

Mr Matthew Sprott
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Dear Sir

Thursday 30th May 2013

RE: MT ARTHUR COAL MODIFICATION (09_0062 MOD 1)

I am writing to make my objection to Mt Arthur Coal's Modification.

I object to the project for the following reasons:

- Yet another modification.
BHP and the government would have known the extent of the coal reserves at Mt Arthur prior to operation beginning. BHP should have been honest, declaring the eventual size of the mine instead of this sneaky policy of applying for modification after modification. Neighbouring landholders, who were some distance from the initial mine, are now being threatened by the widening footprint. This causes loss of property value, uncertainty and stress to neighbours - which I don't believe can ever be properly compensated by BHP.
- Air quality
Mt Arthur mine's NPI annual emissions data include toxins like PAHs, formaldehyde, VOCs, SO₂, NO_x, and many more nasties. One would expect that these emissions will increase with the modification. The Environmental assessment of the modification does not mention these emissions (unless I missed the references to them). Upper Hunter residents have to breathe these emissions, so the rates of release should be included in the modification assessment.
- Surface waters
The modification assessment notes that the "Ec of local creeks are elevated relative to ANZ guidelines for fresh & marine water quality". This means the mine is leaking salt into these creeks which feed the Hunter River. The mine is supposed to contain salt water which should ONLY be released at times of high flows in the Hunter, as part of the Hunter salinity trading scheme. Clearly BHP are breaking the rules.
In the modification BHP wishes to "change flows in local creeks" and "divert creeks". As well, they expect to decrease the catchment area of local creeks. I object to this request. NO company has the right to interfere with watercourses in such a manner.
The resulting void (at the end of this modifications life) will leave a toxic acid legacy for future generations. These voids seep ACID mine drainage for years.

- Flora and fauna

The modification assessment identifies five threatened ecological communities, nine threatened fauna species, and the clearing of 160ha of habitat. For BHP to then claim “no critical habitat would be affected” by this modification is therefore incorrect. The 427ha (mostly grassland) offset proposed is a joke. As well, the offset strategy as stated will not do a thing to help save the flora and fauna as BHPs bulldozers crush them to death.

- Green House Gasses

BHP must be congratulated for admitting their part in causing the severe weather events, wild fires, floods and temperature extremes experienced around the world in the recent months*. However, the GHG figures probably underestimate the modifications GHG emissions by not accounting for spon.com and not stating the total amount Mt Arthur has produced over the life of the mine. Surely we can expect even more severe weather events when the modification GHGs kick in!

*It won't be long and people will begin class actions against companies producing large amounts of GHG, so BHP will be an easy target. The government departments who continue to allow large GHG emissions will also be a target for law suits.

In summary I object to the Mt Arthur mine extension,

Yours sincerely,

Kaye Monro