

1 February 2019

Independent Planning Commission
Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Attention Tony Pearson

RE: United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Project (SSD 7142) and associated modifications (DA 305-7-2003 MOD 16 and DA 177-8-2004 MOD 3)

We refer to the above-mentioned application and are pleased to submit this letter of support in relation to the same.

The Hunter Business Chamber (HBC) is the largest regional business chamber in Australia and was established in 1886. The Chamber independently represents around 2,000 member organisations to all levels of government and is the peak industry association in the Hunter, reflecting the interests of all business sectors.

The HBC has long held views concerning the significance and importance of the resources sector and particularly the coal industry to the economy of the Hunter Region. We have advocated for growth and investment in the sector where it can demonstrate it is consistent with planning and operational requirements set out in respective policy and regulation documents. This industry delivers significant economic benefit to many businesses across the region, many of whom are our members.

The HBC understands this current application, if approved, will increase resource recovery by combining two mines and addressing operational constraints that will enable extraction of an additional approximately 150 million tonnes of coal over 23 years. We also understand the proposed Project will facilitate significant efficiencies in the process to recover coal stocks from a mine operations viewpoint. It is highly likely that owing to the history of leasehold interests across the subject area, the prospect of mining activity – subject to approvals – would have reasonably been anticipated. In this respect, community and industry expectations are likely to be consistent and the eventual mining of the subject area foreshadowed in successive local strategies.

The HBC does not suggest the potential approval of this application should be 'as of right'. However, the Chamber does contend that where the project is in the context of community and industry expectation and the applicant demonstrates the ability for the project to satisfy planning requirements and minimise potential negative impacts it is reasonable that it be approved.

The Chamber notes and supports the sentiments expressed in the Environmental Impact Statement regarding the importance of economic returns of the project for its workforce, suppliers, and local and regional communities. Of crucial importance is the acknowledgement that the Project will extend the economic life of Wambo Mine to provide continued employment for 250 employees, the creation of an additional 250 mining jobs with a further 120 construction jobs during peak construction.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the application and look forward to the matter progressing through the consideration process.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned should you require further information.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Hawes", is written over the typed name.

Bob Hawes
Chief Executive Officer