

IPC Hearing 13/07/2021

Hume Coal Project SSD7172

### Speaker Notes

My name is Ian Burns, my wife Anne and I have owned rural properties since 1999, 320 HA in the Hunter valley for 2 years 1320HA in the central west of NSW for 14 years and for 5 years downsized to 60HA at Fitzroy Falls.

For over 20 years we have utilized the time control grazing methodology, placing care of the land first and using grazing animals (in this current case, cattle) to effectively increase biodiversity, promote desired grass species and increase soil fertility and carbon levels without expensive inputs.

This grazing system has a requirement for clean water distributed via troughs to the animals; Dam, creek and river access for animals is not part of these systems. The State Government Agriculture Departments have for over 20 years recognised the value of these systems and in many cases subsidises the required infrastructure and the training programmes. On our current property the Local Land Services and Water NSW supported the upgrading of the existing water infrastructure, the fencing off of creeks and waterways and revegetation of riparian zones. This work protects and enhances Sydney's water catchment

Our property depends on bore water for our grazing system. Our bore is 90 m deep. Any long-term change to the availability of bore water would put this entire grazing system at risk.

The major reasons that this development needs to be rejected are.

1/The dramatic Impact on the ground water availability for over 90 affected landholders. This is unacceptable as outlined in the DPIE report.

2/The potential to totally destroy the aquifer due to the geological complexity. This includes faulting that impacts on movement of water within the sandstone and the very thin impervious layer protecting the aquifer from mine workings. This combined with pumping mine waste back underground is a recipe for permanent aquifer damage that will exist long after Posco ceases to exist.

3/ The make good arrangements appear unworkable as outlined in the DPIE report and will lead to expensive and complex disputes involving many landholders.

In 2019 Hume Coal attempted to make a case for a change in NSW Government legislation similar to existing mining dust and noise legislation, this was rejected out of hand by the NSW Government.

A vast majority of the affected landholders have a long history of resisting the Hume Coal mine approval and harbour a deep distrust built up over 10 years.

4/ There is a real danger that the assumed water flow data for the modelling by Hume Coal dramatically underestimates the projected water inflow to the mine thus potentially rendering the onsite water storage inadequate. This would potentially result in polluted water flowing into Sydney's water supply.

5/ Thanks to previous speakers the commissioners are now familiar with the ongoing unsuccessful attempts by Boral to stop the outflows of polluted water from the non-operating Berrima Coal Mine into the Wingecarribee River.

The Commissioners may wonder why there is no similar remediation works being carried out on other closed coal mines in the Sydney area. The simple answer is the owners of those mines no longer exist and all remediation works would have to be funded by the NSW Government. The mine royalties have long been spent.

The Commissioners would hopefully also be aware of the multimillion-dollar pollution control programmes that have been and continue to be implemented across the UK and in other countries in an attempt to mitigate and control the pollution of streams and rivers from closed coal mines.

6/ This is a green field mine in an E3 zoned area and is totally inappropriate development for this area. Hume Coal point to the Boral Cement works as a precedent of industrial development. The cement works were first commissioned late in the 1920's at that time the total population of the Southern Highlands was approximately 4500 residents not the almost 50,000 today. A majority of residents would like to see the cement works relocated and I doubt if it would be approved in that location in 2021. It is vital that the remaining existing rural landscape of the Southern Highlands is preserved.

7/ The future of the Southern Highlands is not mining. The services, health, tourism, home construction, distribution and light manufacturing provide long term sustainable employment.

8/ The Southern Highlands does not need the jobs Hume constantly refers to. The unemployment levels in the southern highlands are very low estimated by the WSC at 2.7%, trades people are particularly scarce. On Saturday, I happened to see in Bowral Matthew Burke the Owner of a significant local electrical contracting business who said business is very good, I asked about the availability of staff, he replied it was tough to find people and that he had recently bought another local electrical contractor company from a retiring owner not for the extra business but for the staff.

9/ This is not an important coal mine to its owner Posco, NSW or Australia. Why? Because it is tiny by comparison. Hume expects annual production of metallurgical coal averaged over the life of the mine to be 1.92 million tonnes per year. According to Queensland Treasury, Queensland in 2019 exported 154 million tonnes in one year. Metallurgical coal is not in short supply, not now and not ever.

10/ Since this mining lease was quired by Posco the world and indeed Posco have moved on and I am quoting from the Posco Global website.

“POSCO has declared to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 last year. Accordingly, in the short term, it plans to develop technology to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emission and expand its low-carbon product portfolio while, in the long term, achieve carbon neutrality by realizing hydrogen-based steelmaking.

Hydrogen society is fast approaching. And at the center of this is POSCO, which continues to pioneer and innovate towards carbon-free steelworks with its world-class steel technology. “

One has to wonder why Posco persists with this development.

11/A recent Queensland Treasury Study of long-term Global coal Demand refers to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations which require the production of thermal coal to fall 65.1% and Metallurgical coal by 48% by 2040. This depends on many Countries changing policies and rapid industry development so Queensland Treasury is forecasting a more modest decline of 22.6% for metallurgical coal . With this reduction in demand the price of Metallurgical coal must fall, and it is highly likely the Hume mine will not be operating for its projected life span .

12/ Apart from the thousands of objections and submissions lodged by local residents and the demonstrated overriding rejection by the community. Battle for Berrima commissioned in April 2017 the Galaxy Research organisation to conduct an independent telephone poll of 400 residents across the LGA. The results

59% of LGA residents oppose the Hume Coal proposal

47% or almost half of the residents surveyed strongly oppose it.

Only 18% of the LGA residents surveyed supported the mine.

13/ The very worst outcome for the Southern Highlands community and NSW would be for the mine to be approved with a very long list of complex hard to administer and monitor conditions. Against continuing strong community opposition the mine would be constructed and commence operations only to have the mines productive life cut very short due to future predicted market movements , and the poor financial and environmental realities of this project. It would then be placed in care and maintenance to avoid high remediation costs and the resulting damage of this project will have been permanently done for little or no benefit.

**In summary this is absolutely the wrong project, in the wrong century and in wrong location and I ask the IPC to recommend against it.**