

SUBMISSION OBJECTING TO THE MOUNT PLEASANT OPTIMISATION

Thanks for reading and considering this submission.

It is probably fair to say that the last thing that Muswellbrook needs is more coalmining, particularly so close to the township. The air quality around Muswellbrook, considered by many to be the worst in Australia, can only be made worse by further mining. Already, the air quality monitoring system in that area reports exceedences above dangerous levels dozens of times each year, depending on weather conditions, giving local residents no way of escaping the effects of poor air quality and noise except to stay inside closed buildings.

The incidence of respiratory illness in the Hunter generally is already way beyond the national average, as can be confirmed by medical practitioners in Singleton and Muswellbrook. If the cost of treatment of these respiratory illnesses were subtracted from the profit margins of the coal companies, rather than being borne by the Health system, it would in some cases, seriously impact the viability of mining projects.

Noise from the mine is already an issue for local residents being so close to so many residences, as the complaints register clearly shows. This project will only make the situation worse.

The above impacts are all made worse by the cumulative impacts of mining in the area.

The impacts of increasing the height of the spoil pile by 40 metres will have a notable visual impact, as will the closure of Castlerock Road on the surrounding area. The same will apply to the breaching of the ridge line between Muswellbrook and Aberdeen.

Mining provides employment to local residents but also can be seen to have a notable social impact due to the above effects.

It is now well recognised that the mining, transportation and burning of coal is a significant contributor to atmospheric carbon dioxide emissions. These emissions must be limited if Australia is to meet it's commitments to the Paris agreement and avoid the effects of dangerous Climate Change which will affect every species on this Planet. If we expect to continue living here, we can not continue with such enterprises. Also, the market for coal and prices are declining. With this in mind it would seem ridiculous to be considering mining another 247 million tons.

The mine will go another 10metres deeper than currently which will have a drawdown affect on the nearby Hunter River Alluvium which is predicted to worsen after mining has finished. This should not be allowed to happen to a river already under significant stress from mining in the area.

At worst, even if approved, this project must be limited to acceptance of the modification's proposal on the local area to limit to amount of coal extracted, retain Castlerock Road and improve drainage and crenulations.

I request that the commissioners take into account, the above considerations.

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