

Ian & Robyn Moore,  
"Strathmore,"  
Apple Tree Flat,  
Jerry's Plains. NSW. 2330.  
14<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

Independent Planning Commission NSW  
Level 3,  
Elizabeth St,  
Sydney.NSW.2001.

Dear Commission,

Re:- Objection Maxwell Underground Coal Mine Project Application SSD -9526

We are writing as concerned landowners and residents from the Jerry's Plains area to voice our objection to Maxwell Underground Coal Mine Project.

We are farmers, not anti-coal mining activists. We believe this country needs mining, however it should not be allowed to destroy and impact on high quality agricultural land and our most precious resource of all, our water, without water this country will be doomed.

Our families have been continuously farming in this Valley, for the over 170 years. We operate a successful mixed farming enterprise where we produce top quality Vealers for the Butcher shop market; with the main crop/fodder grown on our properties is Lucerne to produce top quality Lucerne Hay for the Equine and Cattle Industries.

Our Properties are in close proximity to the Maxwell Underground Coal Mine Project. On our Apple Tree Flat Property where I (Ian) have lived for 65 years, 57 years of them I have been personally making a living off the land, of which 43 of those years were spent Dairying. Throughout these years I have acquired a great understanding of these aquifers, and knowledge of what these aquifers were previously doing in good times and in drought through irrigating our properties from aquifers.

Our main concerns and objections with this project are the environmental issues:-

Water is our biggest concern of all. The applicants say there will be minimal effect to the Aquifers. We have firsthand knowledge that this would not be the case, as we have three Licenced Shallow Irrigation Wells that we are unable to use now for Irrigation, because of the lack of water in the Aquifers. The accumulative impact of mining in this area has gone too far especially when we are talking about our precious water.

The Maxwell Underground Mine will completely destroy and deplete the Aquifers in the area. The Aquifers (Wells) in this area that were once used for Irrigation Purposes are now

only capable of just supplying enough water for Stock Water. This occurred before the recent drought. Our Groundwater Aquifers are now much more important, because in the recent drought there have been major reductions in the water allocations that Irrigators can use from the Hunter River owing to the fact that the major Dams in the area, had fell to a very low level. This proves that we as a Community and a Country do need our very important Aquifers.

The modeling of the drawdown on the Aquifers in the water report has showed a Maximum Predicted Depressurization on our properties of between 5 and 10 meters, if this is the case our wells will be dry dirt. And they call it minimum effect on the water.

We only hope that they have got this wrong for our sake. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

Water is our most precious resource of all our resources. We have seen in the past what underground and open cut mining has done to the Aquifers in this area – they have been depleted. Mining also affects the subsoil moisture levels in the soil. With no subsoil moisture everything dries out a lot quicker. This mining project will have a major impact on the shallow Aquifers in this area. This is all detrimental for the agricultural industries and the production of food and fibre for our population.

With the recent Covid-19 Pandemic, we as a Community and Nation are all realizing that there may be times when we may not be able to depend on other countries to contribute to the supply of food and fibre for our Nation.

If this Valley is to survive maybe it's about time to say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH and there SHOULD NOT BE ANY NEW MINES including underground mines in this Valley.

The close proximity of the Maxwell Project to the Hunter River is a major concern also with the threat that the water from the Hunter River could be lost into this underground mine; this was a major problem at the Dartbrook underground mine at Aberdeen near the Hunter River there.

The massive subsidence that will occur from the Maxwell Underground mine, that will definitely occur, will change the lay of the land forever. This has been displayed very clearly at nearby underground mines. This land will never be the same as it was if this underground mine is allowed to proceed. Fences will disappear, dams draining out completely and gullies and creeks will be altered forever. There is no sense saying this doesn't happen, it's just that the general public is not allowed to see it. It certainly does happen.

In the 65 years that I have lived in the area, I have witnessed many dry land crops been produced from this land that is earmarked to be mined, with previous owners growing and producing hay and the harvesting of grains including Lucerne Seed, not many areas are capable of achieving this, along with the breeding of cattle and sheep for meat and wool. My father and older brothers were contracted in previous times to make hay and to harvest these crops on the land in question, which included Hunter River Lucerne Seed that was highly sort after across the state. If this land is allowed to be underground mined, we

believe it will never be capable of doing this again post mining, as the underground aquifers and the subsoil moisture will be seriously affected and in some cases completely destroyed.

Another of our major concerns are the huge amount of high quality agricultural land that is endangered of being lost forever to the coal industry, either by been destroyed by mining, or been locked up by mining companies for off sets, where the land cannot be used to its full potential.

The agricultural land that is been affected one way or another by mining, has always been greatly sort after for a wide range of agricultural uses, dairying, beef, sheep, fodder and vegetable growing for the nation's food and fibre chain.

The Hunter Valley was built on agriculture, **NOT mining** as the Minerals council has stated in recent times.

The Hunter Valley has always been known as one of the finest agricultural valleys in the world and also breeding some of the world's finest thoroughbreds.

The Jerry's Plains area has long been known for horse racing, it has been documented back in the 1850's that a horse named "New warrior" was advertised as standing at the "Horse and Jockey Inn" in Jerry's Plains. "New Warrior" sired Melbourne Cup winners "Warrior" (1869) and "The Pearl" (1871).

John Howe first discovered the Upper Hunter in 1819. As he stood on the mountain just south of the Maxwell Coal Project, Howe looked out over an expanse of land that he described in his journal as **"the finest sheep land I have seen since I left England"**.

Howe also wrote after following the Hunter River downstream from the Doyles Creek junction, towards the historic village of Jerry's Plains. **"The land on both sides very fine, and a great part of it may be cultivated without felling a tree. ....The grass on the low ground equals a meadow in England, and will throw as good a swath, and is like that native pasture grass which is found where old stockyards have been"**. These quotes are from John Howe's own journals.

When we look back on those journals from 1819, we cannot understand how it is possible that this precious section of the Hunter Valley is now been debated upon to decide whether or not to allow mining to destroy what our early European explorers and settlers spoke so highly of.

We believe that the future of the historic village of Jerry's Plains and surrounding agricultural area must be protected from the depletion and contamination of the water and the pollution of dust and noise that will be greatly increased by this coal project. We have sat back and listened to all mining companies telling us that they are doing things better, better for the environment, less noise, less dust, less pollution of our river systems and aquifers. WHY is it that the dust, the noise, and loss and contamination of our country's

water and everything that is adversely affected by mining is getting a whole lot worse and not better? It is impossible to control the pollutants, owing to the grand scale of mining in the Hunter Valley. This Valley cannot sustain another new mine.

The mines destroy the land and water forever.

We keep hearing the same old story we must protect the miners jobs. We never hear about the jobs that have been lost in the area to mining. This area was a rural farming community where there was many, many families living and surviving quite well on the land and employing other families. Just in Muswellbrook and Singleton alone there were six agriculture businesses selling Tractors, now these two towns have none.

The combined impact on the Hunter River and the aquifers are at risk, our water is so precious it must be preserved for our future generations, along with our very fertile land.

The Andrews family at Tarwyn Park in the Bylong Valley has demonstrated very clearly with their Natural Sequence Farming what a high water table does to improve agriculture. The water table in our area has already been lowered dramatically or in some cases depleted completely, by adding another large mine to our area, it will certainly have a devastating effect to our aquifers.

We would like to add one last comment. All Mining Companies including Maxwell Underground Coal Project are now making a lot of Substantial Financial Contributions to the Community, whether it is to Sporting Organizations, Schools or Local Community Halls (These Halls are now battling, because the Rural Communities are fading away owing to the fact that the mines have purchased so many properties and no one wants to live close to the mines). All of these Contributions that we consider to be hush money, will not alter and cannot alter the detrimental damage to the Aquifers, the dust and noise pollutions that we are enduring or the impact on the agricultural land and the surrounding Communities, whether they give money or they do not. We believe this is a bribe.

All of the about concerns that we have mentioned is why we are recommending that this Maxwell Underground Coal Mine Project must not be approved. As we mentioned earlier, our Water is the biggest concern of all as our Water is our most precious resource of all. There is too much at stake. Climate change is a real problem.

We respectfully ask that you register our objection to this project and seriously consider our objections when assessing the appropriateness of the Maxwell Underground Coal Project. If this Valley is to have a future after mining, this mine must not be allowed to proceed.

Yours sincerely,  
Ian Moore.  
Robyn Moore.