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Executive Director
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Mount Thorley Continuation Project. Project Application number SSD6465.

Dear Sir

I strongly object to the proposed Mt. Thorley extension to their open cut mine.

I am a resident of Bulga and subjected daily to dust, noise and lights. For four years Mt Thorley was not operational and it gave us some respite although we still had Warkworth to contend with. The large majority of our noise and dust comes from Mt. Thorley and they are continually exceeding their consent conditions.

For some reason the mine in the last 2 years was able to raise the maximum noise criteria from 35 dba to 38 dba. This was done with no consultation with the community, but when raised with the Department it was advised it was to make it easier on the mine to monitor the noise. Mt Thorley and Warkworth which are separately owned entities but run as one operation.

Why is all the consideration given to the mines and not the community ? Why was there no consultation with the community? Was there any consideration given that to make it "easier" for the mines to monitor noise that perhaps the dba at Warkworth could be lowered to 35 dba . I think not. The Department is supposed to fair and transparent but we can see no sign of this in our dealings with them when it comes to approvals for Mt Thorley and Warkworth. In fact it appears to us that they are just another department for the mines.

If this extension is approved the small amount of rehabilitation that has taken place at Loders Pit and Abbey Green will all be for nought? We will be subjected to overburden dumps, more dust, more lights and no visual respite from these mines. It is my opinion and that of many, Mt Thorley is requesting this extension to act as a dumping ground for Warkworth.

I read with interest the article in The Australian newspaper dated April 17 2014 written by Phil Laird who is a farmer and the national co-ordinator for Lock the Gate Alliance. It really hit a chord with me and I wish more people could read about what he had to say as we have to live every day with the advertisements and opinion pieces written and financed by the Minerals Council.

His piece was in response to Steve Galilee's article where Mr Galilee called for economic vandals to be jailed. Mr Galilee criticised Lock the Gate for being spokespeople for various organisations? Yet he himself is a spokesman for the NSW Minerals Council, a highly politicised lobby group that represents the narrow interests of coal miners.

His background is far more interesting than those he purports to criticise. He was a long time staffer and advisor to various Liberal government ministers, both state and federal.

In November 2010 an ICAC report into corruption risks involved in lobbying in NSW recommended that former staff of ministers and parliamentary secretaries be banned for a year from lobbying activities related to any matters they had had official dealings with in the past.

The recommendation, which was in line with the Australian code of conduct was not adopted and in December 2011 Mr Galilee left his position as Chief of Staff to NSW treasurer Mike Baird to become chief executive of NSW Minerals Council. More recently the NSW Minerals Council has added another former government advisor to its ranks. The former chief of staff of former state resources minister Chris Hatcher, Andrew Humpherson, began consulting for the council just months after his former boss resigned from cabinet following a raid by officers from ICAC on his office in December last year.

You may ask what this has to do with the DAs submitted by Rio Tinto. Well it is very relevant as this is what we are up against when it comes to influencing different government departments, like for instance the Planning Department. We do not have the finance or lobbying powers as people like Mr Galilee have.

Now that the government has made changes to the rules it is made even harder for the PAC to ensure that we get a fair and balanced verdict.

You must take into account the decisions of both the Land and Environment Court and NSW Supreme Court of Appeal.

The department should take the moral ground and not allow this extension to be approved.

Yours sincerely

Leslie Krey.