

13 September 2016

Director Mining Projects  
Development Assessment Systems &  
Approval  
Department of Planning & Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001



Dear Sir

**Re: Proposed Rocky Hill Mine (SSD 5156);  
Gloucester Valley**

Second time round, I still feel that writing this submission will be a waste of time just like the other ones that I have written and sent to both you and other ministers and members of parliament, but doing nothing does not seem to be an answer either. The attitude of the state government seems to be one of greed with no care for the individuals, families or communities that it devastates in the process. I find it hard, no not hard, impossible to understand, how anyone in their right mind and who possesses a heart, could possibly grant approval for a new coal mine to be given the go ahead in an area as pretty, agriculturally sustainable and as close to a viable pristine tourist town as Gloucester. Not when there is a mass of land in this country that is completely unviable for agriculture and with little or no human population that it effects directly. Places where coal mines could be developed.

When my wife, two young children and I purchased our block back in 2003 to build our family home, and even by the time in 2005 when we moved into our new home, there was no mention from any angle that one day we would be living roughly 900metres - 1km from a coalmine, and be able to stare into it from our living room and bedrooms. As I am writing this we are sitting on the deck off



our bedroom and the view of the valley in the direction of the proposed mine is currently spectacular and one that we savour every day. This is going to be destroyed in the near future, when and if

this proposed mine gets the go ahead. If you do not believe this, please come for a drive to Gloucester and I will show you what I mean. The classic example is the extension of the Duralie Coal mine on to what was once the beautiful "Wards River Station" just south of the small township of Wards River. An unsightly man made fabricated wall was built along a section of the main road that runs past the property to block out the view of the coal mine extension. Firstly, why was this needed at all if mines do not cause any visual impact, and secondly, it is only a claytons wall as it only blocks

out a section of the complete devastation that has been created. When you approach the old Wards River Station, driving south towards Newcastle, all you can see is this the massive ugly hole caused from Coal mining on what was once, pristine and spectacular farming country.

Apart from this, we will have to put up with excess noise from mining operations, extra train movements, and now also the massive trucks that will be continually hauling coal along the proposed new road between the Rocky Hill mine to the washery at Stratford. As I write this, there is machinery activity going on in the general direction of the proposed mine which I have videoed to show the effect. The gas company are still in the process of capping off the gas wells that had recently been drilled. This is only a small operation but even it is extremely noisy, though thankfully, it will only be there for a short period of time. The talk going around is that the mining company will maybe supply double glazed windows to keep the noise out. This is totally unacceptable as we do not want to be locked in our houses when the weather, conditions and views currently sitting out on our veranda's is spectacular.

The excess dust that we will experience (our roof already has black dust and soot, most likely from the Stratford coalmine which is over 5kms away) and bright lights at night from mining operations are just a number of other issues that we will have to endure. I know that the EIS says this won't happen but some of it already is. We do not want to, or should have to lock up our house like a safe to keep the above mentioned from changing the way we currently live. We should not even have to be worrying ourselves about it at all.

We sunk all the money that we had and took out a large mortgage so we could build and develop what we wanted for us and our children. This was a beautiful home and a lovely garden and accessories. We still have projects that we would undertake to complete our dream home, but with the total uncertainty of what is to come, we have found that our life has been put completely on hold. I wish that the people who are going to allow this to happen were currently in our shoes, wondering what was going to happen to them, both health wise and financially. Our health has already been affected and this is well before the mine has even started. Mentally, we struggle every day with the stress that all this is causing, not only on our health, but on our relationship, which I feel is extremely unhealthy and unfair on us. My wife is continually in tears and constantly asking me how and where we are going to end up. This is due to the fact, that we do not want, or never wanted to live on the edge of a coal mine. If we had had any inclination that one day this would happen, we would never have bought where we did. Apart from having to live next to and look at the coal mine, it is extremely depressing that we could not even sell our house and move elsewhere (even though that seems like the only option), as no one would buy it, not unless we were prepared to give it away. To top this off, my wife is adamant that she is not going to live here if the mine goes ahead. I keep telling her that we will not be able to afford to move as we could not sell our house for a reasonable price and afford to move without borrowing to the hilt again. She does not seem to care as the stress of it all seems to override this and I feel that it will destroy our 24 year relationship.

Some of the Rocky Hill propaganda talks about local employment. While this may be the case, though some people would argue after the website "MiningAustralia.com.au" in 2013, quoted Mike Smith, the general manager of the Stratford/Yancoal coalmine as saying that 58% of his existing workforce resides within the Gloucester and Great Lakes Local Government Areas. Then, where do the other 42% come from and what distances do they have to drive, especially if they will have to

travel all the way to Gloucester. This could put not only their lives at risk due to the excessive hours that many mine employees appear to work, but also the lives of all the other road users as well.

With all this, why is it, that the Duralie Coal Mine near Stroud Road, are apparently in the process of shedding a large percentage of their employees/operators, with many of them, from what I understand, being local Gloucester residents. Does this not ring alarm bells with people in high places, especially those who can control the outcomes of all these proposals. Firstly, that a major mine is being closed in our valley, possibly due to low returns, but then, approval for a completely new one, that is supposedly meant to be quite small, is being considered. Is this not completely ridiculous, being that maybe there will be a lot of mess and already a lot of heartache for a meagre return.

Secondly, I may be a cynic, but the farcical idea of fining mining companies if they do not clear up the mess that they create is a joke. The cost of restoring country to a level that would be acceptable to the non-mining community would be way and above the actual fine that these companies would have to pay.

I used to think that if something ever happened to my wife and I, that our children would be financially secure, as our home and land, when the market was at its high, and there was no discussion about a coalmine, would have been worth roughly around \$1,000,000.00, and would possibly be worth a lot more now if this was still the case. As discussed earlier, we would be lucky to even sell our home at present without giving it away. We are living our life in limbo, not knowing what is to come, and feel that there is only two outcomes, both which need to be sorted out ASAP to allow us to get on with our lives. (1) The mine application needs to be revoked, never to be allowed back on the table, or (2) That it be approved, and a condition written in the approval process that the mining company should have to buy us and our neighbours that will be directly affected, at a figure that would allow us to move on, have what we presently have, and not suffer financially in any way.

I would like the persons that have the ability to approve or decline this mining application, before they make a decision, come and sit in our home and then walk around our gardens, to see what I am talking about.

Your Sincerely

Mr Chris Reynolds