

David Riley
237 'Croydon'
Flood Hill Road
Boggabri
NSW 2382

October 23rd, 2018

NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Objection to the 'Vickery Extension Project'

We, a local farming family, write to register our objection to the following application for the 'Vickery Extension Project' – application number SSD7480. As long-term residents of the local area, we have seen the changing nature of the surrounding environment and witnessed the detrimental impacts of the mining boom. The proposed extension will be implemented approximately 1.3 kilometres from our land 'Croydon'. The project's location, its operation and design, will have an unacceptably adverse impact on the properties immediately adjacent to the site and the surrounding area. These include air quality, water quality and availability, roads, noise intensity, direct competition for land and the decline in land value. Consequently, the co-existence between mines and rural industries in the local area is misleading.

Aquifers and Surface Water:

Within this project, the mine is attempting to acquire 10 additional 1 megalitre bores within the local area. Will these bores be metered? Will they have restrictions on the amount of water they can extract, and will they have to conduct mandatory water testing to ensure quality? All bores in this area need to be monitored and if there is an issue with the depletion in the water-table will they have to alter their pumping volume? On-site explosions increase the likelihood of contamination, leaching and the interconnectivity between groundwater aquifers. This drastically impacts the ability for us and other farmers to draw clean and safe water for human and livestock consumption, and for irrigation practices.

On the surface, the mine's run-off water will flow into the Driggle Draggel', 'Barber's Lagoon' and the 'Namoi River'. When running, these streams flow directly through my property where my cattle drink on a daily basis. What stops the mine from discharging contaminated water like they have done in the past? How much contaminated water can they store on-site before it runs into these water systems? We can easily receive 100mls of rainfall over night or in a short amount of time. Can they store this volume? How much can they store before it is discharged into the river system?

Air Quality:

The exposed soil on-site and mining practices such as the mechanical disturbance of rock and soil materials by explosions, dragline or shovel, bulldozing and the operation of machinery will generate loose coarse particles. In addition, the toxic fumes released through explosions further deteriorate the air quality. At our location, we predominantly receive south-easterly winds. These winds will carry these particles in our direction where it will settle onto our infrastructure (e.g. water tanks and roofs), crops and pastures, and inhaled by both personnel and livestock. To ensure our farm's productivity we are constantly outside on four-wheel motorbikes fixing pumps, irrigating crops and working livestock. Our livestock would have a much greater exposure because they are not only in open spaces, but all their ingested feed would be subjected to contamination by dust particles.

Within our household, we have members that suffer from both asthma and allergies. Consequently, air quality is of great importance to us.

The Railway:

In relation to the railway, how will it be designed? Will it be an embankment or on pillars? No matter the model, its positioning on the flood-plain is going to dramatically restrict the flow of water. The proposal needs to be based on a 1:100-year flood, as this large-scale floodplain carries an immense volume of water across all major catchments. If not done appropriately, the water from both the 'Mooki' and 'Namoi' river will become restricted and accumulate on the Gunnedah side. They will experience higher water levels in areas that have never experienced flooding. The water will be deeper and slower to recede causing extensive road closures for a greater period of time. If the infrastructure was to bridge at this stage, then both the Boggabri area and downstream would suffer a flood exceeding records. We are currently experiencing the driest period on record. What stops us from having the wettest season in the near future? There is an already existing railway loop situated at 'Gin's Leap'. Why can't this already existing network be further developed.

Noise Intensity:

At present, the 'Tarrawonga' open-cut mine is situated 5.6 kilometres north-east of our property. Even at this distance, we constantly experience the loud growling sound produced by the machinery and vehicles operating on site. This becomes more intense during over-cast nights where it physically sounds like they are on our land. In addition, the conducted explosions can be both felt and heard. This new project being located 1.3 kilometres away from our boundary will cause the sound related impacts to intensify. Our concerns relate to quality of life, including the further impacts on our amenity as the site will be operating 24 hours 7 days a week. Will they control the noise through monitoring?

Neighboring property – 'Calendar':

Another aspect of concern relates to the sale of Bob McGregor's property 'Calendar' which sold due to the cumulative effects of air pollution, noise and dust. For 'Calendar' to be affected from the 'Tarrawonga' mine site, the winds would have needed to approach from the north-east. Our property will be closer to the 'Vickery' mining site and for it to affect us we would need to experience winds from the south-east. In our local area, these winds are more

consistent and stronger than a north-easterly wind. This implies that we would obtain more adverse impacts than what 'Calendar' would have experienced. We have not yet received any correspondence from the mining company to address this matter. Therefore, why is this project still going ahead if it is clear that it is going to personally affect us.

Property Value:

When we first purchased 'Croydon' 15 years ago, we aspired to create a multi-generational farming industry. The economic and health impacts of having a mine in such a close proximity makes it harder for this idea to be sustained. Our family and surrounding farms have already lost value in their properties due to mining speculation, as no prospective buyers would want to live next door to an open-cut coal mine. Since being here, we have brought another 3 properties, improved and established new infrastructure including sheds, irrigation channels, a new brick home, fencing, levee banks, cattle yards and bores. We have spent a fortune ensuring our farm's productivity and livelihood – we are here for the long haul. Our farming practices abide by regulations to ensure that we do not negatively impact neighboring properties. We find it hard to believe how this mining project could still go ahead despite the proven impacts on the surrounding area.

Excessive Traffic:

At present, the gravelled 'Braymont Road', even though is not designated for mine usage, experiences an excessive volume of mining vehicles. When driving, these vehicles pass at reckless speeds exceeding 100kms/hr often throwing stones that cause damage. As an example, we would be travelling 80kms/hr and they would still overtake us. This extension project will cause the volume of traffic on this road to increase significantly. What guarantee do we have that 'Vickery' will do something to stop mining vehicles using this route?

In conclusion, we strongly believe that both the mining and farming industries can co-exist in the local area. We are not anti-mining. If the 'Vickery' mining company cannot address our valid concerns and guarantee that they will not occur, then perhaps this extension project should not go ahead. The ramifications will not only effect the local environment and community, but also our family directly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D S Riley'.

David Riley and family.