

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

Forever hopeful, although I feel that this submission will probably not be read or make any difference to a decision that has probably been made by the greed of people that this situation will not effect, without any care for the individuals, families, environment and the division that it causes to a community. As stressful as this is I cannot, I will not, sit back and do nothing.

With my husband and our two young boys we purchased our block back in 2003 to build our family home, pictured above and below. 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 less than 1km from and well and truly overlooking a coal mine.

If we had any inkling of “a coal mine situated in the beautiful Avon valley, only 900 metres from a residential subdivision, five kilometres from Gloucester, a viable pristine tourist township, agriculturally sustainable, and at the gateway to the World Heritage Barrington Tops” Forbesdale is the last place on earth we would have settled.

To try and appease the local community and pretend that they can cover up the impacts of this proposed mine the Rocky Hill Coal Project community newsletter states they have made changes to reduce impacts on the community, from:

- “NO night-time operations, proposed new hours of operating from Monday to Saturday commencing at 7am to 10pm” I don’t know what they class as night time ????????????
- “REDUCED noise, dust and visual impact” For heaven sake, we can see the Stratford Mine from our front verandah that’s over five kilometres away.
- “Dust”, they can try, but with the easterly’s that we experience most afternoons it will take a monumental amount of a valuable precious resource “water” to suppress the spread of dust.
- “Visual impact”, despite what they say and what they super impose on a photo, it will be impossible to block out all views of this, not unless they mine on the eastern side of the Mograni range.
- “Plans in place to minimse noise” The suggested fix from the mine angle is to supposedly double glauze windows in the houses that might be affected. We do not want, or should we have to lock ourselves in our home. We want to be able to sit on our verandah’s and enjoy our stunning views and inviting climate. While writing this, there is machinery activity going on in the general direction of the proposed mine which my husband has videoed to show the effect. The gas company 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.



All of this hypoyhetical proparganda is to satisfy who?? Money hungry politicians, who will makes decisions on how other people will now have to live. Locked up, in their own family homes.

Maybe the solution is for us to brick up our windows.

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, 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.



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 evolving 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. 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.

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 off 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 husband 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.

Finally, I would like to say that I have listen to the personnel of Rocky Hill, desperately trying to convince us and many others that our lives will not change. That the big buffer walls will stop the noise, dust lights and we won't notice the explosives when detonated. Do you honestly believe this to be true.

Your Sincerely

Mrs Patrice Reynolds



I have included photographs so you can visualise why we have undertaken this project to create our dream family home.