

S. Neil Mitchell

10 Cardinal Close,

Cameron Park 2285

I object to the proposal to extend the Mt Thorley Warkworth (MTW) coal mine.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

I was raised in Bulga, NSW which is adjacent to the proposed extension. Both of my parents were born & raised in the Bulga/Milbrodale area. My parents still reside in the family home in Bulga and I am a descendant of the first white settlers in the area in around 1825.

FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIONS

1. While there is no buffer (visual, noise, dust) between Bulga and the current Mt Thorley mine operation (MTO), there is a buffer in the form of Saddle Ridge between Bulga and the Warkworth mine operation (WML). This proposal will eliminate this buffer and therefore expose Bulga completely to mining operations from the northeast to the southeast.
2. It appears from the application that spoil from WML will be dumped at MTO. Not only does this introduce cross-contamination, but I am unaware to what extent that the MTO approval allows this to occur (even though it currently happens).
3. The past few years have been very stressful and draining on my parents. The health of my parents from these effects is a constant concern to me, my wife and our children. They are active in their opposition to this proposal (in current & previous guises), as long-time residents and members of the Bulga Milbrodale Progress Association. This opposition is based on community concern and cannot be abandoned by people with a social conscience.
4. Our extended family still lives across the upper Hunter Valley. My father's sister lives at Jerry's Plains. Her husband passed away earlier this year. The loss of Wallaby Scrub Road would substantially and significantly extend the journey time for my father to visit his sister. Of additional concern is that this may act as a catalyst for either WML or MTO to seek to remove Putty Road (or realign it with an increase in travel times) and therefore further deteriorate access for my parents to the other relatives in Singleton.
5. I have stood on top of the mountains behind Bulga and looked down many times in my life. Most recently I did this earlier in the year with my two oldest children. This sight left me dismayed. A full arc from north to southeast is a moon-scape of active mine sites. And behind the first layer, even more destruction can be seen, such as Hunter Valley Operations. If you doubt me, take a look at Google Maps or another web-based geographical viewer and see the state of the land.
6. No mine in the Hunter Valley has lasted its approved operating period. All mines extract coal faster than allowed for in their approvals. This application clearly states that the extension will only last two years – still six years before the expiry of the current approval. What happens in two years time – another extension???