



# Scone Equine Hospital

*Dedicated expert care*

The Secretary  
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment  
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## **MOUNT PLEASANT OPTIMISATION PROJECT: SSD 10418 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Scone Equine Hospital objects to the Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project.

### The Scone Equine Hospital

The Scone Equine Hospital is a local business with a world class reputation. It is the largest veterinary practice in Australia, and indeed the Southern Hemisphere. We employ over 100 people (9 specialists, 30 veterinarians, 70 support staff) in a practice that is recognised as a world class centre of equine health and research excellence. We have a proud history of over sixty years servicing our clients in Scone and the Upper Hunter.

We provide veterinary care for the second largest horse population in the world, including the Hunter Valley's thoroughbred breeding industry. As a result of our specialist and world-recognised team of people, we also provide veterinary referral services across Australia's eastern seaboard and internationally.

The Scone Equine Hospital has strong research relationships with leading universities in Australia and around the world and is sought after to field veterinary specialist and expert advice and speakers at national and international conferences.

In addition to our veterinary care, we provide practical training for 40 veterinary students and 60 veterinary nurses each year.

In the Upper Hunter region, we are a large employer of professionals and skilled workers. Our staff and their families are long term residents and proud contributors to our local communities. Our practice sponsors and supports over fifty community groups and organizations and is a sponsor of major horse related events in the Upper Hunter.

**SCONE EQUINE GROUP**  
Veterinary Excellence

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## The Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project

MACH Energy propose to double the rate of run of mine coal production at their Mount Pleasant operations and seek a 22 year extension to their mine life (to 2048).

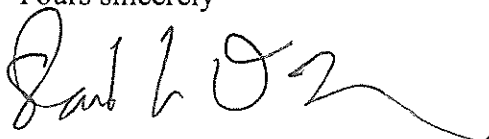
This proposal poses significant environmental impacts on surrounding land uses and the townships of Aberdeen and Muswellbrook. The community here has been required to comment on a 6,500 page Environmental Impact Statement, which is highly technical in nature, in a very limited time frame. In our view, this does not help engender genuine community engagement nor give communities, recently recovering from drought and currently suffering from the effects of COVID, sufficient time to properly assess the impacts of significant (and numerous) mining proposals which will impact on their livelihoods and futures.

We support the Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders' Association submission in opposition to this project and highlight the following concerns with this proposal:

- An inadequate economic analysis which underestimates the costs and over estimates the benefits of the project;
- The absence of cumulative impact assessments – importantly for air quality and water sources in the Hunter – contrary to the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and NSW Guidelines;
- Unacceptable air quality impacts exacerbating already unacceptably dusty and polluted conditions in the Upper Hunter;
- Unacceptable resulting health impacts for humans and horses;
- Deficient surface and groundwater assessments and an undesirable final void that will take 300 years to fill, 500 years to reach equilibrium and will increase in salinity, year on year;
- Unacceptable visual impacts on residents, towns and roads – including a overburden dump that is 6km long and 360m high;
- Deleterious impacts on investment and economic diversity in the region;
- Unassessed impacts on the Hunter's Equine Critical Industry Cluster; and
- Incompatibility of this project with surrounding agricultural land uses.

In addition to not complying with the SEARs and NSW Guidelines, this project is at odds with key Government policies aimed at protecting the Hunter's equine industry cluster; protecting the environment; protecting our cultural and Aboriginal heritage and fostering growth and diversity as we transition away from coal and towards more sustainable, zero emissions future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David O'Meara', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David O'Meara, BVSc MANZCVSc