

Submission to EIS of Stratford Mine Extension Project  
Application Number SSD-4966

Affected property 345 Glen Rd Craven - Notated Receiver on EIS - Property 47

Submission

Owners - Tim and Libby Hart  
David and Carolyn Digges

1. Noise issues at both dwellings
2. Air quality and adverse effect of added dust
3. Ground vibration and blasting
4. Visual Impact, traffic, closure of Glen Road,
5. Illumination - added irritation light 24/7
6. 24 hour operations
7. Socioeconomic effects
8. Mitigation measures
9. The Planning and Assessment Committee

The Owners acquired the property in 2003, at that stage being unaware of any plans for a mine extension, and were not threatened by the existing extent of the Stratford Mine. The affected property is located on Glen Rd approx. 900m at its closest boundary to the Southern extent of the proposed Stratford East Pit - SEP. The property covers an area of approximately 100 Hectares and is concurrent directly on its Northern boundary with the Proposed Stratford Mine Extension Project boundary. A current dwelling is approximately 1.3km from the SEP. Another dwelling has approval consent approximately 1km from the SEP. SCPL to date has acquired properties on three sides to the North, SW and South. The purchased property notated 19(32) and property 60 like our property 47 are located a similar distance from the SEP.

In discussions with the SCPL we have voiced our real concerns about the proximity of the new mine affecting our amenity in a number of areas but were assured there would be NO added affects to our amenity. An SCPL representative was made aware of our long held building plans for a new dwelling on a picturesque part of our property. To our dismay a letter of objection written by Mine Manager Mr Mark Jacobs to Gloucester Council then contradicted previous statements to us making an objection to the DA on grounds that there would be a significant adverse impact from the SEP on both new and old dwellings. The DA was subsequently passed by Gloucester council.

Our families have invested both financially and emotionally in this property to date and it has been an important part of our children's development. We now feel however that the admissions made by GCL in the objection letter mean that our amenity, lifestyle and plans for the property are under threat.

Stratford Coal has produced its EIS based on established computer modeling e.g. noise, vibration and air quality. SCPL has stated in the introduction statement that the EIS and its operations are best practice. We do not doubt the efficacy of the actual mathematic modeling, however we believe that the EIS itself contains anomalies indicating that much of the measurement inputs on which these models are based are specific to Stratford and

Craven and inaccurate in regard to local conditions on Glen Road precinct, a distinct offshoot of the Gloucester valley. We hope to show that SCPL made omissions and erroneous assumptions, and measurements were made closer to Stratford than Glen Road therefore inaccurate raw data as it relates to our local conditions.

We note that Stratford Coal has dismissed our new dwelling as it has not been notated in the EIS, rendering the studies inadequate.

\*\*\* We request the authority to have our approved 2nd dwelling notated as a receiver in the EIS. \*\*\*

We feel that so far SCPL representatives have undertaken a PR exercise that has dismissed our concerns outright and painted an overly optimistic view of the mine. We may be classed as a small player but feel that by right of law have justifiable concerns that the proposed huge extension will adversely affect our socioeconomic investment. We are very close to the SEP (900 m) and the approach along Glen road will be within 200m. By definition any EIS is required to articulate and include all effects of a particular development so as to give a balanced view and we wish to state that this EIS excludes or underrates some negative impacts that do not fit into an overall "best case scenario" for the benefit of SCPL. Also the SCPL in ES3 state that their aim is best practice, however there are examples in the EIS where this is contradicted as will be discussed.

1. Noise issues : Firstly the mine fails to notate our approved dwelling in its EIS which is unacceptable. When the Stratford mine expansion (particularly Stratford East open pit ) was announced we did become concerned that it may affect the amenity of our property and our long held development plans. Many local friends and neighbours concurred with our concerns. However, in due consultation with SCPL, we were told on more than one occasion that our property would be unaffected by the new mine development. As there are no other facts on public record that we can rely upon we can only take what was stated to us by GCL to be correct. What GCL said allayed our concerns and we decided to get on with the enjoyment of our country lifestyle and developing our long held plans for a dwelling in a picturesque part of our property. Unfortunately, according to a letter of objection to Gloucester council from Mr Mark Jacobs, Mine Manager, there is now an admission made that both houses on our property (current and proposed) will be affected and GCL has contradicted its original representation of the facts to us.

As part of the EIS a number of ambient noise surveys were relied upon eg :

1994,2001,2007,2011. The noise loggers for these surveys were predominantly in the Stratford area remote from the Glen Rd precinct where our farm is located and a map shows that no loggers were placed in the general area around Glen Rd. These surveys were carried out for limited time spans eg : 2001 study was for 14 out of 365 days. Some meteorological data was predominantly taken from some distance from Glen Rd valley 20km south and 5 north of Stratford. No mention is made that this offshoot valley runs in a more southerly direction and is therefore more prone to the prevailing night time southerly winds.

Meteorological and cloud data was taken also from Murrurundi some 100 kms away especially for the dust study.

EIS states that the night assessment has a significant south- south East cross flow and that night time inversions are a feature of the area. Above surveys are all based on predominantly Stratford receivers NM1-8 located 6-8 kms from our farm and NM3 more

than 4 kms away. Surveys are of the original Stratford pit and it is dubious whether these surveys can be accurately correlated within an EIS to represent the real noise effects of three widely separated placed pits sources. We cannot find in the EIS where relevant noise estimates sourced at the Stratford East Pit SEP were logged by a noise receiver located at our farm ; of course such a relevant survey has not been done for Glen Rd and therefore the relevance of these Stratford surveys in any Modeling extrapolation cannot be accurate for our farm also considering local Meteorological conditions are different and the valley facing more south is more prone to prevailing southerly winds. The EIS study says exceedences are based on effects of temperature inversions and or prevailing winds yet do not take into account that due to the Glen Rd offshoot facing more south our farm is upwind of the SEP. This is particularly relevant for both a noise study and temperature inversions due to cloud cover and night time fog and to the dust study and the drift of PM2.5 and PM10. Also how can cloud cover be accurately measured in our valley from Murrurundi ? The assumption is also made in the study that fog inversions lift at 7 am when the mine operations plan to start work - this is absurd.

The EIS noise study contains a serious data omission i.e. Failure to include the dumping of overburden noise in the manufacture of bunds that are many kms long is not minor and what about the noise when they are removed.

This is set aside ingeniously by SCPL as being minor and removed as an input from the EIS modeling however we believe that the whole relevance and accuracy of the EIS is questionable if all data is not included. Isn't that why the EIS is used to decide when exceedences are relevant ? It brings into question what other noise may have been omitted? Has the dumping into Stratford East overburden Emplacement site been included? How can the noise inputs into modeling be omitted without reference to the Director Generals Requirements?

Uniform environmental standards for mining formulated by ANZEC 1990 state -

" The formation and removal of baffle mounds is often the noisiest operation on a site "

The above cannot be seen as best practice as stated by SCPL in their preamble.

What then of the amount of machinery estimated to be required by SCPL and placed into the modeling and has this been independently checked ? Has SCPL done drill holes every 100 m along the length of the Stratford East seam to verify strata thickness and hardness variations along a pit that is more than 1km long ? How can SCPL be sure the hardness and amount of overburden is accurate and that they haven't underestimated the the amount of machinery required ? How can data noise inputs be accurate ? It seems undeniable that the noise study inputs are not accurate and cannot be based on worst case scenarios.

SLR Conoly enter a disclaimer which states" Information is based on the interpretation of data collected which has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid. This report is for Stratford Coal's use and the company ( SLR Conoly ) gives no guarantees on accuracy"

We believe that as shown input data for the noise study has been excluded and prior surveys being based on Stratford area the EIS cannot be validated as accurate or based on worst case scenarios especially as it relates to our farm geography and local conditions. ES4-1 indicates SCPL wishes to mine 24 hrs at SEP, however then says operations are likely to be 7am-7pm. This statement is ambiguous as it leads us to suspect that the worst case scenario, as stated previously by the mine to be it's aim in the EIS, has not been

factored into the noise study. SCPL needs to clarify whether noise inputs into modeling are for 24 hr operation at SEP or from 7am - 7pm . If the latter applies then the EIS is valid for 7am - 7pm ONLY and the Regulatory authority should only reasonably apply approval for 7am-7pm . In any case we state that 24 hr approval should be viewed as unreasonable especially as already stated within the EIS " night time inversions are a feature of the area" . Best practice noise mitigation would be to limit SEP to 7am-7pm and there exists precedence on this point in that the mine has decided to limit operations at it's Roseville West Pit. SCPL have said in it's noise mitigation statement " whilst other more extensive noise mitigation measures may be technically possible they are not considered by SCPL to be feasible and reasonable, for example some night time noise levels at some locators could be avoided by restriction of mining at Avon North open cut and Stratford East cut(years 6-11) to daytime only. However these measures are not considered economically feasible by SCPL. It is obviously economically feasible and reasonable for SCPL to limit the hours of operations for residents near the Roseville West pit so for the regulatory approval to be consistent we ask that the same restrictions be applied to all operations.

EIS contains Night time noise contour maps ES-4(2yr),ES-5(7yr) , ES-6(10yr). Our farm Receiver 47 in relevant distance to SEP falls between receiver 60 and receiver 19(32). As the SEP is mined the distance decreases between operations and the 3 receivers. Also of relevance is that the SEP moves adjacent to decreasing geographic impedance and additionally stated within the EIS " night time inversions are a feature of the area" . However notwithstanding the above facts there are illogical relevant differences between these receivers i.e. there is significant increase in noise contours for receivers at 19(32) and 60 but a relative decrease in noise contours for receiver 47 from 2-10 year period . Logical analysis would assume all 3 receivers should have increased noise levels as the noise source gets closer. This anomaly is evidence that modeling extrapolations into Glen Rd have rendered inaccurate the contour models .

## 2. Air quality and adverse effect of added dust

As discussed above similar problems exist in the air quality which has been monitored mainly in the Stratford area. At the start of the consultant's noise review they state what (Class 2) is best practice dust measurement however then admit that their own study falls short of best practice. There is some confusion as to whether all data has been included i.e. whether dumping to make bunds and in emplacements are included as well as extraction. There are also 3 years of very high dust exceedence around 2003 from previous studies which basically are ignored as anomalies, this is another example of SCPL being highly disingenuous and disregarding data from a study that does not suit their purposes. It means conclusions are flawed and that they are not presenting worst case scenarios. Meteorological data is taken also from Murrurundi some 100 kms away, 20 km south of Stratford and 5 km north at Rocky Hill, hardly relevant for Glen Rd. The study states that prevailing night time winds are from the south, Glen Rd valley faces more south with SEP dust being blown towards our farm 900 metres away. Any future monitoring is to be at Stratford which is irrelevant for us.

\*\*\* At the very least we request the authority obtain an independent review of data entry by an experienced University based expert should be mandated on SCPL in order to

verify accuracy of inputs into noise and air quality reports contained in the EIS. Any adverse economic outcomes on SCPL are regrettable but self inflicted due to there own admittance to disregarding noise and air quality data which has invalidated the EIS.

3. Ground vibration and blasting - significant vibration levels have been listed in modeling for our farm yet again due to data mainly from Stratford region this possibly underestimates our affectation.

4. Visual Impact,traffic, closure of Glen Road: In general again this EIS is more concerned with impact on Stratford and hardly mentions Glenn Rd and down plays any impacts. Table 5 has the visual modification change being moderate however we believe the visual impact will be high. We strongly disagree especially as the pit will be 200 metres from Glenn Rd our only access rd. SEP would also be very close to our 2nd dwelling. EIS states that 105H of vegetation will be lost along Glen Rd much on the forested hill adjacent to SEP and that ugly mounds will be placed. This will be changing a scenic drive along our only access road into a drive along a moonscape .SCPL has stated that road closure will be required for blasting safety and SEP is within 200 m of Glen Rd. The recommended safety distance I believe is 500m however it is another impost on our amenity that Glen Rd our only public access should be closed at any time and another reason for likely land valuation loss that would occur due to mine operations. As SCPL would no doubt find a request to have SEP shortened to 500 metres from Glen Rd as economically unreasonable to their operation they may want to realistically acknowledge the economic impact their development will have on our property .The planting of trees along Glenn Rd when the SEP is 200 metres away in full view along the side of a hilled moonscape will be inadequate as mitigation measure. There will be a significant impact on our property valuation.

5. Illumination - added irritation of light 24/7 from mainly SEP and reflected from clouds will be another impost to our amenity. Again stated the planning request for 24 hr operations is inconsistent with all pit operations as can be seen in Table 27 which indicates Roseville West pit operations will be curtailed to daytime hours.Both our dwelling will be affected by floodlights and vehicle traffic from 24 hr operation. We are especially concerned by the night illumination from 24 hr operations which will make living here not a pleasant peace environment as we have experienced. We wish to be afforded the same mitigation measures as the Stattford residents and not having 24 hr operations forced upon us.

6. 24 hr operations: - Table 27 indicates mitigation measures at Roseville West and we request this be consistent at the other pits for reasons already stated. In the EIS the SCPL states the tenant of their mitigation measures " reschedule intrusive activities to less sensitive times of the day where possible". Well if it's possible at Roseville West it's possible to be consistent throughout the operation.

\*\*\*We request that the residents of Glen Rd should be afforded the same mitigation measures to the residents of Stratford and that all operation times be consistent with that currently requested at Roseville West .

ES4-1 indicates SCPL wishes to mine 24 hrs at SEP however then says operations are likely to be 7am-7pm. This statement is ambiguous as it leads us to suspect that the worst case scenario, as stated previously by the mine to be its aim in the EIS, has not been factored into the noise study. SCPL needs to clarify whether noise inputs into modeling are for 24 hr operation at SEP or from 7am - 7pm. If the latter applies then the EIS is valid for 7am - 7pm ONLY and the Regulatory authority should only reasonably apply approval for 7am-7pm. In any case we state that 24 hr approval should be viewed as unreasonable especially as already stated within the EIS "night time inversions are a feature of the area". Best practice noise mitigation would be to limit SEP to 7am-7pm and there exists precedence on this point in that the mine has decided to limit operations at its Roseville West Pit. SCPL have said in its noise mitigation statement "whilst other more extensive noise mitigation measures may be technically possible they are not considered by SCPL to be feasible and reasonable, for example some night time noise levels at some locators could be avoided by restriction of mining at Avon North open cut and Stratford East cut (years 6-11) to daytime only. However these measures are not considered economically feasible by SCPL. It is obviously economically feasible and reasonable for SCPL to limit the hours of operations for residents near the Roseville West pit so for the regulatory approval to be consistent we ask that the same restrictions be applied to all operations.

7. Socioeconomic effect : The EIS has stated there are economic benefits for the community however omit stating that the mine will have an overall negative impact on farm values close to the mine. SEP within 200m of our Glen Rd access will be a constant visual impairment as we drive past and not possible to hide. It is not possible to make a cogent argument that the mine will not effect land value of properties along Glen Rd especially one such as ours located 900 m from SEP and surrounded by SCPL owned properties. It will be most difficult to find a purchaser for our property if we decided to sell it in the future especially as the expected life of the SEP is 11 years so our investment has been made virtually worthless by the SEP mine expansion.

The effect on land values is mentioned briefly in 4.1 Economic Efficiency - This states that the overall community benefits outweigh the economic loss on land value or agricultural land use. This statement of course means that the "economic cost should be borne by the few farms nearby without compensation for the economic loss" which is a transfer of economic resource from a small land owner to SCPL.

We disagree with the above socioeconomic justifications as being wholly unfair and believe that in a democratic Australia the legal rights of the few do matter. On this point alone our property will suffer economic loss and we believe to expect compensation is fair and reasonable.

We have indicated to SCPL that they should enter negotiations to acquire our property in an email sent 26/11/2012 however to date the mine has not indicated they are willing to negotiate compensatory acquisition.

## 8. Mitigation measures 6.2.1

- These measures are vague and lack specificity for Glen Rd.

- Measures such as glazing ,insulation and air-conditioning are totally impractical and irrelevant as most country people including ourselves don't wish to be shut up in a box; the reason we have a farm is to enjoy the countryside amenity.
- SCPL has suggested the use of larger than usual hauling trucks as a mitigation device however these oversized trucks would have larger, noisier engines. In fact best practice references warn of increased noise levels by adopting this practice.
- Adaptive noise management ? We're not sure what such "cant" or doublespeak means? . We believe that best practice would be to request the authority for SCPL to undertake continuing real time noise and air quality measurement through the life of the mine(our farm will be most affected in the years 4-10 when the SEP is closest to us) in the Glen Rd vicinity that is most relevant to our farm not just Stratford, that regular published data be sent to close affected receivers and regulatory authority ie transparent information. Adaptive measures should be mandated on SCPL if exceedences are regular. This is necessary because as has been tabled by SCPL in the EIS large dust exceedences for 3 years were ignored and/or not tabled openly to affected residents .Prevailing night time winds for our farm are from the south (as stated in EIS) at night so a TEOM needs to be placed between us and SEP from where the dust will actually be blown towards our farm. Likewise noise receivers need to be placed in relevant positions.

9 . We request that the The Planning and Assessment Committee look into questions raised above.

We do not believe that the Director Generals Requirements have been met for the Glen Rd precinct for reasons given above and that needs to be reassessed in the EIS .We believe the impacts are inaccurate and not worst case for our area.

We question the seriousness of SCLP, unilaterally and without reference to the Director General, withholding noise inputs for modeling and on this point brings the noise study into disrepute. As well survey results are disregarded for 3 years in the dust study. This alone should require EIS be reviewed using University Experts appointed by the Director General who are independent as most of the private consulting companies have already had a hand in formulating this EIS.

We have previously asked verbally and in writing that the mine acquire our property( that is surrounded on 3 sides by SCLP owned properties) however have received minimal response.

We also request that for the above reasons the mine should be instructed to enter negotiations to acquire our property as a mitigation measure .

Yours Faithfully,

Owners - Tim and Libby Hart  
David and Carolyn Digges