

Des Hernon
3067 Jerry's Plains Road
Appletree Flat
23rd Nov 2020

Professor O' Kane & Mr Hann,
The Independent Planning Commission,
Sydney

Re: The Maxwell Underground Coal Project.

Commissioners,

Professor O' Kane repeatedly asked those making submissions to highlight areas of the Department Assessment Report that they disagreed with. I have picked three that stuck with me.

Dept of Planning: *"The proposed project...has been designed in a manner that addresses the NSW Government's intent of providing a suitable buffer between mining and the CICs to facilitate coexistence."* P. V of Department Assessment Report

Response: This mine occupies the subterranean footprint of the proposals that preceded it. It brings very different impacts and is true that those impacts will not be apparent on Day 1 of operations as they would have been with Drayton South. However, it remains at very close proximity such that there is no margin for error. The EIS and Department Assessment Report do not spend any time examining the impact of the lowering of the water table on nearby agricultural operations. Instead because this mine will not be seen and seldom heard it is assumed that there is a buffer. There is not. The depressurization extends for 11kms around the site of the mine and this extends right throughout Coolmore. This does not sound like any type of buffer that I am familiar with.

Dept of Planning: *"Overall the Department considers that the projects impacts would be largely confined within groundwater sources and surface water catchments that have already been substantially altered by mining"*. P. VII of Department Assessment Report.

Translation: We have already damaged this area, a little more wont hurt. I am not a water expert. However, I have been told by a team of actual water experts at

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Gilbert and Sutherland that this view that strata's of the water table beneath us do not interact is quite simplistic. Bores set in alluvial aquifers on Coolmore already display salinity which would appear to be evidence contrary to the Departments statement. This is especially the case considering we are told by the Department that these alluvial aquifers primarily recharge from regulatory release and rain. If further collateral damage is to be visited upon the local groundwater system it would be preferable if the authorities involved could conduct some actual thorough due diligence and map the groundwater that occurs throughout the surrounding sensitive agricultural enterprises and ascertain whether its quantity and quality will in fact be impacted.

Dept of Planning: "Impacts on alluvial aquifers are predicted to peak approximately 200 years post mining and gradually reduce thereafter". P 59 of Department Assessment Report.

Response: The Department report acknowledges impacts that it does not deem significant enough that they cant be managed by adaptive management. Setting aside differences of opinion regarding what constitutes significant.... What if they are. What if the confidence found throughout the Department Report is misplaced. These are impacts that last for multiples of our lifetimes. This seems like a big risk on the doorstep of agriculture which undisturbed will be present in 200 years.

Commissioners if you were a farmer on these lands the above statements would alarm you. There is little room for error in these matters. What I have heard from a string of water experts and the IESC, placed in the context of the above statements certainly alarms me.

Yours Sincerely,

Des Hernon.
Employee
Coolmore Australia.