

IPCN PUBLIC MEETING

DETERMINATION OF MOUNT PLEASANT MOD 3

MUSWELLBROOK CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC, 80 Bridge St MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

4 JULY 2018 AT 09.30AM

ATTENDANCE

The Commission

Commission Members: Alan Coutts (Chair); Dr Peter Williams and Prof. Zada Lipman

Commission Secretariat: David Koppers (Team Leader) and Jorge Van Den Brande (Planning Officer)

THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING IS FOR THE COMMISSION TO HEAR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED MODIFICATION.

THE CHAIR OF THE PANEL EXERCISED DISCRETION TO:

- PERMIT THE SUBSTITUTION OF SPEAKERS;
- GRANT ADDITIONAL TIME FOR A SPEAKER AT THE PUBLIC MEETING; AND
- GRANT A LATE APPLICATION TO SPEAK.

THE FOLLOWING MATTERS WERE RAISED THROUGH VERBAL SUBMISSIONS AND VISUAL PRESENTATIONS (WHICH CAN BE VIEWED ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE).

THE COMMISSION NOTES THAT MANY OF THE ISSUES RAISED THROUGH VERBAL COMMENTS ARE CONTESTED BY VARIOUS PARTIES, AND THEREFORE SOME COMMENTS MAY READ AS BEING INCONSISTENT WITH OTHER COMMENTS RECORDED IN THE MINUTES.

A FULL TRANSCRIPT OF THE PUBLIC MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE.

Water Quality

Speakers said broadly in relation to this issue:

- Impact on water quality is a significant issue in the Hunter region;
- Department's report fails to fully address the risk of water impact should mitigation measures fail;
- The proponent should redesign its water management strategy;
- Department's water management approval contains critical errors and mistakes that should not have occurred, and impact confidence in outcomes;
- There has not been sufficient information provided for ground water impacts and there is a potential risk for the project to impact on water base flows;
- The impacts from discharges into the Upper Hunter River will affect the quality of macroinvertebrates;
- Water discharge has the potential to affect Muswellbrook's drinking water supply;
- The proponent must demonstrate that it holds sufficient credits for discharging water in the Upper Hunter River;
- Updated groundwater modelling has not been completed; therefore, the volume of groundwater inflows into a proposed final void is unknown; and
- It is unacceptable that Department of Planning and Environment is recommending the modification go ahead if assessment of environmental impact of water discharge has been asked by other agencies and has not been done.

Cumulative Impacts

Speakers said broadly in relation to this issue:

- Cumulative impacts resulting from the proposed modification have not been properly considered;
- There has been no assessment of the cumulative impacts to cultural and Aboriginal heritage and proponent has destroyed most of the heritage items that had been found within the mining boundaries; and
- Ignoring the cumulative impacts of existing mining operations while assessing the commencement of new operations is irresponsible.

Modification or New Application

Speakers said broadly in relation to this issue:

- The proposed modification proposes changes that significantly change the original project and should therefore be reassessed as a new development application;
- There has been no mining activity in Mount Pleasant since the original application was approved, therefore, the environmental impacts and obligations that were originally assessed have changed in the intervening period;
- The mine should not have a life extension approved without a full reassessment of the impacts of the project; and
- The proposed changes sought under section 75W are more than a modification and warrant careful consideration as to whether s75W is appropriate for assessing this modification proposal.

Impacts on thoroughbred industry

Speakers said broadly in relation to this issue:

- The region has a small triangle that includes four of the six major stallion farms in Australia;
- Mining is the antithesis of the thoroughbred industry. They cannot coexist; and
- If this modification is approved there is a risk that the Upper Hunter horse stud owners will take business elsewhere, with catastrophic flow-on effects.

Air Quality and Noise

Speakers said broadly in relation to this issue:

- Air quality in the local area has deteriorated and noise from mining operations in the vicinity has grown worse; and
- It will be negligent of the government to approve further mining around Muswellbrook without first undertaking a thorough and robust study of the cumulative impacts of mining.

Voids

Speakers said broadly in relation to this issue:

- The proposed final void should not be approved and there should be a focus on not approving other voids in future applications; and
- The DPE's information on the final Mount Pleasant void is confusing.

Other matters

Speakers raised other matters broadly in relation to:

- Climate Change has not been taken into account in this modification proposal;
- The environment and neighbouring industries have changed in the last 20 years since the project was approved;
- The Department is placing greater emphasis on the financial health of the proponent than on the social and environmental health of surrounding communities and ecosystems;
- Visual impacts from nearby mines are already significant;
- A full social impact assessment is required to consider the cumulative impacts of mining on the rural community neighbouring the mines and on other industries operating in the area;
- Proponent has provided employment opportunities for Muswellbrook locals and has helped small business grow;
- Local communities need extension for the mine to provide for employment, however promises to source local employment must be kept;
- A cost benefit analysis is required to consider the economic viability or benefits of this modification proposal.
- The proponent has contributed to the economic growth of Muswellbrook and local community groups; and
- The proponent is making efforts to ensure best practice is adhered to during construction and operation of its project, including, advancements in rehabilitation.

MEETING CLOSED AT 12.50PM