

⑦ Shane Davey

**PAC submission from Shane Davey. Singleton resident and part of the mining industry.**

I am here to talk in support of the silent majority in the community who want this project to proceed.

Drayton Mine can be approved while adhering to all conditions and objections. I ask the panel to assess this project on the truth and reality of what has been determined by the department and that alone.

There will be a lot of noise and opinions during this hearing, and speaker after speaker from the equine industry, environmental interests and some others will talk about impending doom and lack of community support. It will most likely outweigh that from the industry and those in support from the community in the context of this room. That alone does not and will never outweigh the overwhelming but relatively silent majority outside these walls. They are not professional fighters, professionally advised or confident enough to be able to stand up here.

Around 500 people have lost their jobs this month, along with the security 500 families rely on, and the contribution to Hunter communities and businesses. That does not make their perspective or opinions redundant because they are now out of sight, so I am speaking in support of them.

Stand in the street and have this conversation and debate with everyday people and you would be stunned by the outcome. You will hear little if any opposition in the actual mining communities.

I have stood in the street and talked to thousands and no matter what anyone during these hearings says or believes, the reality of that experience not only proves a point, it sledgehammers it home. If this was put to a popular, correctly informed vote it would be a convincing win to approve the project.

Many in our industry have simply stopped fighting because to them the fight has never been refereed on what they believe to be the facts and the rules of a fair fight. The court of public opinion has been over run by a very vocal minority supported by biased media coverage.

Today really is and should be one argued purely on the basis of fact.

This is a mining area just as much as it's a horse breeding area. The mining industry should not unreasonably impact the nearby horse studs and this mine should be held accountable to that promise.

The conditions have been met and the most likely outcomes and impacts assessed, what other information needs to be considered.

The studs are across a road from an escarpment the proposed mine site will

sit behind, out of sight, Not 1 km away, but quite a few. They have previously said that if approved, the project could force them to move. The visual amenity and environmental impact of the studs has been assured.

The departments extremely well informed recommendation states:

'Considering the further analysis, the Department reaffirms its view that Coolmore and Woodlands would be unlikely to leave the Upper Hunter. In the Department's view, the risks posed by the current project are not substantial enough to represent real or reasonable threats to the reputation of the studs or that they would leave the Upper Hunter.'

The Department further stated: 'The proposed coal mine can be developed without impacting the ability of either the Coolmore or Woodlands studs to continue to operate successfully.

'The Department considers that the risks to the long term viability of the broader Upper Hunter Equine CIC are less than previously assessed by the Commission.'

The sky will not fall in, the sun will continue to shine on people and animals on both sides should this application be approved.

That said, the horse studs need to know that many people want them around as much as they want mining prosperity. It is undeniable that horse breeding is an important, valuable and desirable part of the fabric of Hunter industry, life and identity. So is mining.

Todd Mills and Allan Hamson, two Drayton workers, had this to say in an emotional catch-up recently:

Allan said, "This is not about s\*#t canning the horse industry, we want them around and we want them to coexist, as is proven with the successful Edenglassie stud. Horses are not more important than people though."

On what has already come to pass Todd said: "We have no future when we always thought we did. My main bugbear is the government. All evidence suggests there will be no impact on the horse studs, and then the PAC turns around and says we don't believe the evidence. They vote in favour of a narrow element of public perception, a minority in the Valley, but more in the city including certain radio broadcasters who haven't got a clue what's going on.

These are just some of many conversations.

Agree or disagree, the racing industry simply wouldn't exist without coal mining. From the machines that work and manicure the impressive breeding

estates, to the fences and every other piece of equipment used, coal has in some way helped to create the industry.

This demonized resource is a part of every single minute of every single day of each and every person on both sides of the argument and to claim otherwise is convenient ignorance in the extreme.

People should reflect on their own life and accept some responsibility, whether you are a breeder, environmentalist or pro-coal.

If Coolmore wants to leave that is not only regrettable but not wanted. It would however make way for a committed breeder to acquire the asset and continue our regions successful horse breeding history.

On the environmental arguments, the analysis has been done and the conditions have been met.

23 conditions including strict air quality controls, noise criteria and water management performance measures mean the mine must have minimal impact on the surrounding properties.

Strict rehabilitation guarantees and the credentials and capabilities of any new owner in respect to the rehabilitation requirements should be carefully considered and guaranteed as well.

So where to from here?

We are constantly improving how coal is used and how it is mined and we can do it with stunning success on this project. In many ways this fierce debate has created an ideal situation for how we could get it right.

Why we cant we look at what's possible instead of always looking at what isn't.

If this project succeeds the fall out will be more like a fall up in reality.

Local communities will become stronger

Overall community unity will become stronger

Economic outcomes will become stronger for families and local business.

Investment confidence across all local industries not just mining related but in every single other local sector will rise significantly.

Environmental scrutiny will actually be strengthened due to the focus this project has generated and that is a positive as well.

Many conditions were demanded and all of those conditions have been agreed. Set additional conditions and they most likely will be also. This can only be knocked back on reasonable terms and absolute fact, not hearsay and unfounded scaremongering.

Neither side seems to have much confidence in what the outcome might be.

Let's hope both sides honestly start talking about how this could work if by some chance it was approved.