

18/12/12

The Director General,

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing in support of the Stratford Extension Project with which I have had a long association with until recently.

Since commencing in 1994 the Stratford Project has operated continuously and coincided with a serious decline in the dairy and forestry industry. Despite some initial negative inferences regarding the short life of the operation and limited workforce opportunities the reality is that the mining operations in the Gloucester district are now in their 18<sup>th</sup> year and more than 300 direct jobs are located at the Stratford and Duralie mining Operations.

The workforce is established, mature, stable and fully integrated into the community. The longevity of the Stratford operations has proven one of the most significant stabilising effects on the district economy. Some local ex-forestry workers and farmers now experienced mineworkers have seen their children progress from preschool to HSC during their continuous employment at the Stratford operation.

The Stratford (and Duralie) mining operations has generated a base level of economic activity in the district which has guarded against rural decline seen in many other rural communities, which lack such prospects. The town of Gloucester has further developed into a busy community with few vacant shopfronts and new businesses in the main street. This vibrancy cannot itself be attributed to casual weekend and school holiday tourism rather an expanding community with job prospects and an economic platform to work from.


Mining skills not historically associated with the district have been offered and developed with those skills are transportable internationally. I have also witnessed those with entrepreneurial bent adapt and commence new local businesses to service the Stratford and Duralie operations and observed those businesses become stable and successful in their own right, multiplying the economic benefits.

The mining methods for this project, good environmental performance and highly successful rehabilitation has placed the operations well in terms of existing track record and provide insight into future potential impacts which due to the size of the proposed operation are minimised.

I congratulate the company on the commitment to the extension of Stratford Operations and commend to you the benefits that this operation has provided to the district and for the State of NSW.

Regards

Todd Hutchings

 18/12/12.