

Good afternoon Commissioners

Thank you for this opportunity to voice our objection to this proposal.

My name is Grace Murphy and my husband and I have been residents of Jerrys Plains for the past 17 years. During this time we have experienced considerable negative impacts due to the expansion of mining operations in the area.

Our principal concerns with this proposal are the damage and risk it poses to groundwater and to the supply and quality of water in the Hunter River and the cumulative effects of decreasing air quality.

WATER

We live on a small rural property with a High Security licence to the Hunter River. Without this water access we would not be able to maintain our stock - in the last year of drought our dams ran dry. Regardless of the drought, we have seen a gradual reduction in the water flow and quality in the Hunter. We are forced to clean water troughs more frequently due to algae growth, which we believe is a reflection on the quality of water pumped from the river. Also at the bottom of the troughs is a layer of black sediment. Up to 2018 we were able to access water from our bore, however the level has now dropped to the extent that we are unable to pump from this source.

We have read the Assessment Report submitted by the Department of Planning, with particular interest to sections relating to water. As we are located down river of the proposal, there is nothing in the Report that reassures us on the future protection of this valuable resource. Terms used by the Department of Planning such as “indicates/likely/unlikely” do not inspire confidence or give certainty. To suggest that there will be negligible impacts and indeed that the proposal “is likely to improve water quality in the Hunter River” is at best presumptuous and given the current state of the River, highly unlikely. Malabar hold general security licences on the Hunter. How do they propose to “make good any losses of water” in a prolonged drought scenario when we as private landholders have access to a more secure water supply, by holding High Security water licences, then they do through their general security water licences.

Since the publication of the EIS, Malabar have had to acquire more groundwater licences to account for water that they will take onto the mine site. This to us illustrates a hap hazard approach to their planning and assessment around water.

Indeed, section 6.2.57 of the Department of Planning Report says that rather than meeting an IESC request concerning Saddlers Creek, the Department allows Malabar to cite data from 1956-1981 rather than undertaking correct quantification analysis of subsidence-related surface water losses.

DUST

You can see the Wambo project behind me. Projects like this are responsible for the existing poor air quality, noise and visual impacts endured by local residents.

It is well documented that the air quality in the Hunter Region has significantly declined over the past number of years and adding a further mining operation to this will not improve the situation. It is distressing that the Department refuses to properly recognise the cumulative effects of mining operations in the Jerrys Plains area. The depiction of the “Regional Context” page 16 in the Assessment Report is misleading. It fails to show HVO West Pit and the Wambo operation at Montrose both of which are very close to Jerrys Plains. The United/Glencore JV expansion is in progress at Wambo with HVO now seeking further extensions – all of which will directly impact the

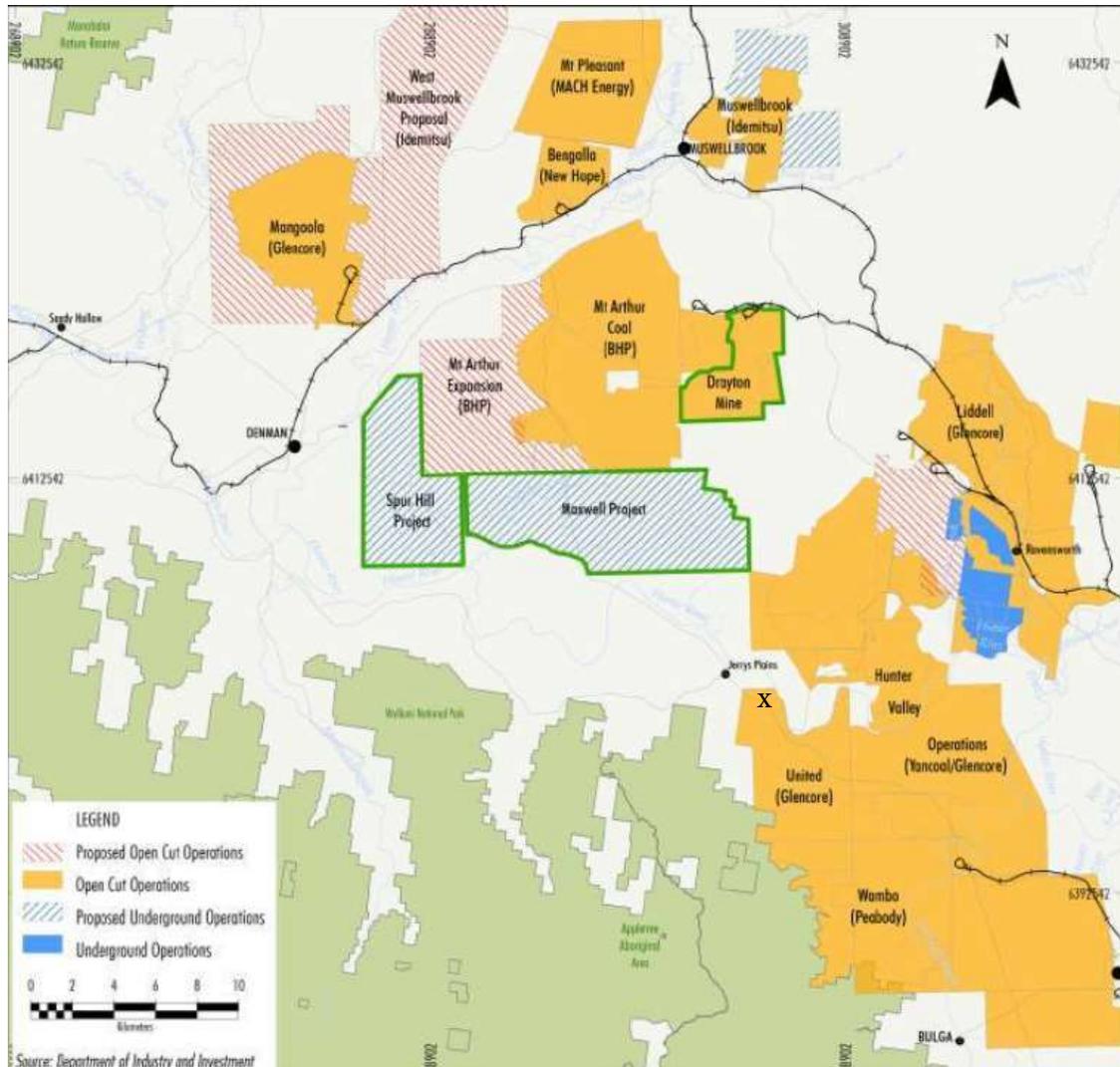
residents of Jerrys Plains. It is not right to suggest that this proposal will not contribute to the already harmful air quality.

In summary, we believe that the Department's assessment does not adequately address the impacts on ground water and the surface water and the increasing dust/air quality issues which are being exacerbated by the cumulative effects of existing coal mine operations in the area and how dry NSW is becoming. In particular, there is evidence of further adverse impacts from mining on the Hunter River and the local groundwater. These impacts will be felt in the decades to come and present risks of irreparable damage to the local community that the proponent has not assessed properly and is not capable of repairing.

Thank you very much for your time

Denis & Grace Murphy

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x Murphy
within 10 kms
of Maxwell
Project

