

Ms Carolyn McNally  
Secretary  
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

25 July 2018

Dear Ms. McNally

We are writing to you to express our concerns over the recent proposals to reopen the previously shut-down Dartbrook Coal Mine. Whilst the current owners are moving to reopen the mine as an underground operation, evidence from the Dartbrook Website and the Newcastle Herald make it very clear that this mine will become an open cut operation. This is definitely not a feasible option due to a large number of negative impacts that the mine will cause.

Firstly, the cumulative issue of mines in the Hunter Valley poses a very tangible threat to its agricultural and tourism industries. With two regional saleyards and as many abattoir processors located between Scone and Singleton, many residents in the region rely on the agricultural market to make a living. Properties such as ours here at Turanville are now into their 5<sup>th</sup> generation of operation, with well over 100 years of history working the land. This food production industry is greatly threatened by the reopening of Dartbrook Coal Mine in combination with other approved and ongoing mines in the immediate area. Both cumulatively and in particular in relation to this proposed mine re-opening, a serious danger is posed of contaminating aquifers and water ways, many of which are crucial for livestock and crop production via irrigation, particularly in the current drought conditions.

Secondly, whilst the mine is proposed to generate large economic inflows, much of this information is grossly biased. Under the cost method, extractive industries capitalise all initial expenses as assets, and these exaggerate the predicted profit margins of the site. Furthermore, the project costs are understated and do not recognise the environmental costs. Finally, socioeconomic analysis has not been conducted whatsoever in regards to loss of agricultural resources and water sources that may become contaminated.

In addition to our own opinions based on the adverse impacts listed above, an article by Joanne McCarthy that details the warnings from former Australian Coal Association Chairman Ian Dunlop is most alarming about the Dartbrook proposal. He describes the offloading of environmental liabilities to smaller risker buyers (i.e. current owners of Dartbrook) as a major problem.

Our family has farmed this land for over 100 years and the threat to the sustainability of these existing forms of agriculture is too great a risk if there is any impact on our natural resources – including underground water and air quality. Our fertile productive land cannot be replaced once it is damaged.

We trust you will take our concerns seriously.

Sincerely,

Douglas and Nicola Robertson  
"Turanville"  
Scone NSW 2337