

IPC Submission

To the IPC Commissioners,

I, Clint Mason am writing to strongly support the Tahmoor South Project.

I am 37 years old and the operation of Tahmoor Colliery has had a direct effect on every day of my life. My father was a coal miner working at Tahmoor when I was born, the operation of the mine provided me with an employment opportunity in 2004 as it has done for thousands of other local residents over its history of operation.

My youth years spent being part of and involved in community sporting groups was also heavily influenced by the operation of the mine;

- Coaches at the local Rugby League club who worked at the mine
- The swimming coach who was the wife of a Tahmoor Coal employee
- The local pony club, with instructors being immediate family members of Tahmoor Coal employees, the club infrastructure that was donated by and at times constructed at the mine.

My employment at the mine was an opportunity for me to contribute to society through stable employment and the benefits/outcomes of this;

- Tax revenue to the Government
- Contribution to local businesses
- The purchase of a new home in the local area
- The commencement of a family within the local area

As my employment position at the mine changed over the years I have had the opportunity to observe the intent and focus of the mine to not only be a significant regional employer but also an exemplary social and corporate citizen. As society develops we rightfully expect ever improving standards of living, both through our employment and of our social activities, this drive for continuous improvement in life has resulted in businesses such as Tahmoor Coal being highly innovative to meet these ever-increasing expectations. I consider but a few of these;

- The engineering work completed for successful mining under the main southern railway
 - This work was a collaboration between Tahmoor Coal and external Project Managers and Engineers
- The engineering work completed to reduce the generation of methane and carbon dioxide gas underground to meet legislated requirements
 - This work was a collaboration between Tahmoor Coal and external engineers
- The engineering work completed to reduce the generation and exposure of employees to airborne dust to meet newly reduced exposure standards
 - This work was a collaboration between Tahmoor Coal and external engineers.
- The creek remediation work successfully undertaken for mining conducted in Tahmoor North
 - This work was a collaboration between Tahmoor Coal and external Project Managers and Engineers

The relevance of the above examples is to display capitalism driving innovation within industry to meet ever increasing social standards.

Throughout the IPC hearing I was able to hear the concerns of many groups relating to the operation of the mine, the primary concerns being;

- Green House Gas emissions
 - Tahmoor Coal currently utilizes carbon abatement methods converting captured methane gas to electricity which is used by the mine and reduces the mines requirement to draw from the grid, the remaining gas captured is flared to reduce the CO₂e released.
 - Tahmoor Coal is continuing to increase the capacity of its gas capture network to further reduce gas concentrations of ventilation streams, and thus emissions
 - Tahmoor Coal is one of many businesses that make up the GFG Group, GFG have pledged that they will be carbon neutral by 2030, the emissions from Tahmoor Coal have been committed (by GFG) to be abated through other means. In my opinion we cannot expect individual businesses to be carbon neutral as a requirement for a license to operate without completely stifling industry within our state. The government currently has a strong process for the capture and assessment of emissions data (NGERs reporting) that can be utilized to monitor businesses progression in lowering emissions.
- Effects of mine subsidence on residents of Bargo and impacts on undermined creeks
 - With respect to undermining of creeks, the mine has undertaken innovative means to reduce the impacts on creeks through mine subsidence, the proposed mining area was selected to remove subsidence impacts on higher order creeks and rivers, for the lower order creeks and streams, the mine has a proven ability for the remediation of the creeks and streams that sees water pooling return in a much shorter timeframe than if left to natural means.
 - Through the IPC hearing much was made of the potential subsidence impacts on homes within the Bargo area, as was communicated by the mine and is known by the DPIE and the IPC commissioners, the mine revised its proposed mining layout to significantly reduce the number of homes to be undermined, reducing it to 143 homes. Each of these homes are currently within a Mine Subsidence district/zone, meaning that the occupants are aware that mining could potentially take place beneath them, these districts/zones were established with the view of allowing industry to have a place in certain areas with the state. It is acknowledged that no person would like damage to their property to occur through no doing of their own, it is for this reason that both the State and the Mine need to take measures such that Subsidence Advisory NSW administer the correct process and that the Mine meets its obligation under this process in a timely manner. If the Commissioners are concerned with this could they not ask for the Department to propose/install additional consent conditions rather than reject the approval.
- Water quality of mine discharge water into the Bargo river
 - Dr Ian Wright spoke at the IPC hearing, Dr Wright has long had an interest in the water quality of the Bargo river and the water quality discharged from the mine. During Dr Wright's address to the Commissioners he was asked if he thought that the ANSECC guidelines would be suitable for discharge quality if the mine was to achieve these. Dr Wright stated that in his opinion they would be, however then

raised concerns regarding what would be done with the brine. Within the project submission the Mine commits to meeting the ANSECC guidelines through the installation of a RO plant, what is to be done with the brine should be a matter for the approvals of the installation and operation of such a plant with the Mine the Department and the EPA.

In conclusion, I hope that the Commissioners do not make judgment on the project based on an assumption that the Mine will not comply with consent conditions and regulatory requirements, given that the Mine has a strong history of compliance to both consent conditions and regulatory requirements.

Instead, have appropriate project consent conditions that allow capitalism to drive improved standards of operation and by outcome an increased standard of living within society.

Regards

Clint Mason