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The Secretary
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO 39
Sydney
NSW 2001

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Objection to the Mount Pleasant MOD 3

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on and state my objection to the Mount Pleasant modification application sought by MACH Energy.

I am the owner and operator of The Hunted Gourmet, a Scone based catering business. We have provided catering services in the Upper Hunter for 27 years. I employ 5 full time staff, around 10 part time staff and up to 80 casuals for larger jobs - such as the thoroughbred studs' annual Open Days and Stallion Parades and the Scone Race Club for whom I have catered the 1000 guest Emirates Marquee at the Scone Cup for more than ten years. My clients include, Coolmore Stud, Darley Stud, Godolphin, Vinery Stud, Segenhoe Stud, Yarraman Park Stud, and the Scone Vet Hospital. I therefore consider the wider health and sustainability of what has been designated by the NSW State Government as the 'Equine Critical Industry Cluster' integral and essential to the ongoing viability of my own business.

It is nearly twenty years since the original approval granted to Rio Tinto for the Mount Pleasant project. In those intervening years the original proponent never gave the project the green light to commence, even at the height of the mining boom, and the zenith of the thermal coal price, the board of Rio Tinto sent the project back time and again to Coal and Allied with the instruction to improve the project's economics.

In those intervening years the landscape has changed considerably, both figuratively and literally. Large swathes of the middle Hunter have been ripped up by open cut pits, inconsistent rehabilitation practices, and inadequate rehabilitation requirements has left large areas ruined in perpetuity. The assessment process has also changed considerably and it seems ridiculous that a mine approved under softer, laxer laws could be allowed to proceed nowadays without having to submit to the new more rigorous processes.

A new Environmental Impact Statement should be required at the very least.

The Mount Pleasant project will undoubtedly have a major effect on air quality in both Muswellbrook and Aberdeen. Muswellbrook in particular is downwind of the project and will be chronically impacted. Air quality issues already exist due to the combined impacts of the Mount Arthur and Bengalla mines, Mount Pleasant will only add to the problems. Aberdeen will also suffer

visually, many of the homes in the township are built on the west facing slopes and will have direct views of this mine and the others proposed for the area.

The northward expansion of the mining industry into the Upper Hunter is really frightening, there are three new mines planned around Aberdeen, Mount Pleasant to the south and Dartbrook open cut and "West Muswellbrook" open cut to the west. What will the combined impacts of three massive neighbouring new mines be? Blasting, Air, Noise and Light pollution, how will these be regulated? By what methodology will the combined or cumulative effects be assessed? The answer is that there is no mechanism for doing that and that the three projects will all be assessed individually in an ad-hoc fashion, their combined impacts ignored and glossed over. Despite years of promising the community an assessment process that looked at the overall effect of mining in the area, there is still no cumulative impact methodology. That is a pitiful failure of Government and bureaucracy.

This proposal should be fully reassessed, from the beginning, from square one.

Yours sincerely,

Meryan McRobert.