

Winston Lodge Thoroughbreds
2339 Jerrys Plains Road
Jerrys Plains
NSW 2330

17 June 2015

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

Via email: matthew.sprott@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms McNally

Re: Objection to Drayton South Coal Project Application Number: SSD 6875

My name is Grace Murphy and I am writing to you on behalf of Denis, my husband and our business Winston Lodge Thoroughbreds. We wish to submit our objection to the application by Anglo American for the Drayton South open cut coal mine project.

I would firstly like to give you a little background on us We operate a boutique thoroughbred breeding and horse agistment business on the southern side of Jerrys Plains. We purchased the property in 2003 having travelled to and from Australia living on various horse studs in the Valley since the mid 1990s. We specialise in the care of small groups of valuable broodmares for a number of Clients, we raise young horses to race, some to sell and from time to time have racehorses who are having a break from the track. Some mares have been imported and only stay with us for a short time, while we have 1 mare who has been resident with us for 7 years.

We did not purchase in Jerrys Plains by chance – we chose this property due to the proximity to the best stallions in the country, the best veterinary facilities and other support services and most importantly a water licence to the Hunter.

Since 2003 we have invested substantial money in re fencing 90% of the property making it horse safe and drought proofing, through putting in the infrastructure to access water from the Hunter. We have built stables and built a mare and foal crush and other horse facilities.

We have not produced a Black Cavier ... yet ... but who knows maybe one of the young horses coming through or indeed one of the foals to be born later this year might just turn out to be a champion.

In light of the above we have strong objections and concerns regarding the proposed Drayton South project. We are not environmental or water experts, nor do we have the expertise to comment on the reams of scientific data produced by the mine in the EIS. However we are glad that other objectors have been able to engage experts on behalf of our Community. But we want to tell you what we have experienced over the last number of years living as we do in proximity to HVO and Wambo. We are not speculating on what might happen should this proposal go ahead – we can openly and honestly tell you what impacts the existing group of pits has had on our lives and

business and how we believe the Drayton South will increasingly compound these problems. We appreciate the opportunity to make this submission.

Unfortunately we do not have the financial resources to have the EIS and submissions made by the Proponents assessed by independent experts. But even as lay people, we find some of the statements absurd and simply demonstrate that so called studies, modellings and forecasting is all weighted to achieve a desired outcome – getting approval and growing profits. It is this economic rationalism versus the quality of our lives and survival of communities that has prompted us to lodge this objection.

Examples of the impacts we suffer from the existing operations are; machinery noise including truck noise, buckets dropping and dragline swinging, unbearable amounts of dust – black dust which is very visible on our white vehicles, blasts which shake our house. More critically, over the years we have seen a visible drop in the water quality we are pumping from the Hunter River.

I will go back to the noise issues which we principally experience at night. The noise prevents us getting to sleep, waking us up and prevents us from opening a window to allow natural ventilation. Mines make statements about minimising noise, compliance and engaging with neighbours, however our experience has been that our complaints are only an annoyance. You might say that we are a reasonable distance from Drayton South, however noise travels in this valley and again no one has taken into account the cumulative impacts.

The existing dust problems in our area are well documented and it is good to see more scientific and medical evidence of this. It only confirms what we residents have known for a number of years and is consistent with accepted scientific evidence in other countries - that the air quality in this Region is below the Nationally accepted standard. We can only say we are choking on it and we have serious concerns for our health and the impacts on the bloodstock we are raising.

It is a documented fact that other industries have applied similar rhetoric and governments have allowed them to get away with it. However, it is only decades later that the real health impacts are revealed in future generations.

There is also an adverse visual impact. Our property is the highest point over Jerrys Plains and at one time we had 360 degree view of the beautiful landscape. But within the last few years we now see a gray mountain where before natural ridges were visible. We have no doubt that in time the Drayton South mine will become visible to the North West.

We would like to make special reference to our experience of blasting. From the windows rattling to the house shaking to ground vibrations, plumes of brown/yellow matter that stinks. We only hope the wind direction is in our favour on those occasions. Aside from our concerns about structural damage, we have serious concerns about potential harm to our horses. You would think that our concerns are well founded given that historically the horse is a flight animal and despite training etc., can still take fright at sudden and in our experience not particularly loud noises. They also find ground vibration frightening. But not so according to the mining experts when we raised our concerns. Their response is 'there is no research to support the notion that noise or vibrations from blasting could cause a horse to take fright' – the fact is that when horses are frightened they can and do injure themselves. This is a very serious issue and not just in relation to horses as there are

plenty of stockmen who would also have experience of yarded cattle getting spooked by noise causing harm to themselves and to anyone in the yard with them.

We would like to go back to the tendency now to rationalise to achieve a desired outcome. An example of this is the cost benefit analysis - agricultural production value versus the projected economic benefits of the proposed project. At first glance the numbers put forward look impressive but this does not take into account the agricultural benefits – ie., food production over the past 200 years and the loss of this production over the next 200 years. This also ignores that this valley has been producing champion racehorses for 200 years and if protected will continue to do so for another 200. Our prime agricultural land is disappearing and unfortunately it will be future generations who will suffer. The decision makers of today will be long gone and therefore will not be held accountable.

We would like to briefly cover off some other points;

The mining industry is practised at publishing their support of communities – however the level of anxiety and apprehension now evident in our community due to the adverse impacts of mining operations is at crisis point. There are exaggerated claims surrounding employment, supporting businesses etc. But we and other agricultural related businesses also support other services. We use the local Vets, horse transport, farrier, we purchase our hay locally and all our feedstuffs. We purchase our groceries locally. There are thousands of people employed in agricultural and related businesses who also do contribute to the economic benefit of the nation.

We have heard statements about the loss of jobs if the proposal is not approved. A similar argument was put forward when Coal & Allied obtained approval for their Carrington West expansion in 2013. They also talked up the ‘economic benefits’. Interestingly, this project has not proceeded to date as ‘it is not economically viable’ , ie., not enough money in the pockets of the mining company, yet they have made people redundant!

Finally and not of least importance is the impact on property values as a result of mining in the area. We hear comments about private property sales to mining companies. Comments like ‘you will be bought out and you will get a fortune’. Our experience is that statements like these are flawed. You will only get above market value if you are of strategic value to the mine company. Otherwise you will be left in a living hell. We now find ourselves in a situation, where after years of hard work and serious financial investment, everything we have been striving for is in jeopardy. We cannot sell on the open market as nobody will purchase at market value – who in their right mind would, given the well published issues around noise and dust and pollutants. But sadder is that we purchased our property with the view to being here as long as we could run the farm. We do not have family in other parts of the country and the Valley is the only area we know and we love it. And just to compound our problem ... if we were to be acquired at market value plus as set out, this would not be sufficient for us to purchase another property with the set up for horses that we have developed and with the water security we have put in place. So it is a lose/lose situation for us which has taken away our hopes and dreams for the long term future.

We believe successive governments, policy makers and mining companies have failed to protect our individual and community rights to clean air, clear water and a safe environment. Indeed in other parts of the world the right to peace and quiet and enjoyment of property are considered basic

human rights. In addition to that and referring back to a previous point, our understanding of Land Law is the basic right to 'deal' with a property you have the legal ownership of - this is to sell on the open market. The mining industry has been allowed to infringe on this basic principle. And we know first hand the adverse impacts this has on people's lives.

A very important issue that we would like to finally cover is the issue of cumulative impacts. This project is being assessed in isolation to other nearby pits and other proposed mines near Denman. The Glencore/Wambo Joint Venture will quickly become another issue in the not too distance future. C&A will have further expansion plans for their HVO 'super pit'. There has to be a point where the stop button is pressed. There has to be consideration of people, communities and sustainable industries trying to survive in proximity to mines. What will be left when there is nothing but a massive hole in the ground.

We respectfully put it to you that the opportunity to stop is now. Take a step back and look at what is happening to individuals like us - and what will happen to the future of significant agricultural sustainable industries. Something has to change as the processes have failed us and seeing statement like "this proposal is in the public interest" is further evidence the process is grossly unfair. There is sufficient evidence now that the proposal is not in the public interest. Our personal experience of living here supports this view.

We would request that you consider all of the submissions and acknowledge the very real concerns of individual land owners like us.

Thank you again

Denis and Grace Murphy
Winston Lodge Thoroughbreds