

5 September 2018

Department of Planning and Environment
Planning Services Resource Assessments
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Attention Megan Dawson

RE: Mount Owen Continued Operations Project Modification (SSD 5850 MOD 2)

We refer to the above-mentioned application and are pleased to submit this letter of support in relation to the same.

The Hunter Business Chamber (HBC) is the largest regional business chamber in Australia and was established in 1886. The Chamber independently represents around 2,000 member organisations to all levels of government and is the peak industry association in the Hunter, reflecting the interests of all business sectors.

The HBC has long held views concerning the significance and importance of the resources sector and particularly the coal industry to the economy of the Hunter Region. We have continually advocated for the growth of the industry where it can occur within reasonable guidelines set out by respective planning and regulatory authorities. This industry delivers significant economic benefit to many businesses across the region, many of whom are our members.

The HBC understands this current application if approved will extend the life of the Mount Owen Mine by an additional six years and provide an additional 35 million tonnes in capacity of the mine. We further understand that owing to the history of leasehold interests across the subject area, mining activity subject to approvals would have always been anticipated. In this respect, community and industry expectations are likely to be consistent and eventual mining of the resource foreshadowed.

We also understand the proposed modification will facilitate significant efficiencies in the process to recover the additional coal stocks from a mine operations viewpoint. This goes to ensuring potential impacts arising from mine operations are minimised which is a significant dividend from a community perspective.

The Chamber notes and supports the sentiments expressed in the Statement of Environmental Effects regarding the importance of economic returns of the project for its workforce, suppliers, and local and regional communities. Of crucial importance is the acknowledgement that the Modification will extend the economic life of the Mount Owen Mine to provide for the ongoing employment of the existing workforce of up to 660 people.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the application and look forward to the matter progressing through the consideration process.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned should you require further information.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob Hawes".

Bob Hawes
Chief Executive Officer