

⑧ Lisa Manning

Good morning members of the commission, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Lisa Manning and I stand here again in opposition to the Drayton South Coal Mine. The mine that has already been rejected three previous times. There is something very wrong with this picture. How many times must our community put up with this ridiculous, ongoing process that provides none of us with any certainty for our future in this region? For a fourth time, we are forced to stand up for ourselves against a mine that has already been reviewed and rejected three times. We are sick and tired of it.

My husband was born and raised in the Hunter Valley and I have lived here for nearly ten years collectively. It has been alarming to us both to see the changes in the environment as coal mining has made its impact. As much as we love living here, if it continues to happen we certainly won't be staying for our family to grow up in a barren land of grey holes and dust pollution. However, that choice may not be ours to make if this mine goes ahead, as there would be no employment to stay for and we are only one of hundreds if not thousands in this same position. I drive from Denman to Aberdeen for work and each day I can't help but notice the dust that sits in a constant haze over the area. The effects we all feel are physical and mental.. How much more can we take?

Coal mining has already encroached too far into the areas that are already being used for long term, sustainable industries. For any chance of these industries to survive, this has to stop. If this mine is allowed to go ahead, what's next? No industry is safe and this is completely unfair for everyone as coal mining declines further. We need to make changes.

So I ask you- what has changed for the PAC to alter its decision this time? Absolutely nothing but the fact that we now know that Anglo American will sell this mine if it gets approval and that doesn't necessarily guarantee jobs for anyone.

This mine will only be 900metres from two of the most important thoroughbred breeding farms in the Hunter Valley and as already explained they are a major part of one of the most important thoroughbred breeding centres in the world. The last three PAC reviews have already decided that mining in this area is not compatible with the existing land uses next to it. We need some stability and certainty and we need it now. This process has gone on for far too long...

We all use coal powered energy in some way and there will be many of you who would be critical of those that oppose this mine because of that, however this is not about picking apart different issues within each industry, it is about the best outcome for all of our futures...

Our current government may only be in power for the foreseeable future but that isn't what they are here for- they are meant to be looking after our country for the long term. It is time for the government to stop looking for the quick dollar and invest in long term, sustainable industries. A lot of these industries already exist in the Hunter such as tourism, horse breeding, viticulture, dairy farming and many other agricultural industries. With some forethought and more diversification the Hunter Valley will survive a decrease in coal mining. We not only need to but have to as we can no longer afford to stick our heads in the sand in regards to coal. Coal prices may fluctuate up and down but there is no disputing that coal mining is in global decline whether we like it or not. These changes won't happen overnight and we need a plan and we also need our governments assistance. That is why we elect them- to look after our future. If the right decisions are made now we can ensure the future of the Hunter Valley in a time without coal mining, which is what we all want.

We may be losing an industry that is in terminal decline anyway, however we are able to develop and diversify other more sustainable industries that can keep our region growing and thriving and producing jobs. It is called evolving. Generations have done it before us and we need to evolve for the future. We are all responsible in making sure Australia doesn't fall behind in the role we play in it.