

My name is Margaret Reid and I would like to thank the panel for allowing me to speak.

I wish to make a presentation today outlining my experience of living and working closely with coal mines since 1974.

When my husband and I married in 1974 we lived less than half a kilometer from Ulan Coal Mine and our rural property surrounded the mine. My husband had been employed at the mine for some 10 years. While living there our two children were born. Even though it was an underground operation then, there were bulldozers, loaders, dumptrucks working as well as crushing plants but our lifestyle was not duly affected in any way.

When the mine expanded and we had to sell our property to Ulan Coal in 1980, we built on my elderly parents property which is now part of Peabody's Wilpinjong Coal Mine.

So, after establishing a new home with our small family to be near my parents and take over management of the family farm the very last thing we wanted was another coal mine to uproot us once again.

Therefore in the early 2000s it was a severe blow to learn via the Sydney Morning Herald that tenders were called for a coal mine at Wilpinjong. Following came the news that if we did not negotiate with the mining company the State Government would resume our 1500 acres of freehold land and pay us market value. —

We were able to come to an agreement and since then have formed an amicable working relationship with Wilpinjong Coal. We lease our original property as well as other farming land from them and run our Murray Grey and Angus cattle on this land. —

We lived adjacent to the mine in our original home until two years ago when we moved to our new home on the edge of town closer to our family. Before moving we were approximately 1 ½ ks from the open cut operation. It was our choice to still live there for some 9 years after the establishment of the mine and we were certainly not impacted by any noise, dust or blasting during this time.

There are always strict EPA standards coal mines must meet in this regard.

As well as providing major employment for local people the coal mines have seen huge benefits to local communities with much improved roads, very generous donations and funding to local schools, hospitals, nursing homes, rescue squads, fire brigades, business associations to name a few.

Our local towns, Mudgee and Gulgong have moved ahead strongly in the past 15 years in spite of rural downturns, due mainly to development of mining.

I have seen many young families (as well as my own) and school leavers able to remain in the area due to improved employment opportunities in mining.

I therefore simply give you my truthfull experience over some 40 years and hope this helps you to see there can be positive outcomes from mining. Coal Mines and the community can live and work together for the betterment of the community. Thank you