

9<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
The Director General  
The Department of Planning & Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Objection to the Anglo American Drayton South Open Cut Mine Proposal

We are writing this submission as concerned landholders, business owners and residents of the Upper Hunter.

Firstly, it is extremely disappointing and frustrating that this is the fourth time that our community has been forced to endure this process. Three separate independent panels have found that this mine proposal should not proceed and now for a fourth time we are again required to defend our industries and our livelihoods. The ongoing process has created serious division in our community and strained friendships, families and businesses alike. When this assessment process was developed we were lead to believe that the PAC's decision would be respected and it is disappointing that to date, this has not been the case.

Our reasons for objecting to this proposal are as follows:

1. **Impacts on the Wine Industry** - The proposed mine will directly impact one of the Upper Hunter's key vineyards, Hollydene Estate and the knock on effect will damage the reputation of the Upper Hunter Wine Industry as a whole. The wine and tourism industries need a critical mass to survive and the removal of some of our more prominent vineyards impacts on the viability of the industry and the credibility of this area as a serious wine region. There are numerous tourism development proposals that are constrained by current levels of uncertainty created by existing and proposed mining developments. This mine will affect the future viability of the wine industry, which has been already seriously impacted by the rapid expansion of the mining industry in recent years.
2. **Cumulative Impacts** - The Upper Hunter is already a very large coal producer with a high concentration of coal mines in the area. We do not believe that the cumulative impacts of mining in the Upper Hunter have been fully considered. This mine proposal will contribute to the areas dust and noise pollution, leading to further deterioration of the local environment. These impacts will also affect the health and wellbeing of the local communities. The agricultural impact assessment does not adequately address the impacts on neighboring farms or land uses within the area.
3. **Loss of Diversity** - This development will result in the significant loss of agricultural land and a reduction in the agricultural diversity of the area. Our region boasts some of the world's best thoroughbred studs, wineries and a vibrant agricultural sector which enjoys secure access to irrigation water and some of the most fertile land in the country. This region needs balanced

development that creates an environment where all industries can survive, grow and prosper.

4. **Critical Industry Clusters** - This proposed mine is within the Critical Industry Cluster area for the viticulture and thoroughbred industries as defined in the Upper Hunter Strategic Land Use Plan. The plan was formulated at great length and was intended to provide the various industries of the area with some certainty over the future use of our land. As part of this process, areas of the Upper Hunter have been declared to be Critical Industry Clusters for both Viticulture and Thoroughbred Breeding - meaning we are fortunate enough to have a set of *unique* attributes that should be protected and nurtured, a fact that the previous three PAC's have recognised and endorsed.

If this mine is allowed to proceed it will undermine this document and make a mockery of the entire land use planning process.

5. **Impacts on the Thoroughbred Industry** – This mine will have a dramatic effect on one of the Hunter Valley's most iconic and important industries. The Hunter Valley is one of three centers of excellence for thoroughbred breeding in the world and is home to two of the largest thoroughbred studs in the southern hemisphere; Coolmore and Darley. It is unthinkable that the future of these operations could be put at risk.
6. **Air Quality impact** – As landholders and citizens we are very concerned about the impact of dust from this mine to neighboring properties and the overall health and air quality of our region. The cumulative air quality impacts have not been adequately addressed.
7. **Visual impact** - The Drayton South mine is located at the gateway to the Upper Hunter wine region and directly opposite an existing vineyard/winery operation (Hollydene Vineyard) where significant further tourism investment is planned and being undertaken. The Wine and Thoroughbred industries are fundamentally incompatible with large scale open cut coal mining and cannot co-exist in such close proximity.

I respectfully ask that you register our objection to this proposal and give serious consideration to the above points when assessing the appropriateness of the Drayton South open cut coal Proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Brett and Linda Keeping