

Department of Planning and Environment  
SYDNEY

3 March 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

**Submission of Mr Mark and Mrs Donna Watson (Receptor 116) to the proposed Mt Owen Extension Project (North Pit Continuation)**

Thank you for the opportunity to lodge a submission, by of objection, to the above project.

We live at 668 Glennies Creek Road, Singleton which comprises of approximately 4 hectares. We purchased this property early 2008 and proceeded to build our family home. Over the last 6 plus years, we have been constantly improving our property. Our property currently contains:

- a three bedroom dwelling with verandah, awning, retaining wall and concrete steps
- a double garage (6m x 9m) with power
- bitumen sealed driveway (3m wide x 300m in length)
- full boundary fencing, including house yard fencing
- 2 x 25,000L rainwater tanks (our drinking supply)
- 1 x 25,000L and 1 x 11,000L tank which contains creek water used for watering the yard, garden and toilets. The smaller tank is the dedicated bushfire tank. All the tanks have a 65mm Storz fitting.

In addition to the structures on our property, we currently run goats. These goats form part of our weed control for the property.

Our property is identified as Receptor 116 in the documentation submitted by the Applicant.

History of meetings held with the Applicant

- Location of air quality boundary presented to us in 2013

In October 2013 Mt Owen contacted us to arrange a meeting, which was held at our residence, to discuss the proposed consolidation and extension to the Mt Owen Mine. At this meeting the staff showed us where the proposed extension would be located, ie the north pit continuation. They proceeded to inform us of any impacts to our property in relation to air, noise and traffic.

The documentation, based on modelling, showed that the level of dust affectation at our property was going directly through our residence and appeared to result in approximately 90% of our land being affected. This should have been shown in the preliminary information sent to the Department for the Adequacy review.

At the conclusion of this meeting we were asked by Mt Owen staff if we would be lodging an objection to the proposal. Based on the limited information provided at the time, we advised no, due to verbal confirmation that our property would be acquired. The applicant advised that the acquisition would more than likely be due to more than 25% of the property being affected by dust at the level of 50ug/m<sup>3</sup>.

We were also given a handout which specifically related to potential impacts on our property. A copy of this handout is attached for your information.

- Location of air quality boundary presented to us in 2014

In October 2014, Mt Owen contacted us for a follow up meeting due to the amendments made to address the Director General Requirements issued by the Department of Planning. At this meeting the Applicant advised that the approval area had slightly increased and was coming closer to us than previously advised. In this regard, the Applicant advised the project area was going to move into the triangle corner heading towards receptor 30.

The Applicant again had limited documentation to show how the proposal was going to affect us. Upon discussion of the air quality information, it was noted, the dust affectation zone had been slightly reduced. The 2013 modelling, which had less area in the north pit continuation area, resulted in our property being approximately 90% affected by dust at the level of  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

However, the revised information provided in 2014 implied that the dust affectation area had moved approximately 30m closer to the mine. This was very hard to believe due to the mine's north pit continuation area increasing in area and was coming closer to us. This, essentially, resulted in approximately 80% of our property being affected by dust. The dust affection contour has been moved approximately 30m closer to the mine and approximately 5m from our residence.

When we again asked the applicant if it would be likely that our property would be acquired, they stated that the previous 25% of the property rule, which had been applied to other mining approvals, was under review by the Department of Planning. Due to the review of this policy, the applicant advised that they were uncertain if our property would be acquired.

- Meeting with Applicant February 2015

The Applicant contacted us early February to ask if we needed any further information in relation to the application while it was on public exhibition. We requested a "zoomed in" aerial map showing the dust affection area relating to our property. Due, to the aerial maps provided in the EIS making it hard to determine our property boundaries.

These maps have been attached for your information.

The Applicant contacted us a second time, in which a further meeting was arranged, to advise and discuss with us the *Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy* which was adopted by the Department of Planning 15 December 2014. Due to the Applicant not being aware of this policy when they previously held meetings with us, they felt a further meeting should be arranged. At this meeting the Applicant advised, that we could have voluntary acquisition rights should the application be approved. It was explained that we do not have compulsory acquisition rights due to our property being on the wrong side of the dust affection contour.

At this meeting, we advised the Applicant that we are willing to enter into an agreement with them for voluntary acquisition of our property, should the application be approved. Please note, we have only agreed verbally and no paperwork has been agreed to or signed. A meeting is scheduled for 10 March to discuss the process further with Mt Owen's Acquisition Officer.

#### Objection discussion points

- Increased air quality levels to  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

Should the subject application be approved, there will be an increase in the air quality levels at our property. As you are aware, Integra (owned by Vale) has since gone into a care and maintenance period, which may have reduced the immediate impact on air quality. However, Integra still has an active consent and can recommence operations at any time.

Our concerns from reading the EIS, is did the Applicant include the modelled air quality results for Integra and Ashton coal as well as their project? I haven't seen a map showing the cumulative dust affection contours for our property.

- Increase in dust

As well as the increase in poor air quality, there will be an increase in dust levels at our residence. We have been living in the area since late 2008 and over this time period, we have noticed a steady increase in the amount of dust that settles on the outdoor furniture, vehicles and gutters. Last year we thought about seeking approval for an inground pool. Should we have gained approval, the pool was going to be located on the southern side of our septic tanks. We have not proceeded with the pool due to the Mt Owen proposal being lodged with the Department for determination.

Discussions with the Applicant has identified a variety of mitigation measures they will take to reduce dust, however, should the extension to the North pit be approved, we do not want to live in the area.

We have young children that catch the bus to school each morning. The bus picks them up opposite our entrance, on Glennies Creek Road. This is well within the dust affection contour of  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

- Contamination of fresh water drinking supply

With the potential for an increase in dust levels, our drinking water will be contaminated. As you can see on the zoomed in aerial maps attached, our fresh water tanks are located adjacent to the shed, which is clearly inside the dust affection contour.

If the mine is approved, we will be greatly disadvantaged due to the cost of constantly cleaning our gutters and emptying the tanks to clean out the sludge that will be present at the bottom of the tanks.

We are aware under the *Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy* we can enter into an agreement with the Applicant to specify possible mitigation measures for our property. However, we feel the mitigation measures available regarding the decontamination of our drinking supply will be a major inconvenience to us and an ongoing cost to the Applicant.

- Loss of active use of 80% of our property

The Applicant has stated on page 110 of the EIS main summary, our property has an area of 3.3 hectares affected by dust levels, which equates to 80% of our property having exposure to a minimum dust levels of  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

The zoomed in aerial maps attached, shown the dust affection contour for receptor 116, which is our property. The contour, at its closest point, is approximately 5 metres from our residence.

The structures located within the contour are:

- Existing double garage
- 2 x 25,000L rainwater tanks (our fresh water drinking supply)
- 1 x 25,000L and 1 x 11,000L tanks
- Dog kennels
- Septic tank transpiration area

We have young children that like to play in our yard and have friends and family visit our property all with young children. Should the mine extension be approved, we will have serious concerns over

our children's health if they play in the yard. We are an active family, were we spend most of our free time playing and utilising the yard for various activities. If the extension is granted, this will reduce our chance to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle.

- Blast fume emissions

Upon reading the EIS and supporting studies, it is noted that on page 112 of the EIS main summary, our property will have 10 x 1 hour predicted exceedances of  $246\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The Applicant did not mention anything to us in our previous two meetings regarding blast impacts at our property. We can only presume that the blast fume emissions will be five times worse than the air quality criteria of  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

If this is a correct assumption, we have great concerns regarding the further deterioration of air quality and the potential impact this will have on our quality of life.

#### Recommendation

From the above points raised, we feel that if the project is approved, subject to conditions, there will be a significant impact on our quality of life, potable drinking water and health.

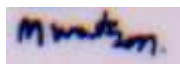
We are therefore requesting that a condition of consent be imposed on the Applicant requiring them to compulsory acquire our property based on the following:

- 80% of our property being located within the  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  dust affectation contour (refer to page 110 of the EIS main document)
- Contamination of our potable drinking water, ie two 25,000L tanks, being located on the northern side of the  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  dust affectation contour (shown on the attached maps)
- Loss and restriction of recreational area of our house yard.
- Increase in health impacts to our family.

I would like to thank you again for providing the opportunity for us to submit a submission on this development. We looked forward to being informed on the next stage of the assessment process and would like the opportunity to provide further comment if required.

Yours faithfully

*Mark Watson*



MARK AND DONNA WATSON  
668 Glennies Creek Road  
GLENNIES CREEK NSW 2330

(RECEPTOR 116)

Appendices:      Handout provided by Mt Owen 2013  
                         Zoomed in aerials maps showing dust affectation area – Three maps