

IRONSTONE COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP Inc.

13th February 2013

The Director General
Department of Planning & Infrastructure
Major Development Assessment
GPO BOX 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Paul.Freeman@planning.nsw.gov.au

RE: ICAG Inc. objection to Stratford Coal Extension Project No. SSD-4966.

Dear Sir,

ICAG Inc. is writing to lodge our formal objection and request you reject Stratford Coal 's EIS entirely!

Reject Stratford Coal seeking a 24 hr operation licence. The promised 8 year-boutique coal mine for the valley is already impacting people. Now in operation for over 14 years and people are suffering a range of disorders. Asthma, stress, drinking contaminated tank water (dirt dust and coal dust), noise impacting their sleep and nervous system, blasting affects that cause homes to crack, shake and vibrate, peoples animals being affected altering their personalities or stopping them breeding. This coalmine is impacting both people and animals already. **Why would the Government continue to approve the mine to operate 24 hours a day and bring the mine 1000 metres or less to the houses of Stratford Township?**

People's homes have been devalued and why should people suffer financial loss when the Government has authorised the coal mine to come into the valley in the first place. Full compensation for all people wanting to sell their properties being impacted in any way by Duralie, Stratford Coal or AGL Gas must be above market price before the mines moved into the valley. The mines **MUST** be made to buy properties from people being affected. The Government **MUST** acknowledge people **ARE** being impacted and start supporting people impacted by the Government authorising these mines to move into an area, town/village in the first place, not 'done-over' as is currently the Government Departments & mining companies process.

ICAG Inc. and others in the community find it very hard to understand the Governments wilful neglect to acknowledge their approvals are causing known health impacts to people affected by these mining projects. Yet Government departments continue to deny this impact on people's health and leave communities to suffer alone your approval consequences. **If your home was being blasted, or your family sick by mining companies, would you continue to deny assistance and support?**

The Stratford Coal mine is seeking to remove hundreds/thousands of hectares of natural native bushland/forest, to be cleared and the wildlife on the EPBC list will become extinct in that area of the three proposed coal mine extensions seeking to remove the last remaining intact bushland of that entire area, cutting off the valley and mountain range and turning bush into pockets not joined together by corridors of naturally occurring bushland.

The bush Stratford Coal's 3 mine proposals 'ear-marking' are intact and have very old habitat trees. This bushland is NOT saplings or cleared bushland as Stratford Coal is happy to falsely claim in their documentation including Duralie Coal in their documentation by their paid consultants of many, making these false claims.

Stratford Coal mine is already generating tonnes of dust and coal dust, which blankets the Stratford Township and surrounding properties. The toxic voids and dirty water holding dams are already scaring the landscape. The companies great need to discharge into the creeks and rivers, which flow to either Taree, or Port Stephens is completely unacceptable and must not proceed further. Carting coal from Duralie Coal to wash at Stratford puts highly acidic coal wastewater directly into the environment, moves uncovered rail wagons past peoples front doors polluting their air and drinking water and also impacts their sleep.

Both Duralie Coal and Stratford Coal promised along with their '8-year boutique mine false promise, that they would install a water filtering system for their dirty water they produced to be cleaned. This has not happened at either coal mine or been built. **Why has the Government not enforced these coal mines to build a water cleaning facility on both properties (as promised) to clean up their dirty water already produced, before allowing more dirty water to be stored and/or discharged without purification process has commenced?**

Homes that are in the category of being mitigated for noise, dust etc. have not commenced, or the company expects property owners to sign a "non-disclosure" clause/contract, which people DO NOT WANT TO DO.

Stratford Coal mines proposal to drain and divert creeks or "redirect the flow of the creek" in all of their mapping throughout their EIS is complete arrogance and madness. Surely Government and mining are very aware that this destroys the natural water flow, causing turbidity and killing wildlife in that area. The impacts to Wards River the (RIVER), is alarming flowing to Mammy Johnsons River Karuah River to Port Stephens and the impacts via discharge into Manning River Taree is also alarming.

Stratford Coal's explanation of offsetting the bushland of the Threatened, Vulnerable and Endangered Species again is made on the arrogance of people, believing their false documentation, that wildlife can be picked up from one bushland area and put down in another 'offset area', when in reality the bushland MUST be left intact and the wildlife left alone, rather than signing their death warrant.

Stratford Coal is digging through creeks, and swamps and removing the recharge system for the creeks and rivers that depend on these natural flows to be kept intact, also the underground water sources our aquifers are also be destroyed. No mitigation (10 year) projected plan of Stratford Coal will ever be able to replace what they are destroying under Government approved mining.

The NSW Government, various Departments there to protect the wildlife and their habitat areas have failed in protecting the wildlife species on the Federal list of Threatened, Endangered, Vulnerable species and EPBC Act on State list which need to be both State and Federally protected for all time, instead of handing over areas 'bit by bit'.

ICAG Inc. is alarmed mining continues to be approved rapidly in the Gloucester-Stroud Valley, with absolutely no concern or embarrassment for the mining wasteland being left and the suffering of those people, towns/villages disappearing along with their environment into open cut pits and over burden waste piles of rubble.

Stratford Coal's desktop analysis and hypothesise of how they will put back the valley and mitigate the area they have destroyed defies belief. We urge the Government to recognise that the environment cannot be "put back together again", like some nursery rhyme. The reality is a destroyed environment, with toxic voids filling up with toxic water, toxic dams over flowing into creeks and river systems, or being given

ICAG Inc. Objection letter re: Stratford Coals extension Project No. SSD-4966
permission by Government to waive the environmental protection law and allow mining companies to discharge into natural water sources is unacceptable.

ICAG Inc. request immediate reversal of any of Stratford Coal and Duralie Coals approvals and remove mining out of the Gloucester-Stroud valley immediately, thereby making the area free of mining. Then our creeks and river systems, catchments of both Taree and Port Stephens would then be a protected environment without mining impacts, back to farming and tourism which if managed will sustain us all way past a short term mining company.

We do hope you take the initiative and do the right thing by the environment first, instead of readily approving mining company ventures as Government Department, Ministers, PAC & Land & Environment Court are currently doing.

Yours faithfully
Ironstone Community Action Group Inc.

A. Albury

ICAG Inc. Secretary
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24th January 2013

To the Director General & Minister
NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure
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Dear Sirs/Madams,

RE: OBJECTION to STRATFORD COAL Extension Project No SSD-4966

~~1/~~ We, Ironstone Community Action Group, hereby OBJECT to the above Stratford Coal extension project and request the Planning Department and Minister for Planning reject this proposal. Stratford and Duralie Coal mines were to close after their '8 year promised Boutique mine'. Stratford Coal has been operating for over 14 years and Duralie Coal over 10 years.

~~2/~~ We object to Stratford Coal's proposal to operate a 24 hr mining proposal and request this is rejected on the grounds that people are already being impacted.

~~3/~~ We are concerned Stratford Coal mine will be too close to Stratford Township, where some houses will be less than 1000 metres away from the 'new Bowens Road proposal' and open cut coal mine impacts.

As people's homes are already cracking, vibrating and shaking with blasts as well as have dust inside and outside/inside their homes and in their tank water (drinking water), this will only be accelerated the closer the mine moves to Stratford Township. I/We therefore request the Department reject this proposal.

~~4/~~ We request Government to protect people affected by mining impacting their tank water. The tanks must be sealed water tanks and water required by the householder for the life of people living in these houses is therefore paid by the Stratford Coal mine.

~~5/~~ We agree that should towns go onto mains water due to their tank water being contaminated by Stratford Coal mine, that the cost is covered completely by Stratford Coal mine.

- All homes in mining impacted areas MUST be fitted with Water diverters on tanks once again at mining expense.
- All people seeking assistance to purify their air in their home must be provided with this equipment free to each household affected, full costs incurred by the mine.

The Health of people is already being affected from coal dust, being sleep deprived from mining noise, vibrations, and unable to stop low frequency noise affecting people inside their home must be addressed by Government & mining.

Dust monitors to reflect PM2.5.

I/We request that health studies via the Government Departments are conducted in an open and transparent way to be fast-tracked into areas already affected by coal mines.

I/We are concerned that any further mining on the people of Craven, Stratford, Wards River, & Gloucester where people are already being impacted will continue to impact people and their animals who have a right to a peaceful existence on their own property.

I/We request that the Government acknowledges that people are having mining move into their area by Government approval. Therefore people must be compensated and have their property purchased if they choose to move away from the mining at the value of land/house before the mine devalued the land value. Prices given to people must be above market value; compensation must be paid to people for having this impacts their life and farming businesses.

I/We do not give our permission for the Government Departments and Ministers to approve Stratford Coal mining proposal, due to the major, significant impacts the mine is already having on environment, people, domestic animals and wildlife and farming businesses. The entire area of bushland 'ear-marked to be open cut' has many threatened species listed, which need the Government Departments to start protecting these areas.

I/We do not give our permission for this mining company to be given approval to continue to dig up, drain divert and impact the many creeks and river systems in the new proposed mining areas of Stratford Coal.

I/We request Government to accept that the cumulative impacts of these mining companies together Yancoal Duralie/Stratford Coal and AGL Gas, Gloucester Resources) must be addressed and stopped.

Individually these mines are impacting huge areas of land that can only be used once for mining and then it's a wasteland for thereafter.

Yet if Land, farming, tourism is managed, the land will always be able to be used and the important tracts of bushland will remain intact, instead of having bushland corridors 'cut off' from other areas for wildlife, causing major problems as their habitat is removed mining being the biggest threat to so many bushland areas.

The Economic value of the Gloucester-Stroud Valley has been devalued by the cumulative affects of mining for the short term gain bringing in small profits to Government, costing the country financially and leaving a legacy of land around NSW and Australia unfit for any use again.

Yours faithfully

(Signature)..... S. Albury

(Name)..... Stephen Albury I.C.A.G. inc President

Address 151 Forest Glenn Road Limeburners Creek 2324.

Date: 24/1/13