

**AnneMaree McLaughlin**

**Submission against Drayton South**

How many times must a community be put through this process? 3 PACs said no to this project.

**We need a no to this mine that is final!**

I am concerned about the negative effects mining is having on our communities, industries and the environment. I am concerned about the damaging effects it is having on the Upper Hunter's air quality and health. Mining in the Hunter Valley is destroying our landscape, devaluing our properties and dividing our communities.

This needs to stop.

We need to protect our agricultural jobs and the hundreds of businesses that rely on thoroughbred breeding, the wine industry and tourism.

The Baird Government has gone some way to recognising the importance of thoroughbred breeding when in 2014 The Dept. of Planning acknowledged the Upper Hunter Valley as a critical industry cluster and mapped out stud farms and other associated businesses, along with wine makers.

According to the department, these clusters are "concentrations of highly productive industries within a region that are related to each other, contribute to the identity of that region and provide significant employment opportunities".

The Department also claims these clusters have enabled it to protect industries from the impacts of both coal seam gas and mining activities. We fully support the PAC when last year they recommended protection of the thoroughbred industry through exclusion zones, buffers and preservation measures. But so far no boundaries have been properly set to protect breeders and so we are faced with further conflict.

**The Department of Planning has identified the land vital to maintaining the thoroughbred industry and so the Government should protect it.**

I am a resident of the nearby village of Bulga. Bulga is not a mining town and its residents are and always have been proactive in maintaining the town's individuality and its links to the Wine, Tourism, Equine and Farming Industries and National Parks.

The local olive groves, orchards, vineyards and primary producers are an integral part of Bulga's past and future. Local businesses have showcased and sold their award-winning produce at events such as local markets, the well supported Bulga Beats Festival, nationally and indeed internationally.

The Hunter Valley is renown worldwide for its Wine, Tourism and Equine Industries. So why is this part of the Hunter Valley being destroyed by open-cut mining?

Expansions such as this one at Drayton South will see the demise of not only these valuable, long term local industries but also the demise of what is an assured future beyond coal.

The Hunter has a strong and growing tourism industry that should be encouraged and supported. We all know that mining and tourism do not mix. To think that some coal companies have grand plans to transform toxic voids into aquatic theme parks as their contribution to tourism in the Hunter is so tragic it's laughable!

There can be respect for the past and the history of coal mining in the Valley but the Hunter Valley **needs economic diversity**. Whole industries and the many jobs they provide **should not** be sacrificed for the **any** coal mine! Mining companies come and go. Enough is enough!

We need to **look to the future**. The agricultural and tourism industries are here for the long term and provide sustainable jobs and a strong regional economy. The Hunter Valley's great future is only assured by industries that nurture both the land and its people.

I say **NO to Drayton South!**