

Sophie Butcher - Fwd: Submission Details for Bruce O'Connor (object)

From: Paul Freeman
To: Sophie Butcher
Date: 1/25/2013 1:37 PM
Subject: Fwd: Submission Details for Bruce O'Connor (object)

>>> Bruce O'Connor <brucewho@live.com.au> 25/01/2013 1:00 pm >>>



Confidentiality Requested: no

Submitted by a Planner: no

Disclosable Political Donation: no

Name: Bruce O'Connor
 Email: brucewho@live.com.au

Address:
 16 Bucketts Way

Wards River, NSW
 2422

Content:
 Dear Sirs/Madams, I object to this application on the following grounds:

1. Noise Disturbance

The extension/expansion of the Stratford mine will result in unacceptable noise disturbance to residents for more than five kilometers, particularly at night if 24 hour mining is allowed.

I live at Wards River approximately 5 klm noth of Duralie Mine and 6 klms from the Stratford mine.

I have made numerous complaints regarding the noise from the Duralie mine at night, as they are mining 24 hours at Duralie.

The noise disturbs me whilst trying to enjoy the peace and quite of the rural area I moved to some 10 years ago. I t also makes it hard to get to sleep, and once asleep disturbs me with low frequency sound of machines and rumbling noises from the placement of excavated material into trucks, This results in sleep deprivation, which is well documented to be damaging to general healh. I can NOT currently hear the Stratford mine at night.

Noise modeling used for the project is inadequate and should be reassessed, including C weighting figures.

Recommendation:
 24 hour mining at Stratford must NOT be allowed

2. Water Quality

It is well documented that mining adversely affects water quality.

Water is an important for agricultural purposes, and it's quality is paramount. Food produced with compromised water will be compromised.

Water is also important for recreational purposes, fishing and swimming in particular.

Claen water is also essential for human consumption and this mine is in the water catchment for Taree's drinking water. **The cumulative impacts have not been adequately assessed to allow for all the existing and proposed projects in the area and therefore the Department is unable to make a reasonable and informed decision. Current water quality testing is well below the communities acceptable standards and needs to be improved so as to allow realtime results to be obtained of a far greater number of possible pollutants. This is used in the River Thames in England. It provides a constant stream of information able to be accessed online by all interesred parties by way of telemetry.**

Recommendation:
That the application be rejected until water quality concerns have been suitably addressed and adequate monitoring regimes are established

3. Air Quality

This project will exacerbate the already dusty conditions created by the current mining activities and uncovered train transport of coal in the area.

This will affect the health population at large, but in particular the young and elderly.

My house is covered in dust, despite regular cleaning/washing of cladding. I have coal dust inside my house.

My roof gets coal dust on it.

I survive on tank water.

When it rains this coal dust enters my drinking water.

Recent tests showed high levels of metals, a low Ph, and evidence of too much coal dust. (Dr Damien Gore) Nothing has been done to alleviate this problem. No efforts have been made by the mining companies to address this.

Residents affected should be provided with filtering equipment, regular cleaning of affected property and air conditioning to their homes so as to allow at least some place to breathe air unaffected by coal dust.

Recommendation:

That PM 2.5 dust monitoring be implemented, and dust alerts provided to affected areas, to warn of dangerous levels.

Coal train wagons to be covered, in particular the unwashed coal from Duralie mine that is delivered to Stratford for washing and mixing.

Health audits of residents within 10 km of the mine.

That Yancoal provides water filters and ensures water tanks be tested for toxins and regularly cleaned to remove coal dust.

4. Property Values

Further expansion of mining in the area will drive down property values and impede the ability of people wanting to sell their homes get away from the mines.

According to real estate agents, sales of property are down in the area, and the prospect of mining expansion in the area scares people off buying, for fear of having their assets devalued as well as quality of life reduced.

Recommendation:

That Yancoal purchases affected properties from people wanting to leave the area, at a reasonable price, plus compensation for reasonable expenses.

5. Natural Vista, Vegetation and Wildlife

This project will have a pronounced effect on the Vista of the Vale of Gloucester, destroying the natural beauty of the area, which is a major drawcard for tourists.

The clearing of the remaining fragmented vegetation will be detrimental to the native fauna and wildlife in the area.

The resultant cumulative impacts on native fauna and flora are significant and have not been properly assessed. The proposed expansion will severely impact a number of threatened species. The mitigation measures proposed are inadequate.

Recommendation:

Areas of identified and potential habitat of threatened species should not be cleared.

Remediation of the existing Stratford mine should be completed before any further mining is allowed so as to facilitate more suitable areas for wildlife.

6. Socio-Economic Benefit Analysis

Many farms which once provided employment to local residents have been purchased by mining interests in the valley, thereby reducing the economic viability after mining ceases. Rehabilitated mine land is less productive and produces a lower quality product. The amount of people employed on those farms would now outnumber those employed in mining by Yancoal.

As evidenced by The Gloucester Project of late, the Tucker Patch is providing access to locally grown fresh food, as well as providing full time and part time employment to local residents, enabling tertiary qualifications to be achieved.

Gloucester is well positioned to benefit from an alternative approach to regional economic development based on agriculture and food production.

Tourism is an established and important industry that relies on our scenic beauty and natural heritage.

This project's expansion poses an enormous threat to tourism and is likely to kill off the emergent food production potential of the valley.

Two independent studies have assessed the economic justification for the project. Both conclude that the social and economic assessment sections of the EIS are not suitable for decision making in their current form because they fail to clearly demonstrate the economic costs and benefits of the project. The local community will bear all the costs and receive very few of the benefits. The social costs will clearly outweigh the economic benefits of such a marginal project.

Recommendation:

The socio-economic justification for the project should be re-assessed

- a. to allow for lost jobs in previous rural enterprise and
- b. to address the deficiencies identified in the two independent reports and evaluate the impact of the project on tourism and the alternative economic model.

7. Regulatory Authorities Inability To Provide Timely Response To Pollution Issues

The inability of the EPA to reasonably address pollution issues as evidenced recently at Yancoal's Duralie mine on the 9th of January 2013 indicates that the Stratford expansion should not be allowed.

This incident was reported to the EPA.

The EPA was again unable to attend due to too understaffing. This has happened before, with the result that no suitable tests could be taken due to the time lapse and change in conditions.

Instead, after a local resident contacted Great Lakes Council, 2 of councils environment officers attended on January 11th 2013 , and showed concern at the state of the affected waterway and took water samples. Test results are not yet available.

Recommendation:

That this application be rejected until the regulatory authorities are capable of performing the checks and testing required to satisfy community expectations.

The community expects that their Government would not allow their health to be compromised.

8 Psychological Effects

The effects of mining on the community and the detrimental changes it makes to peoples lives and living conditions results in an increased rate of depression and anxiety in the community.

Local Health Professionals have stated that there is an increase in

- a. The amount of people requiring help with mental health,
- b. The prescribing of sedatives and anti depressants
- c. The amount of people suffering Solastagia

This has far reaching effects on peoples ability to function in the workplace, in their homelife and also affects the entire social fabric of the community.

This mine was meant to be a "Boutique Mine" and was to have ceased production, the extension/expansion of mining at Stratford will remove from some in the community "the last glimmer of hope" , that the mine will close and rehabilitate as it should have done.

Recommendation:

Assess the cost to the community and the health system of these issues.

Suitable provision be made to assess and treat those whom are suffering these effects.

All efforts are made to reduce or remove the causes.

That this application be rejected.

Yours Sincerely
Bruce O'Connor

IP Address: - 180.181.30.21

Submission: Online Submission from Bruce O'Connor (object)

https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com?action=view_diary&id=53187

Submission for Job: #4966 Stratford Extension Project

https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com?action=view_job&id=4966

Site: #107 Stratford Mine Complex; Via The Bucketts Way, Gloucester

https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com?action=view_site&id=107

Bruce O'Connor

E : brucewho@live.com.au