

Coolmore Australia,
3367 Golden Highway,
Jerry Plains,
NSW 2330.
17/11/20

Dear Commission,

My name is Audrey McDermott, I am a permanent resident here in Australia, travelling over from Ireland two and half years ago. After spending 6 months in Sydney, I moved down to the Hunter Valley to take up the role as Contracts Manager for Coolmore Australia. I am privileged that during my off season (the non-breeding season), I get to assist with the pretraining and riding of the young horses that are starting off their careers in racing and are potentially future stars of the thoroughbred industry. This pre training is all done in Coolmore Australia's new top class facilities (including a gallop, horse walker and starting stalls). I am proud to say I work at the 'Home Of Champions' which is Coolmore, a globally successful company that is steeped in tradition and heritage and renowned worldwide for breeding and producing the best thoroughbred athletes in the world. I also call Coolmore my Australian home, where on my days off I am able to go for walks along the Hunter River and through acres of luxurious green paddocks. The farm also has some breath taking views of the Hunter Valley region where you can sit and enjoy incredible sunsets. However, it is increasingly worrying to see from these vantage points the large number of mines in the surrounding area.

I am writing this letter to ask you to please reject the application for Maxwell underground mine. My main reasons being the effect on water supply and levels, the effect on air quality and the noise impacts this mine will have on our community. I will address these issues separately below.

It is an undebatable fact, water is vital for life whether it is for grass, horses or humans. Therefore, water is a critical resource for Coolmore Australia and all the other stud farms in the Hunter region. Maxwell admits a drop of up to 2 metres in the Hunter River Alluvium if the mine proceeds, which is river flats at Coolmore, if we have another drought similar to last season the effects of this could be catastrophic. Maxwell's water assessments are divided into groundwater and surface water reports. Neither these reports sufficiently outline the mine's impacts to Coolmore. Maxwell has not adequately outlined their impacts to groundwater resources beneath the farm. The ground water is near surface and essential to the pastures, paddocks, shade trees. The effects of the lowering of the water table on the farm have not been taken into account by Maxwell and this could have detrimental consequences especially during times of drought.

Air quality is on the decline over the past few years and this is of great concern for both humans and horses. Here in Coolmore Australia, we are not only breeding but we are also producing top class athletes. According to research by David Marlin, BSc, PhD an equine respiratory and exercise specialist, by the time a horse crosses the finish line in a five-furlong race, he will have moved somewhere around 1,800 litres of air in and out of the lungs. Therefore, if our future athletes are raised and pre trained in an environment with poor air quality; inevitably it will be detrimental to their health and performance.

My third main concern is noise blasting. Thoroughbred horses are highly strung animals, with a strong flight response and an unpredictable nature. Riding and pre training young horses is a high risk activity, with a high number of riders suffering life threatening and spinal injuries from impact falls in the thoroughbred industry. Every safety precaution is taken in Coolmore to prevent accidents, however, the noise of an unexpected blast going off could easily spook a horse and lead to a serious accident causing life threatening injuries to horse and/or rider.

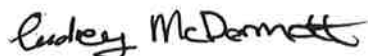
Throughout my life I been lucky to have spent extended time periods in different countries around the world. However, before I made the move to the Hunter Valley, I never experienced an earthquake. I have now experienced a number of these earth tremors since I arrived here two years and research indicates the

number of these tremors have been on the rise in recent years. Writing in *The Conversation* a few years ago, Christian Klose, a research scientist at US-based Northwest Research Associates, referred to the Upper Hunter as part of the "Newcastle Triangle Seismic Hazard Zone." Earthquakes with a magnitude of greater than 5 on the Richter scale occur, on average, every 40 years in this area. Other areas of the state experience such seismic events, on average, every 170 years. Dr Klose, an expert on natural hazards and human security, argued that tectonic plates deep beneath the earth's surface reacted to the mass removal of pressure through mining. He said the risks associated with human-made earthquakes need to be addressed when large-scale geoengineering projects were planned. "Ensuring sustainable geoengineering practices is especially important in the regions of high population densities. This is, in particular, important for deep geothermal power generation or carbon sequestration as hot spots for earthquakes crafted by human action," he wrote. The Hunter Valley as a community cannot ignore information from experts in the field.

Also, only a few weeks ago a number of mines in the Hunter Valley region shut down and seized production for two weeks, as there was more supply than demand for coal. I think everyone needs to step back and look at the larger picture. How can an application for a mine be accepted that is clearly not a necessity and its benefits are short term and questionable. But its environmental costs are long term and it is detrimental to another world class industry that the Hunter Valley is renowned for.

I ask you again to please reject the application for Maxwell underground mine.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Audrey McDermott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Audrey McDermott