



18 June 2015

Ms Carolyn McNally
The Secretary
The Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY
NSW 2001

Sent via: matthew.sprott@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms McNally,

Objection to Drayton South Coal Project Application Number: SSD 6875

NSW Farmers is Australia's largest state farming organisation with members growing food and fibre for the domestic and export markets from beef, dairy, sheep and goat meat to wool, grains, cotton, horticulture, poultry, oysters, eggs and pork. We support public policy and technical innovation aimed at

- Growing agriculture's contribution to the Australian economy;
- A sustainable natural environment reflecting the dedicated stewardship of our farmers; and
- World's best production and marketing practices, joining science and the practical expertise of farmers.

As such, we are a well placed and strong voice when it comes to highlighting issues that threaten to affect the agricultural industry in this state. It is with this in mind that we write to place on the record our concerns regarding the second application by Anglo American for the Drayton South open cut coal mine project ("the project").

We have numerous members in the area that undertake a range of agricultural activities who are likely to be affected by water issues, dust and noise impacts, visual impacts as well as significant impacts to property values.

In addition to the direct impacts experienced by landholders on the ground, NSW Farmers has strong concerns in relation to the process for approval of this mine and the policy settings that create this process. It is our view that these policy settings are failing. The fact that this already rejected application is being considered a second time is no truer illustration of this.

Previous scrutiny from the independent Planning and Assessment Commission ("PAC") has shown the merits of this project to be severely lacking. The project was refused on a number of grounds including the fact that it was not in the public interest and on the grounds that the project presented unacceptable risks to a myriad of key industries that operate in the Hunter Valley.

Furthermore, the NSW Gateway Panel found that this project failed five of the six biophysical strategic agricultural land criteria and in addition, the panel were not given the latitude to assess the impacts of the project impacts on Critical Industry Clusters ("CICs").

The fact that this significant mining project, in such close proximity to two of Australia's international scale studs that are the heart of the equine CIC, did not trigger a CIC assessment by the Gateway Panel is a distortion of the policy intention for the Gateway Panel, denigrates the integrity of the planning process and demonstrates the biased favoritism that the entire process delivers to mining projects and their proponents.

The Gateway Panel should be empowered to refuse to issue certificates when in their scientific and independent opinion, strategic agricultural lands are at risk. The fact that a project can proceed, through a flawed Gateway process and to a second round of determinations is a damning criticism of a process that was intended to provide upfront scientific and independent advice to Government and protection to highly sensitive strategic agricultural land.

Given the issues that we have outlined above and given the project has been refused once already, we urge the government to consider carefully the ramifications of reconsidering this project again.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Simson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Fiona Simson
President

NSW Farmers' Association

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