metres or more.
- Air quality studies – Modelling/Predictions that no one other than us will experience levels exceeding the OEH assessment criteria
- Air quality studies – mention PM10 not PM2 which we believe to be more harmful
- Calm periods lasting up to 2 months with wind speed less than 0.5m/s do not satisfy specified OEH requirements so they have changed area to another mines meteorological data results to give better predictions for air quality

- Refer to deposition of airborne dust – having potential to cause NUISANCE IMPACTS and possible health impacts
- Huge volumes of water flow through Murragamba valley – where will it go - creek diversions have not proved to be successful in the past
- Loss of local community – report refers to property acquisitions as ‘beneficial’ – brought more properties – beneficial outcome – improved environmental and social outcome for impacted residents
- Development of mine workers villages – address traffic and road issues but creates other problems – self contained – where does the wealth to the local community go then – will they still have to access Doctor and medical services which are already stretched to ridiculous waiting times. Gulgong Hospital is closed and Mudgee Hospital services are limited. Social problems are created by itinerant workers

Cumulative effects with the three mines in the area:-

- Increased traffic flow with new jobs created from expansion of Ulan and Moolarben mines – Cope Road and Ulan Road are already degraded and dangerous from the three mines.
- Dust emissions – supposedly no impact- no exceedance
- Noise emissions – supposedly no impact – no exceedance
- Blasting – no impact 9 blasts/week averaged over year max 2 blasts/ day 9-5 Mon-Sat - Wilpinjong blasts have felt 3 where house and woolshed foundations have been shaken from 15 kms away – 5 blasts /week averaged over year max 2 blasts/day – plus Ulan blasting Could have 20 blasts a week – like living in a war zone
- Surface and ground water
- Community degradation

In the PPR for stage 2 it states only one issue was raised by the CCC – offsets. There were many others (CCC minutes are not a true indication of business) – nearly every meeting, various issues concerning water/ noise/ dust/ traffic and the Drip are raised.

Concern was raised at the last CCC meeting about making public aware of PPR being on display. Advertising in 2 editions of the local paper and mentioned on the news is not an effective way of letting people know what is happening. We met at least 10 people who live nearby who had no idea of the proposal before the department that live in and near the area of affectation. If they don't know, how can they make a submission – then you are led to believe everyone is in favour of proposal! Not everyone buys the paper or listens to the news. The Community newsletter from MCM was not delivered by Aust Post until 3 weeks into the exhibition phase and then only delivered to mine selected recipients. It contained some wrong info and nothing in regards to making a submission to the Department. The way these things are advertised needs to be seriously addressed as this is not the first time poor advertising has happened.

In summary, we feel this proposed development has no future and should be rejected outright.

This objection applies to the three affected landholders and lands owned by them respectively being Malcolm, Helen and Estate of Phyllis Swords.

Yours sincerely
Malcolm and Helen Swords