

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Craig Bates, I am a 4<sup>th</sup> generation coal miner from Muswellbrook.

Firstly I would like to thank all of the workers in mining and energy who make this possible, without them, we would be living in the dark. I see Malabar Coal being a win win situation. A win for Australia in around 1 to 1.2 billion dollars in revenue over about 26 years. What do we get from the horse studs – nothing at all. They never even sponsored their own races till a little while ago. All you get from racing is either broke or divorced or both and how come all sports except horse racing was called off with Covid. For the town of Muswellbrook and surrounding areas around 350 permanent jobs totalling around 55 million in wages which will be good to see after the damage caused by Drayton's closure. What does the town get from horse studs – nothing unless you are a back packer prepared to work for nothing.

Since taking over the former Drayton coal site they have been actively supporting clubs as well as a program for the aged care. Getting back to sporting clubs, my daughter's rep netball team has been sponsored from age 13 to 15 till the closure of Drayton. I wrote numerous letters and emails for sponsorship only two replied saying they don't support anything unless it is to do with horse racing. By the way, they won Division 3 and the following year runners up in division 2 in Sydney with no help from horse studs.

In the last PAC I spoke for Drayton, I was not allowed to comment about things brought up about what was said by the horse studs. All bets are off now after myself and 500 work mates that got laid off after 33 yrs myself. One argument that was raised by an Aboriginal group not the local tribe was that some of their ancestors were murdered on the land, this was not true, as well they forgot to mention that Mt Arthur made a 5 million dollar payment as it was on their land this happened. Another person said he had worked at Darleymoore his whole life, this also was not correct, he could not even get the name right, it should have been Darley or Coolmore stud, another lie. Another spoke about using local people to do their work, as I spoke earlier, they use back packers, another lie. One of my favourites was the report with photos about rehab, the photos shown were of Mt Arthur not Drayton. In the break I spoke to the person and asked why the photos were incorrect, he said "none of the PAC would know" and just laughed in my face. Another story was Coolmore did not know there ever was going to be a mine out there when they bought the land off Arrowfield in the first place. I have a map (original) from 1977 showing all mining leases for the entire area, not one horse stud in sight. I even drove out to see Bob Hawke's jet bogged on the air strip when Coolmore opened, all the locals could not believe what was said at the PAC so please check your facts you are given.

My twins have just finished their HSC, Alexander securing a scholarship something all the mines do for their community. Drayton's reason for not getting to mine their lease that had previously been approved was the possibility of visual impact for the horse studs. Malabar has gone above and beyond so this is not an issue being underground, no visual impact at all as they will be utilizing the old site infrastructure, no noise, no lighting, no dust. They have done some amazing rehab and if given the go ahead will be able to utilise reject to make even a better picture. With their solar farm also will lessen their impact using their power from the solar farm. 75% of Malabar's coal will be coking coal for steel making, this is another good point why this mine should go ahead. I would like the PAC committee to look at a small video when you get a spare 5mins, it is called "The Farm Transparency Project", it will be an interesting video for you to watch. Also they mostly pump water from the river not bores as they stated in their objections, another lie.

Lastly I would like to thank you for listening to my speech and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thank you,  
Craig Bates

**1977 Map is on next page**

