

ULAN MINE MOD 4

Wednesday 19 June 2019

Dr Sara Fergusson

I acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the Traditional Custodians of this land.

I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future, of the Wiradjuri Nation.

My name is Dr Sara Fergusson, I am a landholder and a farmer with Blue Springs Road to our east and the Talbragar River to the south.

I am also a Medical Practitioner of 25 years.

The views that I express today are entirely my own as a landholder and farmer and should be in no way be taken as the view of Coal Services Health or subsidiaries.

Farmers are resilient.

The risk of drought, flood and fire is real.

We have experienced drought.

We have experienced severe floods.

Floods that took away kms of fences, uprooted trees and washed down river valuable soils.

Floods that meant we had to swim across a rushing creek to feed our animals and check our stock.

Our farm was one of many burnt to the ground from West to East by the destructive Sir Ivan Fire. This fire burnt 95% of our grazing land and pasture, burnt our conservation areas and took all plant, equipment and stock which was in its path. We fought to save our home.

These are challenges that we can overcome.

We can plan and prepare in droughts, such as now.

We can plan and prepare for floods and we can plan and prepare for the possibility of future fire.

We cannot plan nor prepare for this proposed 'mod 4'.

We are resilient but we are not fools.

Mod 3 is failing landholders and farmers.

Mod 3 has ever increasing problems and problems which have, and are, destroying land and relationships. Destroying individuals, families and small communities.

With mod 4, the mine say that they don't really know what will happen to our ground water.

They don't really know if some landholders will have subsidence such that with mod 3 where homes are cracking, and the earth is opening.

We are resilient and it is this resilience that demands respect and support, professionalism and trust.

Farmers treasure water.

The mine does not.

The mine wants the coal. The coal in this area is surrounded by water. Vast amounts of water.

So much water that the mine does not know how much it has removed.

It is *how* to get rid of this water and *get the coal out* that the mine is solely interested in.

Blue Springs Road was named for its history of springs.

These are being lost.

The mine already trucks water to some farmers.

The Talbragar River does not want the water from the mine.

Farmers like us do not want the problems of the Goulburn River.

STOP

We are not ready for Mod 4.

Be honest Ulan Mine, you are not ready.

Not ready to predict the problems.

There has been no pre expansion assessment.

Accountability requires an assessment as a baseline pre any expansion.

We have had no assessment.

You are ready to produce coal and you have various and varying plans for water removal.

But let's be honest.

This mod 4 was rushed through to try and avoid the challenges that would come with the changing regulation.

Mines do not want water underground while farmers do.

This takes proper planning and preparation.

Ulan mine, you have not done this.

The third and final point that I wish to make to our Commissioners is that the mine has failed to communicate.

The mine has failed to communicate with landholders and farmers.

We front Blue Springs Road, we adjoin the Talbragar River: yet we have received no communication as landholders and farmers who are directly affected by mod 4.

Our immediate neighbours and farmers up and down stream were not aware of this proposal.

Commissioners, Mod 4 must not go ahead.

Mod 3 is rife with problems and these must be addressed first.

Communication is a basic requirement if landholders and farmers and the mine are all to continue to coexist in this area.

In summary;

We are resilient but we are not fools.

The mine wants the water out while we want the water in.

Fail to prepare: prepare to fail. Communication is essential.

Commissioners, this Mod 4 application must be refused.

Don't be fooled by the mine.

Mod 3 is only just beginning to show it's flaws.

Divide and Conquer must be replaced by Communication and Consultation.

Thank you.