



# Hunter Environment Lobby Inc.

PO Box 188  
East Maitland NSW 2323  
17th July 2017

## MT PLEASANT COAL MINE MODIFICATION 3

### HEL Objection

[http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view\\_job&job\\_id=8555](http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=8555)

Hunter Environment Lobby (HEL) is a regional community-based environmental organization that has been active for well over twenty years on the issues of environmental degradation, species and habitat loss, and climate change.

HEL believes that this application is not a simple extension of life of an existing mine. Since this project was assessed and approved in 1999, the surrounding area has changed substantially with the opening of the Mangoola mine and the construction and expansion of Bengalla mine and several expansions of Mount Arthur mine.

We see that the impact of mining on the communities in and surrounding Muswellbrook has grown much worse and several new government policies and regulations have been introduced.

The air quality in the local area has deteriorated and the noise from mining operations in the vicinity has grown worse. Many farms and properties have been bought by mining companies, and the thoroughbred breeding industry has expressed vocal concern about the expansion of further open cut mining operations in the area and the threat such operations pose to its continued existence.

Given this dramatic change in the environment surrounding this project, the impacts of the mine are very different from what was expected at the time of development in the late nineties. A new environmental impact statement assessing the project and the cumulative impact it will create with the surrounding mines is necessary.

The maximum 24 hour average  $PM_{10}$  concentration recorded at Muswellbrook North West, Muswellbrook and Wybong breached the  $50\mu g/m^3$  criteria every year from 2012-2015. Annual average  $PM_{2.5}$  concentrations in Muswellbrook are already well over the  $8\mu g/m^3$  criterion and 24 hour average concentrations of  $PM_{2.5}$  are also in breach of the  $25\mu g/m^3$  goal.

By extending mining at Mount Pleasant beyond 2020, HEL believes this modification will unacceptably add to that health burden of our community and must be refused.

The Department of Planning's Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy has not been updated to reflect the current particulate pollution limits in the EPA's Approved Methods for air quality assessment. Landholders affected by this project will be disadvantaged by this. The VLAMP must be amended or repealed before this modification is determined.

The proponent is seeking approval for this modification without having resolved its conflict with the adjacent Bengalla mine, which has approval to mine the area designated for the Mount Pleasant transport corridor.

This conflict will only arise if this modification is granted to extend mining at Mount Pleasant beyond 2020. As the Department of Planning has already granted Bengalla consent to mine this area on the assumption that the Mount Pleasant consent to mine ceased in 2020, this modification will create legal uncertainty and conflict and must be refused.

This modification proposes to reach the peak of mining one year before the proposed 2026 end point, which indicates that either the proponent does not intend to wind down and rehabilitate, or intends to extend the operation beyond that time by seeking further modification.

This is unacceptable uncertainty for the surrounding community and unacceptable failure to assess the full impact of the proposed mining operations at Mount Pleasant.

HEL strongly objects to this modification and believes it should not be approved.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jan Davis".

Jan Davis  
President