

15 Linda Eaton

My name is Linda Eaton and I would like to thank the Commission for this opportunity to speak today about my personal concerns.

My husband and I have lived in Denman since 2003. We first moved to Denman from Sydney as we had purchased the licence to own and operate the Denman Post Office.

After selling the Post Office in November 2011 my husband and I made the decision to continue living in Denman as we thought it was a beautiful town and we had made many friends. We are involved in local organisations such as the Denman Hospital Auxiliary, Meals on Wheels and the Denman Golf Club.

I am now the Purchasing Officer for Coolmore Australia and have been employed by Coolmore since March 2012.

In my role at Coolmore I manage the purchasing requirements for the entire Farm operation. This involves interacting with over 100 suppliers in the Upper Hunter from Singleton, Muswellbrook, Denman and up to Scone. In addition to these we also utilise the services over 40 suppliers in the Lower Hunter.

These purchases cover a very wide range of products and services as not only does our business involve the day to day running of the farm that is over 9000 acres but also the maintenance of over 40 residential homes and 30 other buildings from stables to Vet Hospitals and offices.

These products cover many industries and Coolmore is supporting a diverse range of local businesses. In addition to the obvious major support that we give to agricultural and feed suppliers the range of vendors we utilise on a daily basis covers a wide range including:

Motor vehicle and motorbike dealers, tyre fitters, electrical suppliers, supermarkets, hardware outlets, clothing outlets, furniture dealers, printers, sign writers, electricians, plumbers, wineries, engineering suppliers and painters to name but a few.

All of these are located in the Hunter Valley and the vast majority in the Upper Hunter.

In fact wherever and whenever a product we require is available in the Hunter that is where we are making our purchases. Our relationship with many of

these suppliers goes back almost 20 years and will continue long into the future as ours is an industry that will continue for decades after my working days are over. Many of these suppliers are nationally based and would also be located in Victoria. If a relocation of Coolmore did occur it would be Hunter Valley suppliers who would suffer.

I would also like to draw attention to the number of my colleagues that are long term residents of the Denman area. I currently work with a number of people from Denman as well as my many colleagues from Muswellbrook, Scone, Aberdeen, Merriwa and Singleton.

These capable people cover a wide range of age groups, back grounds and work experience levels. One of my major concerns when I was looking for employment after the sale of the Post Office was ageism as I was almost 50. Would it be hard for me to obtain a job in my area of expertise or for that matter any decent job at all!? I needn't have worried as ageism isn't an issue at Coolmore. Not only this but my colleagues and I are treated like family. The level to which Coolmore extend care and compassion to their employees in times of illness and difficulty is beyond belief.

Coolmore is also home to some of our staff and their families - over 90 adults and almost 30 children. The majority of these children have lived on the farm all their lives. How would a mine in such close proximity affect their health and quality of life?

The generosity of Coolmore towards community organisations is continual and ongoing. In the organisations that I am involved with Coolmore have been generous with funding whenever we have asked. I know that their ongoing support covers a wide range of community groups and charitable organisations but they do not seek major publicity when these contributions are made.

My personal concerns also cover the continued degradation of what remains of the beautiful Upper Hunter landscape and water and air quality. Do we continue to favour mining ahead of everything else?

The Upper Hunter is currently home to a diverse range of industries – agriculture, wineries, tourism, horse breeding and mines. These are all required to sustain a strong base for employment and the survival of all

businesses that they support but when the opportunities for the range are diminished in favour of one industry type then that strong base is also diminished.

I wish to continue my life and employment in the Upper Hunter. Please give full consideration to my colleagues and employer, Coolmore Australia, when you are making the decision on this important matter.

Thank you.