

31<sup>st</sup> May 2013

Mr Matthew Sprott  
Planning Officer/Mining Projects  
Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
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Sydney NSW 2000  
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Dear Sir

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

I live and work in the Hunter Valley would like to make an objection to Mt Arthur Coal's Modification. There are a number of reasons for my objection.

**I object because my family's dairy farming enterprise and my employment in the thoroughbred industry is threatened**

My family are fourth generation dairy farmers, having moved from the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland to the Hunter Valley. The Hunter Valley was always revered by my father as highly productive agricultural land and when the opportunity to secure a lease on a farm near Denman arose, we grabbed it. We work hard to make our living off the land, which is now somewhat of a struggle due largely to our landlord selling 1000 Mega Litres (80%) of our farms water allocation to a mining company at the peak of the drought. We battle against the mines for labour – our small family business simply cannot compete with the high wages the mines pay.

I am also employed in the thoroughbred industry by one of the major studs – Darley. For the government to jeopardize such an internationally renowned industry in the Hunter Valley is just ridiculous. Should the thoroughbred industry diminish its investment or activities in the Hunter Valley, the flow on effects to the wider community would be devastating – loss of employment, business uncertainty, inability to attract new investment.

**I object because the loss of prime agricultural land at the expense of other industries is disgraceful – this land needs to be protected from mining. Land use conflict needs to be addressed by the Government as a matter of urgency.**

I have observed over the last eight years the expansion of both Mt Arthur and Bengalla on my daily commute to Aberdeen. In its early stages, it was barely noticeable and now it dominates the landscape. On my family property we now also face the prospect of Spur Hill being right at our doorstep. The unsightly visual of the mine need to be minimized or avoided altogether. It is disgusting the way the mining expansion continues in the Hunter Valley – the agricultural land that we are losing at the expense of other industries can never be replaced. The ongoing land use conflicts benefit no one and need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. This prime agricultural land needs to be protected. Of greatest concern is the impact of mining on the quality of groundwater and the Hunter River – potential risks and impacts from mining need to be assessed more adequately.

**I object because the lack of balance and failure to assess the cumulative impact on the community provides no certainty for the community and landholders. Visually our landscape is being diminished and health impacts are not given enough attention. They need to be seriously addressed.**

The lack of balance and the ever increasing mining operations in the Hunter Valley is frustrating. It seems the cumulative impact to the community, land holders and the land itself are not given enough consideration in the government's assessment process. The continual and regular lodgements of mining modifications give no certainty for the community or neighbours and inadequately reflects cumulative impacts – or addresses how many more modifications we have to deal with undermining investment certainty.

There is clear evidence that living near coalmines or coal power stations causes serious harm to people's health. Given the importance of air quality and the impact of dust on our communities and agricultural industries, an independent assessment of the cumulative health impacts of this modification must be undertaken by respected, credible health experts. These concerns need to be addressed seriously.

I am concerned at the increasing impact that mining is having on the Hunter Valley, the agricultural land, the livelihood of my family, the air and water quality, and health impacts to my family.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my objection.

Yours sincerely

**Jennifer Squillari**  
**"Glenmore"**  
**Dalswinton Road**  
**Denman NSW 2328**