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**To:** <elle.donnelley@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Date:** 12/23/2013 1:25 am  
**Subject:** Objection re proposed expansion of the Warkworth coal mine (DA 300-9-2002-i MOD 6).

To: NSW Dept Planning

I object to the against the proposed expansion of the Warkworth coal mine (DA 300-9-2002-i MOD 6).

In 2003 Rio Tinto signed an agreement not to mine Saddle Ridge. The reason was to protect Bulga from the effects of Warkworth mine. This area then became subject to environmental protection.

If it was agreed to be environmentally protected against mining then, with what is known about the ill-effects of coal dust at that time, it is even more important to protect it now.

I don't believe Rio Tinto are acting in good faith. I think they have somehow exerted influence over the Planning Department. "Farming Online" reported that the Planning Department allowed for approval of the project in just one third of the time it would take a normal DA to be approved. Why the rush, especially given that this area was previously considered and protected?

Given the recent history that has emerged of other approvals, it is tainted with the possibility of corruption. This is reinforced by Rio Tinto's behaviour in NOT TELLING RESIDENTS at the recent community "consultation" meeting that they had the EA ready to lodge! That shows you they are contemptuous of the community that they make a show of being concerned about providing "jobs", that they are deceitful.

Further evidence of Rio's deceit is in the recent The Newcastle Herald report that Rio "pulled blokes off their shifts to what they called the internet café to fill out submissions" in favour of the mine extension"- in other words, employees would feel their future employment would be threatened if they didn't write in favor. It is unbelievable that a coal mine would receive so many voluntary submissions in favor.

I recommend records of employees and submissions be compared and those who made submissions should be anonymously surveyed to find out what pressure Rio applied.

Just what is Rio up to- is it an attempt to push for the full extension again, but "by a thousand cuts"- because that is what it looks like.

Why for instance, go to so much trouble for something that will only extend the current production levels for only two years, on the pretext that this would "give them time" to consider longer term prospects. That is total bullshit. They've had plenty of time, they know the ropes. They had years of being aware that Saddle Ridge is off- so why this sudden push?

As far as noise is concerned, we all know there have been hundreds of complaints about the noise- yet the Government has NOT taken any action at all about it. It is absurd to think that mining on the ridge will have negligible impact. Not even a two year old would be taken in by that

argument- it is pure fiction.

The claim that they would offset 16 hectares of habitat is rubbish. It is not equivalent and there is no guarantee that Rio would decide to mine it in future anyway if it was in their interest- as they are currently doing to the area they agreed to protect!

Consider the loss of this land forever- I don't believe any remediation by Rio would happen anytime soon and by the time Rio walks away it will walk away- after all, it is demonstrably not concerned with the welfare of the community. So we'd get two years of mining encroaching upon the town, the profits going overseas, the Hunter picking up the social and welfare costs... and of course in two years, Rio will be doing yet another sneaky deal to get a little bit more of a bite.

Remember their previous estimates of employment and benefits were knocked by the Environment court- and the future of coal, and the state of the market now, is worse than it was back in 2003.

In fact if Rio decide to leave it would be of greater long term benefit to the community as a whole, as they would then have the opportunity to develop sustainable industries that bring wealth to the community rather than taking it away.

I am making this submission as I did not have time before, and I've heard that the Planning Assessment Commission has given until Jan 19, 2014.

Regards

Niko Leka

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