

## **Aberdeen Revitalisation Committee Submission**

The Aberdeen Revitalisation Committee comprises of a group of people who have a strong connection and commitment to the town of Aberdeen and surrounding areas.

Our committee supports The Upper Hunter Shire Council in objecting to the modification of the Dartbrook Mine.

Following 3 deaths and facing ongoing dangers from gas, flooding and spontaneous combustion the Dartbrook Underground Mine was mothballed by Anglo American, a large highly experienced mining company.

Despite these known risks, Australian Pacific Coal a new, inexperienced mining company has applied to re-open the safety-troubled mine. Can we be guaranteed that they can and will manage the numerous safety and water issues that plagued Anglo American? Without experience or strong financial backing can we be sure they will not have a detrimental effect on our community, our air quality and our precious water supply?

Has Australian Pacific Coal conducted extensive, independent studies to ascertain the potential impact on Aberdeen and the surrounding country?

And do Australian Pacific Coal have the critical financial capabilities to resolve an unexpected disaster or will the Government and the community be left to bear the environmental and social cost.

The Upper Hunter Shire Council has tasked the Aberdeen Revitalisation committee to develop ways in which we can revitalise Aberdeen, to enhance the town's natural beauty and historical significance, making Aberdeen a more appealing town to live in and to help generate greater tourism in the area.

Aberdeen has a rich Scottish heritage situated on the beautiful banks of the Hunter River.

A river walk meandering along the banks of the pristine Hunter River is one of the planned projects about to proceed. The river walk will enhance Aberdeen's appeal both for residents and visitors alike.

It's also interesting to note that in the future a number of local towns will be bypassed starting with Scone, then Singleton and Muswellbrook.

And Aberdeen will not be bypassed. It is a real opportunity to develop Aberdeen into a tourist destination.

How will the Dartbrook mine impact these future plans for Aberdeen?

What will the visual, noise and air quality impact be with 192 B DOUBLES loaded with dirty coal thundering across our fertile river flats every day? What will be the impact of stockpiling and loading unwashed coal at the Dartbrook CHPP, where we understand huge coal trains will be loaded at any time of the day or night, seven days a week?

Aberdeen's air quality is already poor without another mine contributing to the dust and pollution. Aberdeen's air quality is rated amongst the worst in Australia.

How can we care for our community, our children and grandchildren if the air they breathe is impacted with another mine.

The Dartbrook mine is on the doorstep of Aberdeen only 1.3kms away!

Our rural area and communities are already suffering from the pollution from existing mining operations. On numerous days there is a strong sulphurous/bitumen smell in the air from uncontrolled spontaneous combustion of coal. Fine particles of overburden and coal dust travel long distances on the prevailing wind. From our point of view pollution from existing mining operations cannot and is not controlled and the burden is carried by our farmland, our farm animals and the food we produce.

With abundant sunshine and wind, we should be looking to produce clean, non-polluting power. Destroying the remaining fertile and productive agricultural land is a crime, once the land is mined, it's effectively destroyed.

Together with us, the Government should be fostering local communities like Aberdeen's to grow existing non mining industries and to develop new industries.

The unfettered growth and expansion of the mining industry into the pristine Upper Hunter is unwanted, unnecessary and will constrain our aspiration to maintain a healthy environment, where existing and new industries can prosper.

So many in our community are vehemently opposed to the Dartbrook reopening as demonstrated at a community forum in Aberdeen on Sunday, April 7 attended by well over 100 concerned residents.

Do you think it's time to rethink reopening The Dartbrook Mine and closely assess moving forward with this troubled mine?