

The Independent Planning Commission of  
New South Wales.  
Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000.

9 June 2018.

**RE: Rix's Creek Continuation of Mining Project (SSD 6300) - R043/18**

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Christopher Knight, I am an environmental scientist who holds a Masters Degree with Distinction in Environmental Management and a Bachelor's Degree in Science from the University of Newcastle. I have over 20 years coal mining experience and two and a half (2 ½) years experience as an environmental regulator.

I write to the commission in strong support of the project.

I have been involved with the Rix's Creek Mine since March 2015 as either the Compliance Officer for the Department of Planning- Resource Assessments, for the current operation or as the Environmental Manager for the Bloomfield Group responsible for Rix's Creek Mine. My views expressed in this submission are not the views of the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) or the Bloomfield Group or Rix's Creek Mine. I submit this to you as a resident of NSW who has a working knowledge of the Bloomfield Group from "both sides of the fence".

During my time as an environmental compliance officer with DPE, I was at times the assigned officer responsible for regulation under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979), of all coal mines within the Hunter Valley and Central Coast which held a State Planning Consent. I note this to demonstrate my experience to make the following statements.

In my opinion the Bloomfield Group have developed a Noise Management system which I consider is environmentally best practice in comparison to all other coal mines in the Hunter Valley and Central Coast. At Rix's Creek Mine a predictive noise enhancement model was developed with Todoroski Air Sciences and is used daily to determine where real time attended noise monitoring will be conducted for the upcoming evening and night. At Rix's Creek Mine the mining supervisors receive real time feedback from the offsite noise attendant who provides information to make operational changes. This feedback to supervisors allows direct and immediate management of noise to ensure operations remain below the Environmental Protection Licence noise limits. Having a real person in the community able to go to any location or immediately respond to any noise complaint is best practice and demonstrates the commitment to the community by Rix's Creek Mine. During my time as a regulator I observed Rix's Creek Mine comply with all noise requirements.

In my opinion and from experience inspecting other mining operations in the Hunter Valley and Central Coast, the dust management practices used at Rix's Creek Mine are environmental best practice. Rix's Creek Mine commonly use water carts to soak dig faces, (areas where excavators are removing rock and coal material) to actively reduce dust from loading operations. This practice is not common at most mines. During my time as a regulator I observed Rix's Creek Mine comply with all dust and air quality requirements.

In my opinion and from experience made from observations at other mine sites the rehabilitation and land management practices at Rix's Creek Mine are in line with environmental best practice. I have observed active sustained cattle grazing at the site for a number of years, with no degradation to the pasture which can only be related to the dedication and efforts made in the establishment and maintenance of the rehabilitated areas. During my time as a regulator I observed Rix's Creek Mine comply with all rehabilitation requirements.

From my personal observations the Bloomfield Group hold a strong commitment to Environmental Management and Compliance. It is my observation that the company has always been willing to discuss issues with regulators and notify regulators when issues arise.

Since I joined the Bloomfield Group I have been made aware of the support provided to many local charities, community and sporting groups. In comparison to other mining companies in the Hunter Valley the Bloomfield Group is a small operator with an enormous heart. An example of this is the financial support to the Singleton branch of the NSW Cancer Council which helps to provide transport for people of Singleton and surrounds to access medical treatment such as chemotherapy.

On a personal note, within the last six months my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. At this time I had only been working for the Bloomfield Group for three months, only halfway through my probation period. I cannot speak more highly of the Company for the support and allowance of time to care for my wife and three daughters during this period. To clarify the term support, I mean real support with such examples as offers to cook meals from the Company's Chief Executive Officers, offers to lend a hand and mow my lawn from General Managers and the long heartfelt discussions sharing similar experience with the Chairman.

In my opinion the Bloomfield Group is not your usual "mining company" but a family who mine coal which provides over 500 immediate jobs for the local community, while also providing support to local charities and funding to the local community over and above what other larger companies do.

I strongly believe that the Bloomfield Group hold a strong social licence to operate which will continue to operate with the approval of the Rix's Creek Continuation of Mining Project. The Bloomfield Group employ local people from local communities and provide support in many ways to those communities. I am aware that the Bloomfield Group have been doing this for 80 years.

I have observed and it is my opinion that the Bloomfield Group, and Rix's Creek mine undertake environmental best practice noise and dust management. In my opinion the commitment to rehabilitation and land management is providing a long term sustainable cattle grazing land use. It is also my opinion that the Bloomfield group have a strong commitment toward environmental management and compliance which I also believe will continue with the Rix's Creek Continuation of Mining Project.

I am proud to say I now work for the Bloomfield Group, and I strongly support the Rix's Creek Continuation Project. I request that you please consider this submission as part of your assessment

In my opinion this project will provide environmentally responsible mining for the ongoing benefit of local jobs, benefit to our local community and benefit to the State of New South Wales.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Knight. MEnvMgt, BSc(Geol), MAIG, JP.

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