



Hunter Environment Lobby Inc.

PO Box 188
East Maitland NSW 2323
29th August 2018

Mount Owen Continued Operations Project Mod 2

Hunter Environment Lobby Inc. (HEL) is a regional community-based environmental organization that has been active for well over 20 years on the issues of environmental degradation, species and habitat loss, and climate change.

HEL strongly opposed the development of the Mt Owen Mine and destruction of over half the publicly owned Ravensworth State Forest in 1994 and the expansion through biodiversity offset areas in 2004.

As a member of the Mt Owen Complex Flora and Fauna Interagency Advisory Group from its inception until 2016, initially the Mt Owen Mine Advisory Group, HEL had a continuous engagement with this development in all its iterations.

We have presented submissions at every opportunity whether in public as in a Planning Assessment Commission, at Commissions of Inquiry, or in written form to government departments of all political persuasions. We have done this on behalf of our community, as originally a large part of this mine complex was a publically owned State Forest, with all the attributes of a complex woodland, and possessing an abundance of biodiversity, even though it had been logged over the years for various forest resource materials.

We see the mining industry has enjoyed legislative precedence in the use and development of land for over 150 years, nowhere more visibly than in this area of The Hunter. We were initially pleased that times seemed to be changing, and that the future demanded a new agenda, especially after the agreement in Paris on mitigation of climate change two and a half years ago.

Health and Air Quality

It is common knowledge that population health here in the Hunter is in one of the poorest states for the whole country – particle pollution of PM2.5 and 10.0 are very much higher than the average. Open cut coal mines are a big offender.

We see that it is imperative that the current high levels of air pollution regularly recorded at Camberwell in particular are recognised and taken into account. Camberwell is very close to the main Singleton suburb of Singleton Heights and local GP's have been warning for many years of the increasing prevalence of asthma in school age children and younger.

Acquisition Rights

We see that the remaining private residents of Camberwell should be eligible for acquisition rights – they live in some of the worst areas of the Hunter. It is akin to wind tunnel effects where mines intrude on peoples lives and health.

Final Voids

We believe that no final voids should be left in the landscape, indeed HEL has long maintained that if the current project cannot afford to backfill all pits, it is economically unviable – we do not believe that this is the case, it is obviously a ploy to avoid social responsibility by the proponent.

Transition away from Coal

The proposed extension of mine life to 2037 to produce an additional 35 million tonnes of coal is unsustainable in many ways, in terms of human health and health of the surrounding areas environment, not to mention Australia's promise to the Paris Agreement?

We see that it is a mandatory request that our state government require a transition plan away from coal mining impacts and that it must be in place in the Hunter Region before 2030.

If this is not the case, Australia has will find itself negatively considered by the global community who are struggling to find a way forward with recalcitrant nations not taking on board mitigating climate change effects.

Yours in trust,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Davis', is positioned above the typed name.

Jan Davis
President Hunter Environment Lobby Inc.