

Morley
Good afternoon commissioners.

My name is Paddy Oman.

Firstly I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to speak today.

I am originally from Victoria and from a young age, I knew that I wanted to work with horses. I knew of Coolmore as the best stud farming operation in the world, so it made sense that it would be where I would work. I wanted to work for the best and Coolmore is the best.

I have now worked for Coolmore for over 9 years. I have been given the opportunity to experience every element of the thoroughbred industry by Coolmore and have learnt a huge amount. I have gained international experience at Coolmore's farms in Europe and America and Coolmore has shown a commitment to my continued development that I am greatly appreciative of.

Having worked overseas for Coolmore for almost 3 years I decided to move to Coolmore's Jerrys Plains farm 6 years ago. I had anticipated that it would be a place where I would settle to live permanently – why would I want to live anywhere else!?

However, I have a genuine concern for my future and the future of Coolmore's business at Jerrys Plains due to the threat from the proposed new mine at Drayton South.

Coolmore Australia is responsible for the care and development of some of the most valuable racing and breeding stock in the world. Our clients choose to have their stock raised at Coolmore because of the farms reputation of success as well as the exceptional facilities and environment that the horses benefit from. It is the perfect environment to produce the best racehorses.

Winx, the best horse in Australia at present and one of the best horses in the world, was foaled, raised and developed at Coolmore Australia. She is one of the most successful horses in the history of the Australian turf and a fine example of the quality of horse that the team at Coolmore is capable of nurturing.

A part of my role is to identify prospective clients who may look to board their mares on Coolmore. For these clients, either existing or potential, the prospect of having their best horses raised next to an open cut coal mine would undoubtedly have an unsettling effect. The uncertainty caused by this has the scope to cause significant problems to our business.

My clients have already expressed concern to me at the prospect of Coolmore being positioned so close to an Open Cut coal mine. The margins between success and failure in the world of thoroughbred racing and breeding are so small. Breeders cannot afford to endanger their valuable bloodstock by having them live so close to such a monstrosity. As was pointed out by a speaker yesterday, it's safe to say that if there were no fences, no horse would hang around to live next to a coal mine.

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The agistment business is an extremely competitive market. Our competitors in other states are already capitalising on the uncertainty in the minds of our clients caused by the development of this mine. It has the capacity to hurt our business and to hurt the Hunter Valley. A business is nothing without its supporters and Coolmore needs its clients given the significance of our agistment business to our operations.

Having a new mine at Drayton South would most definitely jeopardise the future of Coolmore and everyone associated with it.

The very real prospect of Coolmore being forced to relocate to Victoria would be a tragedy for the Hunter. The only people who would be happy with such a situation would be our Victorian clients and the Victorian Government. They would be the ones who would benefit. But it shouldn't be that way and you have the opportunity to ensure that it is not the case. I urge you to please consider your decision carefully and recognise the long-term value of a sustainable thoroughbred industry in the Hunter Valley with both Coolmore and Darley at the heart of it.

Thank you for listening.