**Maxwell Underground Coal Submission**

We moved to the area in April/May 2018 just as Mount Pleasant coal mine was starting. My husband and son are both miners in the Upper Hunter so we certainly are not anti-mining. The local area relies too heavily on this industry and as coal mining slows and ceases the area is likely to become ghost towns which is a great regional loss. Our attitude is definitely not uncommon when we say that we are only short term residents of Muswellbrook as the air quality is so poor that we live in a coal dust smog now. The last thing we need is another mine so close to Muswellbrook which is surrounded by mines now.

There is so much ill health, kids with asthma, skin conditions that it cannot be just a coincidence and cluster. After having lived here for two and a half years I have developed a scalp condition which I have never had previously.

A major concern is the water quality and consistency for the agricultural balance that the area has and I have heard nothing in the submissions from Malabar staff and representatives that gives me any confidence that the water quality will not be tainted as the mine is so close to the Hunter River. The area relies heavily on good quality water to sustain the agricultural activities which many locals rely on for employment and without water the area be become a deserted dust bowl.

I believe that the longevity of the area should be reliant on a more sustainable activities than relying on another mine for employment. I ask how many experienced underground miners are currently around to take up positions at Maxwell in the Upper Hunter area and how many would be prepared to move and live in the area. The statement in the submissions that they will employ locally I also hold in question. I look at the attitudes of labour providers e.g. Workpac and know for a fact that they employ people from far and wide as long as they provide a residential address within 50-60kms of the area which does not benefit the local economy at all and they rarely ever, if ever, take trainees over the age of 40 which in this day and age I thought would be classed as discrimination. Everybody deserves the same opportunity. It would be interesting for the commission to look at the age demographics that labour hire companies employ and the true residential area that the miners live for the mines that are current in the area. The commission would then see that the claim for benefits to the Upper Hunter for employment is rubbish.

Thankyou for taking time to read my opinion,

Kind regards,

Jackie Walder