Dear IPC Committee,

My name is Chris Cooper and I have been living and working at Godolphin Woodlands Stud for the last 27 years. In 2019, I was a finalist in the HTBA Employee of the Year Award and in 2020 I won the Dedication to Breeding Award in the Australian Stud and Stable Awards.

I am writing to you to declare my opposition to the new proposed Maxwell underground mine.

I have chosen Woodlands Stud as not only my place of employment for the past 27 years – it has also been mine and my family’s home for the same amount of time. Woodlands is a tranquil, fertile, peaceful place and this is exactly the environment that is required to raise elite racehorses to their full potential.

I feel that the pressures that would be put onto Woodlands by this proposed mine is enormous. Such pressures will include noise from blasting, light pollution at night, and dust in the environment – but most of all, how can we put the mighty Hunter River, which is the lifeblood of this property and many others, at risk by lowering the level and placing impurities throughout it?

The history of Woodlands Stud can be traced back to 1824 when a gentleman called James Arndell was granted this land and gave it the name Woodlands. The historic homestead of Woodlands was built in 1833 after Mr. Arndell was granted convict labour. There is evidence to suggest that the first thoroughbred horse to exist on Woodlands was in 1825. Woodlands obtains a rich history of breeding not only Thoroughbred horses, but at times, it has been a thriving sheep and cattle property. The most famous Arabian Stallion to ever be imported into Australia stood at Woodlands, and his name was Shahzada. Further notes on Woodlands history can be made available upon request.

In my time working at Woodlands, I have never seen a backpacker working at this farm, and all employees that I have worked with have been employed full-time by the farm.

Woodlands Stud is located where it is, due to the Hunter River. We have 5 kilometres of River frontage running through the property and I feel that if this mine was to go ahead, the water quality will diminish dramatically, and the underground water table will be severely affected.

Woodlands currently has 34 homes on the property which are residences to not only single people that work here, but to also many families such as my own. How can the health and safety of all these families be assured if a mine that wishes to operate so close to such as unique environment be approved?

In this current time of coal mines laying of staff due to a lack of demand of coal internationally, how can this new mine even be considered for approval?

Godolphin has always and will continue to be a major sponsor of many of the local schools and sporting clubs in the local area and, wherever possible, local trades and services are always used by Godolphin.

In conclusion, I hope that, once again, common sense will prevail and Woodlands Stud can continue to breed elite level racehorses as it has done for the past 196 years.

Kind Regards,

Chris Cooper.

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