

Speaker # 9 (re originally speaker 14)

Presentation to the Independent Planning Commission

12<sup>th</sup> December, 2018.

Singleton Youth Venue.

Civic Centre

proposal  
about the site

I appreciate the opportunity to express my views as a local GP and resident of Singleton for 34 years.

I have had an ongoing association with Singleton for 64 years and am therefore aware of the state of the rural landscape prior to the expansion of coal mining and coal powered generation.

Similar to Murray-Darling Basin <sup>add</sup> We are seeing similar damage caused by piecemeal component effects - the death of 1000 cuts, There has been accelerating environmental degradation - reduced air and water quality, visual pollution and night time light pollution.

There are many studies now, showing mining communities world-wide suffer significant health impacts but, of concern, is the relative dearth of studies of local health effects in this dense conglomeration of mines and furnaces.

It seems as if the powers-that-be would rather not know the details. This is a deficiency of their duty of care to our citizens, very pertinent in our current losing of faith in "watch dogs", in the banking and Murray-Darling outcomes

Known health effects can be physical - with increases in respiratory diseases and a variety of cancers related to fossil dust and larger particular matter which irritates airways - upper and lower.

However, perhaps more dangerous, are the smaller particles, measured as PM2.5 or smaller, which may enter the lower airway and the blood stream, causing mischief such as cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Sadly, I have a number of coal miners and railway workers with leukaemia and other blood disorders which could be attributed to carcinogen exposure from diesel exhaust products, which are discharged in great amounts in excavation and hauling in open cut mining.

Further toxins such as nitrogen dioxide and nitric oxide are produced from blasting and from mining vehicles. Together they create the yellow-brown haze that frequently envelopes Singleton.

Environmental health is closely connected with human health, both physical and mental.

This local area, one of the oldest farming areas in Australia, suffers impacts of noise, light pollution, dust deposition over homes and into tank water supplies 24 hours daily from mining operation and transport.

In January, 2018 a mine blast covered the town of Jerry's Plains with blast residues.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018, high winds created a dust storm.

Singleton had the highest recorded dust pollution in the state (SMH 23/11/18) and it would be hard to deny that large local open cut mines contributed to this.

These are just two examples of how difficult it is to control and localize the effects of large scale mining so that they don't spread into their surrounding communities.

"Cover your load" principles don't apply to large scale mine sites.

Finally, social factors impact on physical and mental health.

Uncertainty about one's home's continued existence, decreasing property values, reduction of alternative home options, loss of communities with isolation and social deterioration produce anxiety, depression and grieving for better days lost in the past affect mental health – especially in the elderly and the indigenous population  
→ our

Communities without adequate buffer zones are subjected to thousands of annoyances and feel powerless and irrelevant.

Late last year, Bates Hill, an agreed buffer between the historic town of Bulga and a mining operation was destroyed by explosives to expand the mine.

What better demonstration of the imbalance of influence in mining communities is there - where agreements are irrelevant?

Now we come to the United Wambo expansion – huge and with massive long-term consequences.

The above-mentioned health issues – dust, noise, toxins, micro particles, light, impacts on wildlife and vegetation (so necessary for healthy human minds) will be proportionately huge and all occurring so near large human populations – rural and urban. Because the planned expansion is meant to be huge it is logical to conclude that the effects will be huge.

↑ These monsters are hard to control.

It is an axiom of medical therapy- curative and preventative to "first do no harm."

The proposed expansion, on many grounds, has high risks for health and harmony in our valley in the immediate and long-term future.

The AMA and learned medical colleagues regard climate change as the greatest global health threat of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. RAM

As a doctor it is my duty to raise awareness of the harm global warming poses to local and world health- from climate change and the resulting weather unpredictability stemming from greenhouse gas emissions.

This large scale development, if approved, will be a significant contributor to catastrophic harm to human health, not just locally but to the planet.

Thankyou.