

SUBMISSION TO DROP-IN-SIA CONSULTATION SESSIONS
COAL & ALLIED DEVELOPMENT CONSENTS FOR MT THORLEY
AND WARKWORTH MINES
27 MARCH 2014

As part of the community consultation process undertaken by Coal and Allied with regards to the development consents for Mount Thorley Operations and Mount Thorley Warkworth mines I would like to have the following considered:

- **Creation of a Property Trust to Maintain a Property Market Adjacent to Mines.** Noise and dust do not know they are not allowed to travel past the Voluntary Acquisition Area. The visual impact and activity of open-cut mining directly affect residential property values and the ability of owners to sell their property if they wish or need to relocate. An immediate example of this is my next door neighbour who is extremely ill with Motor Neurone Disease, and who needs to move closer to Newcastle to be near to his family, specialist medical services, and support groups. His property has been on the market for more than six months now with not a single enquiry - a direct result of the proposed mine expansion and associated uncertainty. To properly address this issue:
 - A property trust needs to be created with funding from the mine and managed through a nominated local real estate agent.
 - All properties within a 10km distance of the boundary of the mine would be eligible to be purchased.
 - The trust would purchase properties offered to it at a fair price as if the mine extension had not affected the value. Registered Valuers could be used to determine the price paid.
 - Properties would then be marketed to potential buyers wishing to move into the area.
 - If the company is a good “corporate citizen” and supports the local community through managing noise and dust, providing local employment and business opportunities, and supporting local facilities and activities, then the area should become a place people want to move to and properties will transfer quickly from seller to buyer. The degree to which this ideal is achieved will be reflected in the company’s exposure to the local real estate market.

The objective of this proposal is for the property trust to not have to purchase a single property. The village of Bulga has been in existence since 1821, years before mining came to this part of the Valley, and it should still be here years after mining has finished. Unfortunately, this has not been the history of mining and communities to date, and surviving the period mining occurs in an area is a real problem for rural Australia. The key is for the local community and mines to work together with the common aim of developing the area as a whole to the mutual benefit of all parties involved. Maintaining a healthy and active property market is a cornerstone in creating the solid relationships needed for this type of approach.

- **Relocation of Wallaby Scrub Road to the Western Edge of the Consent Area.** Many people, including myself, regularly rely on this road to travel to work or to the western parts of NSW. Having to detour via Mt Thorley could add up to half a day in travelling time to the weekly work commute, which is not insignificant in an already long working year. Many other roads have been relocated to account for mining development (including the Putty Road), and this one needs to be as well.
- **Streamlined Procedures for Repair of Properties Affected by Mining.** A “No Fault” approach needs to be taken to repairing damage to local property as a result of mining. With the mines moving closer than ever before to residential areas it is important that home owners know they can maintain the standard of their properties with a minimum of inconvenience. Repairs should just occur rather than having to go through a convoluted and confrontational process. Insurance companies have no problem with this approach and neither should mining.
- **On-Line Access to Noise/Dust/Mining Activity/General Mine Information.** While this point was mentioned in Coal and Allied advertising in the Singleton Argus on 25 March 2014 there was very little detail. The information provided should be accurate and relevant so the local community can make informed lifestyle choices, rather than being used to hide activities or penalise the company.

This development consent is to extend the mine life for another 21 years, which will mean a dedicated long-term strategy is needed for Bulga and surrounding community if it is to receive the support and consideration needed to survive and grow. This development will earn billions of dollars of revenue for the company and only a very small proportion of this would be required to support the proposals above. Any legislative issues can also clearly be managed given the State Government’s demonstrated willingness to make changes to legislation in support of this development.

Communities should welcome mining and the prosperity it brings to an area with open arms. Mines should be like “big brothers” to these communities, making sure they are taken care of at all times. Instead we get shady deals in dark alleys with selected locals that only serve to divide the community, protracted and expensive litigation, no local employment (a three-toed sloth could count the number of Bulga residents working at Mount Thorley Warkworth on one paw and still have spare toes), and a guy who gets to sit in his car on Inlet Road at night in the middle of winter measuring the noise that crickets and frogs make instead of doing something productive like driving a nice warm haul truck. It is time to let go of the past, mend fences, and enter into constructive dialog to ensure the future of all involved. I believe that the above, and especially a property trust, will go part way to achieving this aim.

I look forward to the results of this consultative process and please do not hesitate to contact me further with any queries you may have either by mail at the address shown above, or on my mobile phone.