

## **Objection to Mt Pleasant Optimisation Project (SSD 10418)**

I am writing to object to the proposed Mt Pleasant Optimisation Project and request that consent for this project be refused. It is time our Governments put the safety of Australia's people and environment ahead of profits for mining companies.

Specifically, my reasons for objecting to this proposal are as follows:

- Scientists from the IPCC have given the world until 2030 to substantially reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to restrict global warming to 1.5°C: "Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050." Clearly a proposal that plans to **increase** coal production by 200% until 2048 is **contrary** to achieving this goal. Scope 3 emissions must be considered and clearly they are incompatible with the world as a whole achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, regardless of where the coal is burnt. Pleading that emissions from export coal are the burning country's problem under the Paris Agreement is buck passing of the worst kind. It is nonsensical to keep exporting thermal coal which increases CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which in turn leads to hotter temperatures, drier conditions and worse bushfires in Australia.
- The project EIS clearly hasn't seriously considered "the feasible alternatives to the development (and its key components), including the consequences of not carrying out the development", as required by the SEARs. The sky will not fall if this development doesn't go ahead, but MACH have only assessed this from their point of view: eg "247 Mt of additional ROM coal to be extracted over the life of the Project would not be mined". The consequences of NOT carrying out this development may not be good for MACH, but may be good for the planet. MACH haven't seriously assessed the broader consequences of not proceeding with the development eg customer countries may accelerate implementation of renewable energy projects and global warming may be contained to 1.5°C
- The project is clearly based on optimising MACH's Mt Pleasant operations and any global considerations run a very poor second: MACH knows that the window is closing on fossil fuel extraction, but is cynically determined to maximise its take while ever our Government is stupid enough to allow it.

- We are reminded throughout the EIS that there would not be any “additional incompatibility” as a result of the Project eg “With the adoption of the Project management measures there would not be any additional incompatibility between the Project and the town of Muswellbrook.” This implies that the current impacts on Muswellbrook are acceptable! When I visited Muswellbrook in 2019, after a long absence, I was shocked to see how close the Mt Pleasant mine was to town and how visible it was! For people who have lived in a rural town, it is already unacceptable to have this eyesore on their doorstep.
- Concerning air quality, we are promised “continued use of general dust mitigation measures (e.g. watering of haul roads and stockpiles, ...” With double the production, is it even possible to fit enough water cart runs in between the trucks to keep the dust down? Is there even enough water available for the additional watering required for double the production and hence double the truck movements?
- We are told: “Further, the Project would result in a significant reduction in the number of private landholders being subject to noise affectation or moderate noise exceedances when compared to the existing Development Consent.” and “It is noted that this outcome would be achieved by MACH adopting an extensive range of noise and air quality emission mitigation measures, including:...” Presumably, the “Continued use of ...” in these measures implies that MACH is already implementing most of these measures – the only new one appears to be “implementation of rail noise barriers both within and outside of the Mount Pleasant Operation MLs”. With double the production, double the trucks and double the trains, I would not be confident that there really will be a “significant reduction” in noise for residents! It also seems to me that MACH could implement the additional measure whether this Project is approved or not.
- The Social Impact Assessment is missing the social impact of global warming: burning coal leading to higher temperatures, dryer country, more intense bushfires and in some places, rising sea levels. Until coal mine assessments start factoring in the impacts of global warming on the population, mining companies are getting off scot-free for the catastrophes they are causing!

- I would assert that refusing this mine extension in isolation is unlikely to materially impact the Australian economy. That is the thinking behind having a “Transition Plan” to move away from coal mining to renewable energy domestically and as export replacement. If this plan was in place, each mine closure would cause barely a ripple to the economy. If Governments were doing their job, they would have renewable energy projects under development and be attracting other employers to the area to absorb MACH coal workers when the existing consent lapses in 2026. Far better to do this gradually over the next 10 years than to let the whole industry be decimated at once, at an unknown time in the future, when our customers get their renewable energy act together.

I urge you to consider my arguments in your assessment of this project. The game has changed – you can’t keep automatically consenting to coal projects! We have seen where that leads with the bushfires of last summer and it is not acceptable that corporate profits are put before human life, property, wildlife and the environment. I urge you to reject this proposal!

Yours faithfully,

Janet Murray