

15th April 2019

The Independent Planning Commission

Dartbrook Coal Mine Modification 7 (DA-7 – 2000 MOD7)

Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street

Sydney NSW 2000

To Whom It May Concern,

I am opposed to the re-opening of the currently 'moth-balled' Dartbrook Coal Mine.

My principal objection is my belief that re-commencing operations will have a detrimental environmental effect on the township of Aberdeen. There will be an increase in noise and dust pollution that must affect the residents of the town. Referring to the topographic map, Aberdeen 9033-I-S both the existing mine site and the coal handling & preparation plant are within 2.5 kilometres of the southern boundary of the township.

At a public meeting in Aberdeen on Sunday 7th April a general practitioner from Scone Medical Practice raised the concern relating to increased respiratory problems in the Upper Hunter Valley that can be directly traced to the mining industry and in particular to the open cut operations that have proliferated in this region in the last three or four decades.

While the Dartbrook Coal Mine Modification 7 (DA 231-7-2000 MOD7) is aimed only at re-opening the existing underground mine as a 'board and pillar' operation the proponents **very clearly** have a vision to extend the mining into an open cut operation at some time into the future. This eventuality must have further deleterious implications for the local environment.

At the same meeting mentioned above, the representative of the company, Mr John Robertson (jnr), twice used the phrase "the elephant in the room" with reference to open cut operations. To my mind, he was attempting to assuage objections to the proposed development on the basis that there was no proposal to extend the operation into open cut. My understanding of the phrase "elephant in the room" is that it refers to a situation in which there is very clearly a problem that no one wants to talk about. My observation at the meeting was that the majority of the community members DID want to talk about the potential development of an open cut mine and the Company representative was attempting to avoid addressing the issue.

I fear that approval to re-open the mine will be the "thin edge of the wedge" and that progressing the mine development to an open cut operation will be a logical extension to the Company's plans in future years.

On this basis **I urge the Independent Planning Commission to reject the proposed modification.**

Yours faithfully

Earle Shields

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