

As a home owner directly impacted by longwall 4A I am strongly opposed to this mine extension plan.

I found out about this proposal via letter from our local MP Nathaniel Smith.

My home predictions are 1.35m subsidence with a tilt of 7.5mm/m. My home has an estimated probability of being in the R5 damage category of 6.8% (amongst the highest on the whole plan). I am also located in the vicinity of the shafts to be built which puts me in the noise and air quality Catchment Area.

We have lived in the Wollondilly all our lives. We bought our current home three years ago with the intention of renovating to make this our forever home. It was a substantial investment, but certainly well worth it to be able to provide a beautiful family sanctuary for ourselves and our three children. My husband and I have worked very hard for over 25 years and are very proud of what we have to show for it.

SUBSIDENCE – The predicted levels of home subsidence for Tahmoor South mine extension are considerably higher than those of the Tahmoor Nth project. Page 28 of the Tahmoor South proposal says **77** homes will experience subsidence over 1m, with **22** of these estimated to be 1.3m and over. I can't imagine how it is acceptable to damage people's homes to such a degree. Since this started we've been told by Councillors Banasik and Landow 'don't worry, your home is built to subsidence standards'. I kept wondering, if homes are built to code, then why so many damages in the Tahmoor Nth project? The NSW ePlanning spatial website tells me our foundations should be built to Australian Standards AS2870 class H2 Guideline 5. This standard states this foundation can withstand ground movement UP TO 75mm. My home prediction is 1350mm! There are **280** homes on the proposal that are predicted over 75mm subsidence. It would seem these foundations are NOT built to withstand the subsidence levels they are predicting for those 280 homes.

I raise as a question if Wollondilly Council has changed their DA guidelines when Tahmoor mine changed to the longwall mining method from the old bord & pillar method? Many home owners have a sense of security believing their homes are engineered to cope. Has adequate research been undertaken by Council and others regarding building limitations before supporting this project?

It has been said that SA NSW is planning to change the Subsidence Development Guideline for the whole of Bargo from Guideline 5 (Moderate predicted subsidence impact) to Guideline 4 (High predicted subsidence impact) imposing new home building restrictions regarding style and size, if the mine extension is approved. If this should be the case, then: **1)** I will not even be able to rebuild my existing home **2)** The home I do build will have to be significantly smaller than my existing home **3)** My asset will significantly decrease in value with a smaller home **4)** I will have new limitations imposed upon me greatly restricting the style and size of any home I can build, through no fault or choice of my own.

TILT - My home has recently been approved for an extension, of which the plans were submitted to SA NSW for approval. Engineering to our foundation (as per Guideline 5) allows for a maximum tilt of 7mm/m. An added cost every Wollondilly home build has to fork out. MY prediction is OVER this @ 7.5mm/m, and yet our plan was approved by SA. It would seem our foundations are under engineered! I am wondering if SA are approving plans allowing foundations to withstand up to a maximum of 7mm/m, then what is to become of those homes/extensions/structures predicted to be over this maximum? Just considering homes... counting from table T.03 of Appendix B of the proposal, I see a total 52 homes predicted to have a tilt of 7 - 9.5mm/m after any longwall with a further 6 homes listed at 10mm/m. A substantial number of homes OVER the regulation. These **58** home owners are under the belief their homes are built to withstand subsidence, but I seriously question this?

NOISE – Page 102 of the Planning Secretary’s Environmental Assessment shows that while my property is listed on the proposal to experience constant noise from the mine shafts as well as an increase in trains and traffic on a daily basis, I am not entitled to extra mitigation to alleviate any of this. Before the 2019 fires we could not see the trains traveling behind Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, or barely hear them. The December 19 fire destroyed the thick buffer of trees at the sanctuary, in front of the colliery and along the roadside, now making the trains and traffic so much louder as well as visible.

COAL DUST – The World Health organisation says *“There may be no safe threshold for fine particulate matter and the effects are linearly related to concentration.”* Coal dust contains heavy metals which are toxic at low concentrations including lead, mercury, nickel, tin, cadmium, mercury, antimony, and arsenic, as well as radio isotopes of thorium and strontium. Coal dust is known to cause a range of heart and respiratory diseases and health problems. Being located so close to the trains, trucks and vents, I am greatly worried for my son who has silent asthma and myself with a heart condition. SIMEC do nothing to remediate the existing stock pile of coal waste. SIMEC will NOT cover the coal train carriages. They do NOT monitor or research these particles and their health affects on the local community. The right to clean air is a basic human right. Introducing the dangers of coal dust to the air would be extremely negligent, to the liken of James Hardie asbestos. This is not a risk worth taking.

ASBESTOS – Asbestos in homes was extremely common up until about 1990. For SIMEC in their proposal to brush this risk aside by assuming homes would have undergone renovations since then is preposterous. Common cracks in walls is one of the minor damages expected to occur, but could very well and, given the wide use of asbestos sheeting, lead to asbestos particles being released into the air of family homes. Does SIMEC pre check, monitor or research this? Will SIMEC take responsibility for people who contract asbestos related illnesses who were known to have mine subsidence? This is not a risk worth taking.

MINING ELSEWHERE: The Tahmoor Colliery Committee meeting minutes (Thursday 3rd Sept, 2020 pg 7) states “CW to show the three Tahmoor South mining domains at the next meeting. MM asked is there intention to mine the other domains in the future? PV confirmed there will be.” There are three mining domains in the Bargo mine lease. This proposal is just one domain. There is another to the west and one to the east. Both domains have substantially less to no impact on homes and businesses. Peter Vale confirmed in this meeting that mining in both of those domains was the intension of Tahmoor Colliery. Will the IPC consider mining those domains as an alternative to this project proposal SSD8445?

There is no doubt if this mine extension is to go ahead, homes WILL be destroyed, people’s physical and mental health WILL suffer and the environment WILL be greatly impacted. It’s just a question of to what extent?

- 40% of homes in the Tahmoor North project have experienced damage.
- Bargo’s predictions are notably higher than those of Tahmoor North.
- 40% of claims to SA NSW have been rejected. The mine is not paying for the real damage it is causing. Home owners are being left high and dry.
- SA NSW claims needs a complete overhaul. I have heard endless stories from residents who have dealt with them which are heartbreaking and jaw dropping. They are not able to speak publically, so nothing is done to rectify this issue.
- Rebuttable presumption needs to be changed to state that in undermined homes, subsidence is the number one cause. Legislation needs to change before embarking on new mining leases to protect home owners.
- Residents of Tahmoor North have out of pocket expenses trying to prove damage is subsidence related. Some I have spoken to are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. SIMEC offer no support.
- The \$13.8M fund to accommodate acquisitions, rebuilds, damage repairs is grossly inadequate. What happens when this money runs out?
- What happens to this fund if SIMEC closes after this lease or goes into administration? What will residents be left with?
- SIMEC generally say they will set up management plans for a number of issues, but this is not good enough. Prevention of damage should be top priority. Specific controls should be stated in this proposal BEFORE approval, and they have not done this. Dealing with damages after they have already occurred is a bandaide, as much damage is irreparable.
- Under Wollondilly Environmental Plan longwalls will extend under land zoned E2 Environmental Conservation, including land habited by Koala’s and other endangered animals and plants, mainly near Wirrimbirra.
- Runoff from the stock pile is going into our waterway when it rains.
- Myrtle Creek has cracks in the large rocks. Now the only water is from the rain. It use to have water dragons but now they are all gone. No water, no animals. SIMEC are trying to fix, but too little too late.
- Mermaid Pools is a cocktail of chemicals. Redbank Creek and Bargo River are a mess. Dr Ian Wright’s research here is invaluable. Is this what Dog Trap Creek and TeaTree Hollow can expect?
- Development would be of far greater economic value to the local area.

The greatest predictor of future behaviour, is past behaviour. P25 of the proposal says *“Tahmoor Coal has extensive experience in successfully managing potential subsidence impacts on houses during the extraction of longwalls in the Tahmoor North lease. This includes longwall extraction directly beneath the township of Tahmoor.”* yet talking to locals I hear stories like: SIMEC were supposed to underpin homes, and did not! SIMEC claim their engineers, geotech and builders suggestions to home owners are independent, and are not! SIMEC threaten to refuse work to those workers who speak up for home owners, much like their smear campaign against Nathaniel Smith and No Mine At Bargo. SIMEC say they have done letterbox drops, door knocks, meetings with residents in Series ‘A’ longwalls (this is me), community committee meetings etc. but I am yet to come across any local who has heard from them, including myself. The only thing we have ever received in the mail from SIMEC was a small slip approximately 2 weeks ago. SIMEC were supposed to put in water treatment near Mermaid Pools in 2011, and have not! SIMEC side-stepped any difficult question in the IPC hearing. What exactly have SIMEC done prior to mining to manage potential impacts on homes? Building reports and ground pegs are NOT managing potential impacts, they are simply just a means to measure and compare pre, during and post mining damage. How many homes were underpinned before Tahmoor North started? Other than that, I see no clear management strategies.

“Tahmoor Coal is committed to ensuring that houses remain safe and serviceable during and after the extraction of the proposed mine plan.” Putting that sentence into their proposal seems to be where their commitment ends. Tahmoor Coal’s effort here is to hand the home owner over to SA NSW. As long as my water is running and my toilets flush, my home is deemed as ‘serviceable’. After lodging an ‘emergency’ claim, I may wait up to two weeks for a response. I’m not quite sure where SA NSW expect my five family members to shower/toilet during this emergency. Two weeks without basic services is a long time. Any other damage will not be fixed until the life of the mine is complete plus up to five years ground settlement. Homes in Tahmoor have planks of wood holding ceilings up as walls have come away from the ceiling. Windows and doors no longer open, bricks have snapped in two, floors are bowed and they have woken in the night from the sound of internal timber framework snapping. I am told Bargo has no idea of what it is in for (should this extension be approved). SA NSW place life time gag orders on affected home owners before they receive a claim, effectively stopping them from ever telling their experiences publicly. These gag orders have provided SIMEC with a relatively smooth ride in this extension plan as it has significantly reduced the level of opposition. The very people who have experienced first hand impacts of longwall mining have been silenced. SA NSW, SIMEC and Wollondilly Council know the trail of destruction that is being left behind and choose to turn a blind eye with their ‘don’t care’ attitudes. Home owners are just collateral damage.

In conclusion, the greatest predictor of future behaviour, is past behaviour, and Tahmoor Mine has without a doubt left a trail of destruction. While some damage is repairable, much is not. Tahmoor Mine offers extremely little in this proposal in the way of clear prevention measures to homes and the environment. It offers absolutely nothing in the way of care, help or support to the people who lives they impose themselves upon. This trail of destruction should not be allowed to happen again.

Any compensation, repairs, rebuilds or god forbid, acquisition is bittersweet. I do not want to watch my husband come home from working a twelve hour shift, only to sit and watch the four walls he proudly provided for us crack and crumble around him. No-one should ever have to endure years of heartache, stress, financial loss and possibly irreparable damage at the hands of big business simply to kick the can along for a few more years of employment. Making profit by destroying people's homes is morally and ethically wrong in so many regards. There are other coking coal mines in Australia to supply need. There are other areas of Wollondilly that can be considered. Decency instead of greed.

Thank you


Bargo Resident