

Airly Mine Extension Project

Application No SSD 5581

Development Assessment Systems & Approvals
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

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INTRODUCTION:

My Name is Neil Gorrell, my family and I have made our home in the Capertee Valley for the last 14 years, and have lived and worked here since. Our properties Watervale and Emu Swamp consisting of 4,000 acres is run as a stud and commercial cattle operation, we supply the stud and commercial market and run approximately 520 stud cattle. We sell our cattle at venues state wide, we also show our cattle at National, Stud and Royal shows.



Our property adjoins the proposed Airly mine extension into Genowlan Mountain along the entire northwest boundary of the proposed project. Hence we write to you in anticipation, that our submission is not only read, but that you understand and hear what we are saying, and that you might gain an understanding as to the immense ramifications this extension into Genowlan Mountain will have on not only our lives, our state of mind but our business, livelihood and property values.

OUR BUSINESS OUR HOME OUR FUTURE:

The viability of our enterprise depends on the water supply from Genowlan and Emu Creek, we pump and supply water to 39 troughs throughout the property, these two creek systems are the main source of water for our stock. Emu Swamp & Watervale have Capertee River frontage, as well as 2 licenced irrigation bores and one licenced stock and domestic bore entitlements, two of which are on Genowlan Creek. Our properties are the first full time working property along Genowlan and Emu Creeks from the proposed mine site.

Environment:

Our family have on many occasions had the opportunity to visit and appreciate the awe inspiring rock pagodas, grotto and amazing tree ferns on the top of Genowlan Mountain, I can only hope that the people delegated with the responsibility of “approving and destroying” or “not approving and preserving” this pristine narrow, fragile Genowlan Mountain with its abundance of flora, fauna and Pagodas for future generations of AUSTRALIAN’S, listen to what the people who submit submissions, listen to the environment because the environment is at risk in this case and could be destroyed forever.

This valley is diverse with unique birdlife, our properties Watervale and Emu Swamp is home to over 55 observed and 176 known species of birds including the Regent Honey Eater, over 18 observed species of mammals, including the Little Forest bat, Chocolate Wattled Bat, the listed as vulnerable Large Bent Wing bat which is a highly mobile species that forages over many habitats and found on Watervale and Emu Swamp, with the preferred roosting habit of this species is in the caves and crevices, such as the nearby adjoining escarpment of Mt Genowlan with its crevices and overhangs. Not to forget the copious amounts of frogs and reptiles.

PLEASE, visit this area with people independent of the overseas mining conglomerate, visit it with Australians who want the rim of the widest enclosed canyon in the world (that has over 10% of this countries biodiversity) to remain intact and preserved for our children and their children, most of all please visit it before you make a decision!! PLEASE NOTE: Genowlan Mountain will be subjected to subsidence, as a direct neighbour we have seen subsidence on many occasions without mining interference, regardless of what the mine experts say that mountain is too fragile and narrow not to subside.

If the mine is successful, these areas that are proposed for mining will take many 100's of years to regenerate, and in reality the pagodas will never recover, it will be lost to generations of Australians, yes Australians! How will you, as a decision maker, explain to your children and my children and grandchildren why and how you made a decision to destroy what they as proud AUSTRALIANS are entitled to enjoy, embrace, and showcase to the rest of the world. Do you say that a foreign company needed to destroy unique Australian landscapes so they could make a profit? Because that's the crux of the matter.

Should our lands future come at the cost of short term overseas investment and short term job gain?

We ask those simple questions of you and as concerned Australians with a lot at stake we need and expect a response in our favour, my children and grandchildren need and expect a response in their favour!

The people whose jobs are at stake today is small in comparison to the unemployment that will happen when these mines pack up shop and go home leaving us with destroyed rivers, creeks streams and aquifers, farms, and lives and livelihoods of Australian farmers. Retrain these people now, find renewable sources of energy now, and don't wait for a foreign company to destroy our land for their profit until you, our government act. Don't leave a legacy for our children that you will be ashamed of.



Water:

It is imperative to the existence of the agricultural industry, that within the widest enclosed canyon in the world the “Capertee Valley” its Australian farmers, who have paid our government for rightfully acquired licences are able to access the amount of water required to continue operation, and livelihoods which has been the case for over a hundred years. As I stated in my introduction we have 2 licenced irrigation bores (located on the adjoining property to the proposed Genowlan Mt extension) and stock and a domestic bore, interference to any of these water supplies, would **make our property worthless**.

We pump and then gravity water through a piping system over 6klm from our bores. Dams are very porous in the valley and don’t hold water well, and because we are a very dry climate we rely on our bores for stock water especially in dry times, the like we are experiencing now. I could not continue operating if this supply as stated by the mine was going to be reduced by 3% unless another source of acceptable quality of water was secured and supplied by the mine. Each of our cows can drink up to 70 litres of water a day! multiply that by 520 head 365 days a year.

The EIS has stated flows from the springs are likely to cease if the mine stop the springs on the Genowlan and Airly Mt areas, these springs feed Gap and Genowlan Creeks that flow into the Capertee River. The Community also had to apply under the Freedom of Information ombudsman to gain information on the original bores drilled by the mine, these showed high levels of heavy metals and poisons that should not be pumped from the mine. We want this information to be readily available to all concerned.

ECONOMIC ISSUES:

As I am now 66 years old, always been self-employed and now nearing retirement, I have treated and planned that my 4,000 acre farm is my superannuation and retirement fund. I have been endeavouring to sell the farm as a “going concern” which is proving impossible, as soon as prospective buyers find out about the mine they refuse to go any further with negotiations because of the fact there would be a mine on their boundary and that the water is not assured for a future cattle operation. We as property owners are stagnating until we know whether to invest more into our property or not. To place revenue from a determined unviable coal mine that has already closed down once in 2012 is not worth the significant social and economic risks to the people of and environment within a potential world heritage area known as the Capertee Valley.

AGRICULTURE:

Within the walls of the Capertee Valley, agriculture is alive and well, regardless of what the mine say, I contribute to the 6,000 head of cattle that are bred and leave this valley and sold to domestic markets. There is, thriving sheep, alpaca, Thoroughbred horses, fodder, and goat industries with in the valley all relying from the water from these creeks, springs, and river systems. These systems are the life blood of these industries and they will not survive without WATER clean fresh WATER. In the present application there is NO GUARANTEE, is given to the neighbouring properties that our water supply for stock and domestic purposes, will not be affected. **We need a guarantee from the mine in the present application that all our water supply will be guaranteed for adjoining properties to the proposed Genowlan Mountain extension of Airly Coal Mine, as was in the original DA of the mine. If the mine say we will not be affected why not guarantee our water.**



TOURISM:

Tourism is a thriving business within the valley with people travelling from all over the world to come and see the birds, rock pagodas, escarpments, unique plant life and abundance of mammals. B&B accommodation is found throughout the valley, helicopter flights are available. At even given day you will find bird watchers dotted all over the valley.

MONITORING AT THE MINE:

On paying to receiving the mines bore report through the freedom of information ombudsman (the mine refused to give us the information on the bores) the mines Hydrologist, stated that the water should not be pumped from the mine bores as it contains heavy metals and poisons. Airly mine has admitted several spills from its large dams and the sampling and monitoring to water does not comply with the due diligence procedures, hence the need for independent of the mine monitoring of these and other important water issues.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. We are not against the mine. But we need honesty and we need our life and land protected.
2. I want my water 100% guaranteed by the mine.
3. The Grotto including its springs and water supplies be fully protected
4. Airly Village ruins be fully protected
5. I am entitled not to have my property devalued because a mine starts up next door.
6. I value the pristine area they are proposing to mine.
7. The proposed mining area of Genowlan Mt should be left in the pristine condition it has been in for hundreds of years. This mountain should be fully protected.
8. We do not want increased road traffic and want the mine to be responsible for upgrading of the road if any increase in flow happens.
9. The entrance to the Capertee Valley has been destroyed visually by mounds of coal. This must be completely screened off.
10. No increase of noise, this valley is quiet and serene and should stay that way.
11. No pollution should be tolerated from the over flow of dams on the mine site.
12. The mine need to be better neighbours as promised to us by Mr Chanin Vongkuslkit the CEO of Banpu. Centennial Coal representatives need to take up that promise and be truthful, honest and share information with their adjoining neighbours. There should be no need for the community to go to "freedom of information" and pay to find out the truth, especially in matters that effect their lives and businesses.
13. **Residents of the Capertee Valley need an "absolute guarantee" that there will be NO EASTERN PORTAL. Centennial Coal have told the community lies in the past "EXAMPLE: Mine managers attended a community meeting and told the community under no circumstances will a washery ever be built" so we need an absolute guarantee there will be no Eastern Portal.**

Thank you for reading my submission of concerns on the Airly Extension into Genowlan Mt.
Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Neil Gorrell

