

The Independent Planning Commission  
of New South Wales.

Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000.

22 May 2019

By online lodgement

### Rix's Creek Mine Extension Project – Mod 10

#### Letter of Support

Submitted by Barry Smith

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for the Rix's Creek Mine Mod 10 Application. I have been an employee of The Bloomfield Group since 1991 when I was initially employed at the underground mine at East Maitland. In 1992 I joined the staff at Rix's Creek Mine with the mine in its infancy. I held the role of Surface Foreman at Rix's Creek Mine until 2009 at which time I transitioned into the role of Cargo and Logistics Manager for The Bloomfield Group.

I was born, raised and continue to live in Singleton as a third generation member of the Singleton community. I believe my background as a local Singletonian employed by The Bloomfield Group puts me in an excellent position to make a submission.

My motivation to submit this letter of support stems from the Public Hearing in Singleton on 20 May, 2019. I respect the rights of the speakers who opposed the Mod 10 Application however I feel it necessary to submit my thoughts to counter some of the comments against the operations at Rix's Creek Mine and more broadly against The Bloomfield Group and their business conduct.

During the time since I commenced work at Rix's Creek Mine through to the present I have witnessed great change and growth. The mine has increased from initially a one shift per day operation to the current three shifts per day, maintaining the Monday to Friday "family friendly" operations roster which, along with its reputation as a "good place" to work, has made it a desired place of employment in the mining industry. It is true that some members of the Rix's Creek workforce live outside the Singleton LGA but there are also many employees living locally in the Singleton district. It should be said that when working onsite at Rix's Creek I can catch up with people I attended school with or played sport with in Singleton. It is wrong to imply that the workforce is purely drive-in-drive-out.

The approval of Mod 10 is important for the stability of The Bloomfield Group workforce. In recent years we have seen a large intake of new employees after the acquisition of Vale's Integra Mine and I sense the Continuation process has created a degree of nervousness across the site. It is easy to understand the trepidation of those who have left the relative security of their former employment to come and work at Rix's Creek, not to mention the hours consumed and the cost of advertising, short listing, interviewing and on-boarding these new employees. In a broader sense, The Bloomfield Group is invested in the community's future through the apprenticeship training program and also provides opportunities for university graduates and trainee operators.

The growth in employment was not limited to operators and tradesmen, as I have also witnessed a growth in staff members. As community standards and expectations have increased, so too has the level of monitoring and forecasting conducted at Rix's Creek. With this, the number in the Environmental team at Rix's Creek has also grown so these standards and expectations are met with the use of new technologies playing an important role. The Environmental team are responsible for real time monitoring and are both proactive and reactive in the quest to meet the parameters of our mining licence. Predictive modelling information is disseminated to shift foreman and the greater workforce on a daily basis so as operations can be planned for the coming day on a shift by shift basis. Modelling also plays a very important role in the blasting operations and "shots" are delayed when the conditions are deemed as not suitable and/or detrimental to our neighbours. This is just one example of the social conscience of mine site personnel in practice.

The Bloomfield Group enjoys a reputation as a reliable supplier of high quality Thermal and Semi- Soft Coking Coal which is borne out through the long association with our key customers in Japan. The Japanese government eased restrictions on coal importation in the mid-1970's and Bloomfield signed a Heads of Agreement with Tohoku Electric Power Company in 1979. Bloomfield has maintained this association with Tohoku over the ensuing 40 years and remains our key thermal coal customer. This is a very impressive achievement for a very small producer in a very competitive market. A substantial volume of the thermal coal produced at Rix's Creek is used in fulfilling the requirements of the Tohoku contract. The nine

month extension sort in Mod 10 is important for the continuation of supply to both our thermal coal and semi-soft coal customers.

Despite being the smallest producer (by export tonnage) in the Hunter Valley coal chain, Bloomfield is a great supporter of local charities and sporting groups. In earlier times Bloomfield were happy to “fly under the radar”. Over time things change and Bloomfield are now more open to identifying as a supporter of the community projects to which they are committed. Employees are now much more aware of the organisations which benefit from the Bloomfield Foundation and I am very proud to work for a business which chooses to lend its support to local organisations and entities such as Singleton District Hospital, HMRI, Youth Off the Streets and the Cancer Council. I believe it is no coincidence that these organisations can be identified as those that care for people in the community. Bloomfield has also been generous with their support of junior soccer, netball and cricket in the Hunter Valley.

There is ongoing debate over Australia’s future energy mix and the role coal should or shouldn’t play in power generation throughout the world. I am not a climate denier and I look to our government, both State and Federal for sound, evidence based policy for Australia’s energy future. Every day the public has access to pro and anti-climate change commentary through the different media platforms and it is very difficult to confidently know or understand the best path forward. What I do know is that The Bloomfield Group, although relatively small amongst the Hunter Valley producers, is a company that is respectful of the community in which it operates and one that takes seriously its regulatory obligations.

In closing, I wish to confirm my support for the Rix’s Creek Mine Mod 10 Application.

Barry Smith