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PERSONAL INFORMATION

Our property is situated on the North Eastern Corner of the Illawarra and Hume Highways, our immediate neighbours are Rosedale, Eling Forest with Comfort Hill and Cherry Tree Hill on the other side of the Hume Highway.

I am 67 years old and have worked in many industries throughout my life, since coming to the Southern Highlands in 1985 I worked for Joy Mining for 17 years both here and overseas and have a good knowledge of the Coal Industry, I then managed a Water, Cordial manufacturer as well as Hotel both in the Highlands and Beechworth Victoria, then became General Manager / Company Secretary of the Bowral Co-Op. Over the last few years I have driven trucks for Highland Sand and Gravel and now work on Farms in the district and with my sons, driving different machinery. I know the area very well.

I remember well an active discussion about 30 years ago with the then Managing Director of Joy Mining Australia about the future of Coal, Joy was divesting itself of “non core” industries and I was fighting to keep them as Coal had no future, well history has proven me correct and now in 2017 Coal is an industry in its last phase, there is no future for new coal mines there is already enough coal being mined in the world to meet current and future demands, it is a damaging industry and has no place in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Now that the exploration license has finished I want to see the NSW Government not renew this license and never issue a license for coal mining in areas like the Southern Highlands with its cheap, clean water and beauty and so close to major cities

RESPONSE

I have taken the time to ask specific questions I will not accept a generic response, I would request all my questions be answered fully and as I am not a scientist in a language that can be understood. Thank you.

ABORIGINAL PRESENCE

The Aboriginals inhabited this part of the country for tens of thousands of years, they worked closely with the land for survival. During this period they travelled extensively along Black Bobs Creek using its water, abundant wild life and natural resources. They were the custodians of this land and have left us a great legacy. On my property there is a Scar Tree, next door lots of rubbing where tools and weapons were sharpened. The tree was documented by the RTA when they did studies for the Hume Highway. This whole area could be devastated by coal mine.

The Aboriginals can be proud of what they have left for future generations, how will history judge NSW Governments performance if this land is ruined? Like the Aboriginals we can use this land, improve it and derive a livelihood from it, all it takes is long term thinking and leadership, after all isn't that what government is for?

HISTORY

This area has had two coal mines in it previously, one on Black Bobs Creek which was entered at the back of Eccleston Park on Canyonleigh Road (the back of Comfort Hill and Cherry Tree Hill) and the other at Medway.

The mine at Black Bobs Creek was abandoned when they hit an aquifer which flooded the mine and they could not get big enough pumps to eject the water so they left all equipment submerged down the mine, I don't know if there were any fatalities in this accident. The other mine at Medway also drained an aquifer and if you drive down Richards Lane you will see how dry and lifeless the

country is down there, the Medway Mine was placed in "Care and Maintenance" by Boral after they could not profitably meet the demands of the EPA to preserve the clean drinking water for Sydney. Both mines damaged aquifers and both were shut down.

The mine site at Medway will more than likely never be used again, but because the rehabilitation of the site will be in excess of \$20,000,000 the mine is placed in Care and Maintenance, what assurances can be given that if a Mine does go ahead at Sutton Forest the site will be repatriated rather than left in Care and Maintenance as Medway is today?

The bridge built across Black Bobs Creek is of historical importance as it is the first single arch non reinforced concrete bridge ever built in NSW. By allowing Coal mining exploration you are putting at risk this historic site as well as many more beautiful buildings and structures in the Southern Highlands.

As a government body saw fit to include the bridge in an article on the web

http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/environment/downloads/self_guided_tours/the_great_south_road.pdf I

do not understand why the current government has so little regard for the consequences of Coal Mining or exploration in this magnificent part of NSW.

EXPLORATION

Hume Coal (Posco) has conducted extensive exploratory drilling in the Southern Highlands. The land owners are totally against the development of a coal mine in this area, as it is such an important and fragile environment, providing a lot of drinking water to Sydney whilst being used as productive farm land.

I currently feel personally betrayed by the NSW Government because the residents of this area are doing everything in their power to keep Hume Coal off their land and the Government simply lets Hume Coal drill on Government controlled land. Belanglo State forest must be like a dart board and the Government also saw fit to allow drilling on the side of the Hume Highway at 3 Leg of man intersection.

WATER

In the beginning, Hume Coal engaged some scientists to do hydrology studies, the scientist attending a presentation at Moss Vale Services Club showed a map of all the bores already in existence in the Southern Highlands, she also said that none of these bores were very deep and did not go down as far as the coal seam.

Shortly after Hume coal sunk another 35 test holes and put in place 4 water monitoring stations containing another 9 bore holes, what is this doing to the water table?

The test holes are supposed to be sealed after exploration, has anyone ever done any checks on this or a destructive test on this to see if it works? I would say not. Also these exploration holes could damage the water table (are they really sealed?) even without mining as they admitted in the presentation they do not know enough about the hydrology to say how it works!

Now that the EIS has been submitted we find out that 90 odd bores will be impacted, my immediate neighbour (Rosedale) who operates a successful farm employing many permanent and contract employees will no longer be able to use their Pivot irrigation system and therefore not produce the same quantities of feed for the Live Stock industry resulting in loss of employment and goods. My other neighbour is Eling Forest their bore is also impacted and this bore connects to old mine shafts. How will this affect their business and what will happen to the aquifer that the old shafts compromised.

GEOLOGY

The way that a quarry splits sandstone is by drilling holes in a slab and then using plug and feather method to gradually split the rock. Another method is to drive wooden pegs into the holes and wet the timber, as the timber expands it splits the stone, in cold climates water can be used and as the water freezes the stone splits.

The coal seam is only 120 metres deep so the sandstone shelf is not very thick and very vulnerable.

Now that Hume coal has sunk innumerable holes through the sandstone, aquifer into the coal, what is this doing to the water table? Is there a chance that this activity could split the stone, if it does then none of us will know?

If approved the mine will extract about 3 million tonne of coal a year, with all of the other material coming out of the mine (rock, clay etc.) the void this will create underground will be enormous. Could the sandstone crack extensively? Could there be substantial subsidence?

I rely solely on Black Bobs creek for my stock and domestic water in dry times, if the sandstone does crack and drain Black Bobs creek I will be left with no water. The climate is changing we no longer get reliable Spring and Summer rain and I am increasingly reliant on this water. I am considering investing in a lot of additional water storage (in ground concrete tanks and header tank) with associated Solar pump and plumbing but I will not go ahead with this if the Mine is approved as there is no real possibility of return on my investment and I am better off buying water and leaving the money in my estate.

Hume Coal say they will make good on any water loss. What does this mean, how will I be able to prove that their mine drained the creek? They will not take responsibility for that. Just look at Thirlmere Lakes, they are empty, the scientific community is still trying to work out what happened to the water, the fact that Tahmoor colliery is in that area is very suspicious, but until its proven no action will be taken. The end result is no water in the Lakes, it is too late to save the water.

I have fenced off Black Bobs Creek in my property conserving approximately 45% of my land to protect it. I do not want this creek destroyed entirely.

PRESENTATIONS

At a presentation by Cockatoo Coal the mine engineer, a young man got up and said that they could control where subsidence occurred!

What a statement! This is coming from the people that you have allowed to investigate whether or not they will set up a coal mine in our area. So the bottom line is that - it is not if there will be subsidence but where it will occur! That will be the issue above ground, and of course, the aquifers below ground will be destroyed.

Is this what you really want out of coal mining? For an initial gain in monetary reward you will be subjecting this State of NSW to a long-term catastrophe which will not be able to be addressed in our lifetime. You will also destroy the livelihoods and lives of those people directly affected by this activity.

GOVERNMENT MINISTERS COMMENTS

Minister Goward is reported to have said that if the community opposes the drilling of bore holes for water monitoring then the community should stop drilling bore holes for water extraction.

There is a massive difference in boring down to an aquifer and then pumping water out, as opposed to drilling through the entire rock shelf. The bore holes for water are only going down to where there is water.

Because you are not destroying the integrity of shelf rock below the water table, the water bores are much less likely to damage the structure and therefore the aquifers themselves.

The government is in control of issuing licenses for bore water drilling and water extraction, if there is any risk the government will not issue a license. With the miners they are drilling wherever they can gain access with the support of the government, they are opportunists. They drill holes in places not approved but in the general vicinity and say that there is no problem with that activity!

I believe that **Minister Smith** stated that we (the land owners) were just a bunch of radicals trying to protect their land values. If this is what was said I am not impressed. First of all we are not radicals, we are citizens of NSW and therefore the very people that the Government should be working for and protecting. Secondly there are no land values to protect, it is impossible to sell land in Sutton Forest. In one example 2014 a couple on Sallys Corner Road, listed their property for sale at \$1.2 million, the improvements are substantial and the home quiet beautiful. They eventually

accepted an offer of \$900,000, unfortunately this sale fell through, they have now received an offer of \$600,000 which is not even replacement value for the bricks and mortar. If the value of our land is now zero, I would expect the Valuer General to reflect this in the valuations that we pay rates on, as at the moment we are being asked to pay rates on a fictitious valuation. Even worse than this is that Hume Coal have been busy buying properties along the Highway at artificially high prices so the Valuer General increased the value of my property by some 45% from \$620,000 to \$904,000. This is an extraordinary increase with other properties in the area only have small rises my rates went up expediently! I requested a review and they did acknowledge that Hume Coal had inflated the prices but were not prepared to lower the valuation. This is one real negative way that this exploration has already caused my family. We are self funded retirees and this has had a massive impact on us.

WATER USAGE

There was a meeting held at Moss Vale Council chambers where the quality of coal to be found in the area being tested by Hume Coal was raised. The representatives attending the meeting from the Coal Mining company stated that the quality of coal was OK at the base of the seam, about one and a half metres high, the rest of the coal, up to seven and a half metres of it was high in ash.

This then prompted the question of setting up a coal washery and the massive amounts of water it would require. The company representative then responded by saying that the washery would more than likely draw water from the aquifer and when the coal had been washed return the fluid back to the aquifer.

This means that all of the heavy metals, chemicals and pollutants that the coal has encapsulated will be first washed out of the crushed ore and then filtered in some manner (there will be a massive amount of water) and returned. What we know now is that it will be put back into mined shafts to pressurise them and then sealed. This material will be like paste, maybe the consistency of toothpaste, then maybe a slurry or perhaps a lot of water with particles up to 1 cm. Who knows what they will pump back into the holes they have extracted coal from? I guess it will be self monitored? I believe that this waste will eventually find its way into aquifer and the catchment and then it will become the problem of the water supply authorities.

The water catchment authorities are currently working very hard with all the individuals who live in the water supply areas to reduce the amount of filtration they have to perform, this reduces their costs significantly. Could you hazard a guess at what these new pollutants would cost to remove from drinking water?

It appears to me that any money made from royalties will quickly be swallowed up by the pollution that this type of mining will emit when built within one of the states most important sources of water. Please stop this exploration now and legislate, not to allow mining in areas like this. This major aquifer is at risk.

WATER STORAGE

I would like to know what rainfall statistics were used to work out the size of the hold dam, whatever was used it cannot be relevant as a couple of years ago we had 75mm of rain in 1 hour, it flooded the Hume Highway at Cherry Tree Hill and Highway was closed. How will the storage cope this this type of event?

2016 we had an extremely wet January, then very dry Feb/Mar/Apr/May followed by a very wet winter starting June and not drying out till October, how will the discharge be handled in these very wet times with no evaporation and saturated landscape.

2016/17 little rain from October through to February then in March we only had 7 dry days, extremely wet. Then dry again till June.

These weather patterns are no longer stable no historical data is accurate. During the dry times Sydney will get an abundance of water pumped out into the Warragamba catchment from the mine, I hope it is good drinking water? In the wet times there will not be a dam big enough to stop significant damage the local creek systems with already big flows.

EXPANSION

If this mine is approved there will be modification requests to the approval then expansion submissions, these will be comparatively easy to obtain once the initial mine is there. You only have to look at the expansions around the coal mines at Ulan and the Hunter Valley to see how this type of activity can snowball. I have just visited both areas and have seen the size of the operations first hand.

EMPLOYMENT

It is touted that Hume Coal will employ 300 people and bring financial rewards to the whole community! This is far from reality, the machinery deployed will be mainly remotely controlled and that can be done from anywhere in the world, there will only be a handful of jobs for locals and rest will be out of district employees or contractors, it will be interesting if they want to bring in construction workers on 457 visa's, that will mean less jobs for Australians.

On the negative side how many jobs will be lost, farm managers, gardeners, landscapers, stonemasons tourist jobs all these will have a flow on effect and could number in the many hundreds. Hume Coal say the area where their mine is only impacts a small number of cattle, this is a misleading statement, they also state there are only 4 tourist businesses in the area of the mine, which again is misleading and does not look at the whole picture.

I have just travelled through the Hunter Valley and it is very industrial, if this is what mining brings forget the Southern Highlands for employment, our largest employers are "Health Care and Social Assistance" and "Retail", well who wants to retire in an industrial area? What will happen to these industries over time?

FUTURE INVESTMENT

I have first hand knowledge of projects that are currently awaiting the outcome of the EIS before proceeding, apart from my water storage, I know of one home in Berrima not going ahead as well as people not wanting to buy land in the area because of the possibility of future mine. This all has an impact on employment both now and into the future.

HEARTS AND MIND

The local Paper and Radio station are receiving a lot of business from Hume Coal and are always championing their case, one thing we are bombarded with is the you must follow the process! If the process was not flawed and free from politics that would be a fine thing but there have been so many issues with this project that one wonders if the EIS is truly being examined and that the approval is not fait accompli.

The amount of air time and information in the paper is designed to influence the general public and divide the community.

SELF REGULATION

I wrote a complaint to the local radio station about an advertisement that Hume Coal had been running for 12 months or so. I had no response from the station, the only thing that happened was that ad was removed.

Under self regulation the Radio station had 30 days to respond to my complaint. This did not happen and has never happened, consequent for station, nothing. Will the self regulation work better in the mining industry? No because they are all controlled by people and cultures that are selfish and self serving, they have no interest in community, Southern Highlands, NSW or even Australia.

HUME COALS POOR CULTURE

Hume Coal (originally Cockatoo Coal) have been found to be underhanded in dealing and advertising, from bullying in their way onto properties for exploration, false advertising, buying properties with shelf companies like Pastoral Australias (or something like that) to disguise who was really behind the purchase, they will seemingly do anything to get their own way.

They recently took the high ground and complained about a meeting that was held between 'Battle for Berrima' and the Premier of NSW, however they have never divulged how they seem to be able to get what ever is required from Government to get their exploration through?

This is an example of how dealings go with Hume Coal

I sent 6 questions to Hume Coal on the 20th of April and am still waiting for answers.

20th April 2015 – Questions sent to Hume Coal

20th April 2015 – Claudia Farrar responds and acknowledges receipt of questions

6th May 2015 – No answers so enquired with Hume coal as to progress

6th May 2015 – Claudia Farrar again responds

15th May 2015 – received answers – did not answer questions !

18th May 2015 – Modified questions and re-submitted

19th May 2015 – Claudia Farrar responds and acknowledges receipt of questions

August 2015 – Hume Coal meeting Moss Vale services club saw Claudia and asked about questions, she apologised and said she would follow up.

2nd September 2015 – Claudia rang me and said she was back from leave, will follow up

9th September 2015 – Still nothing.

12th June 2017 – Still Nothing

SUMMARY

The proposed coal mine has the potential to destroy one of the major aquifers in NSW supplying Cheap Clean Drinking Water to Sydney why play Russian Roulette with this precious resource?

I believe the exploration license has expired, if so this license should never be issued again and any type of underground mining in this area be banned.