



24th November, 2020  
Office of the Independent Planning  
Commission NSW  
Level 3/201 Elizabeth Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000.

Dear Commissioners,

RE – MAXWELL UNDERGROUND COAL MINE PROJECT – SSD-9526

Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry supports Malabar Coal's proposal to develop the Maxwell Underground Mine Project.

Our reasons for support remain the same as stated in our submission to the Department of Planning Industry & Environment in September, 2019 – copy attached.

Since the project's referral to the IPC, the Chamber has reviewed the DPIE report, which recommends approval of the Application along with recommended conditions of consent.

The Chamber does not have the qualification or capacity to comment on the technical aspects of air & water quality, noise, blasting & subsidence impacts of the development. We did however appreciate the opportunity to visit the site on 19<sup>th</sup> October for a guided tour with Commissioners and other industry representatives. At that meeting, it was obvious how the underground proposal removed the concerns, of dust and visual impacts, that were associated with the previous open cut proposal.

The Chambers current membership, of One Hundred & Seventy (170) Muswellbrook LGA businesses, includes a wide range of business types from home based one (1) person operations to large enterprises with up to 500 & 600 hundred employees. The membership represents engineering, retail, hospitality, tourism, viticulture, equine, professional services, construction, gaming & racing, education, not-for-profit, and mining industries. There are members that deal directly with the mining industry and many more that rely on the flow on effect of mining industry employment and economic inputs.

There is a widely held view within our Chamber membership that a transition to renewables has begun and will continue for the next 30, 40, or some say, 50 years. To achieve that transition, we have to fund the alternatives and maintain employment and economic activity. The Maxwell project presents an opportunity to sustain our local economy. It produces a product, which will be in demand over the life of the mine and well within the 'transition' period.

/2.

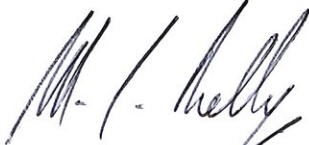
The Maxwell proposal makes a contribution to the transition with the inclusion of solar generation and mine site rehabilitation for future alternative uses.

The project also makes a significant contribution to employment with 250 construction jobs and 350 new long-term jobs plus indirect jobs. The Chamber notes Malabar Coal's commitment to local employment, apprentice training and procurement and understands that much of the permanent workforce will be 'clean skins' or people who have not previously worked in underground mines. These people will need on-site training and perhaps off-site or institutional training. The Chamber stands ready to work with Malabar Coal to identify local training opportunities and to ensure that the majority of new employees live within the Muswellbrook LGA. Any influence the Commission can bring to the Conditions of Consent, that maximise local employment and procurement, would be most welcome and crucial in ensuring that our local economy receives its rightful proportion of the economic benefits.

The Chamber agrees with the DPIE when it states that –“On balance, the Department considers that the impacts of the Project are manageable and that the project is approvable, subject to the imposition of recommended conditions.”

We thank the Commission for the opportunity to comment and we would welcome any request for further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M.J. Kelly', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

M.J.Kelly

President