

Independent Planning Commission

To Whom it May Concern,

Mangoola Coal Continued Operations Project

We are opposed to the Mangoola Mine Project proposal on a number of grounds, and respectfully request consideration of these matters in determining both the approval and the conditions imposed should approval be granted.

Sterilisation of Fertile Agricultural Land

The land proposed to be mined by this project includes the fertile farming land of the Big Flat Creek flats. Prior to the purchase of this land by the mining company, the land was used to produce crops including wheat, oats barley and lucerne. Whilst the land may not have been used for this purpose subsequent to acquisition by the mine, this land remains fertile agricultural land, which risks being sterilised should this mine proceed. We believe Australia can not afford to lose any more agricultural land to mining and/or urban sprawl, as primary production is important to the economic growth of our country.

Impacts on the Watercourse

We are concerned about the impact on the watercourse resulting from the drawdown of water from Big Flat Creek when mining commences. It is our understanding that ground water and surface water in the Wybong area is interconnected. We further understand that the Wybong Creek was the first water sharing plan in the state to have both ground and surface water combined. Our concern is that when mining commences it will impact the watercourse, draining the water away from the flats and also impacting the run off water to the creek.

Health and Safety impacts of Road Changes

The closure of Wybong PO Road required by the project proposal has health and safety impacts for neighbouring residents which must be appropriately addressed prior to commencement of the expansion project.

We respectfully request that, should the project be approved, an approval condition be imposed that the Wybong PO road only be closed (and mining commence) when an upgrade of the Yarraman Road (particularly bridgework) is completed. Many people (ourselves included) who live in the Wybong area, neighbouring the mine, have significant health problems, and there are also a number of school age children in the area. An upgrade of Yarraman Road is required to facilitate access by emergency vehicles and the school bus. Should PO road be closed before the upgrade is finalised, emergency services (including an ambulance) may be required to travel an extra 30km's around a flooded Yarraman Rd crossing to respond to an emergency.

Noise Pollution and Air Quality

Despite prior modelling for the existing mine, the quality of our lives has been impacted by the noise and air pollution caused by the existing mine. Consequently we have concerns over the accuracy of the modelling undertaken by the mines in relation to noise and dust pollution. If these models prove inaccurate, we are required to live with any resultant increased noise pollution and detriment to air quality, which has many implications for residents.

As little can be done to rectify air quality or noise pollution post approval of the mine, we request that prior to approval of the mine, the veracity of environmental modelling be independently tested/reviewed by the Commission. Further, should approval of the mine be given, we request stringent environmental conditions be imposed, including limitations on acceptable levels of noise pollution and air quality.

As previously noted, there are residents in the area with significant health issues including cancer and asthma. Any further deterioration of air quality is of particular concern to the health of these residents.

Impairment of Property Values

The market value of properties in the neighbouring area to the mine have been significantly impaired by the existence of the mine. Prospective buyers of this type of land are not interested in neighbouring a mine. For this reason, we believe a condition of any approval of this project should be a requirement for compensation to be provided by the mine to neighbouring land owners. In situations where the mine purchases land in this area, we believe the purchase should be at a "replacement value" (ie a fair market value, were the property not impaired by the existence of the mine) rather than a market value. It does not appear to be a just outcome that the mine can create an impairment to the market value, and then financially benefit from this impairment when acquiring this land.

Further, for neighbouring properties not acquired by the mine, we believe it fair to impose a condition requiring financial compensation be paid by the mine to these property owners to reflect the impairment to the valuation and saleability of these properties.

Community Concern

It is our view that the stress and uncertainty posed by this project is adversely impacting individuals, families and the community. This area always had a strong sense of community, and this has already been severely eroded by this mine. We are concerned that this expansion will destroy what is left of the community, and force individuals to leave the area they call home. We hope to show our grandchildren the farming lifestyle and sense of community that our children were raised in, and fear that we will not be able to do this should this expansion proceed.

Increased traffic (resulting from mine workers, services to the mine, deliveries, heavy and wide loads etc) poses a significant threat on our rural roads. These roads have not been designed for this volume or type of traffic. Further, it is already common to see workers asleep in their vehicles on the side of the road, however this practice causes concern to local residents, and is an unsafe practice on these roads.

Environmental Impact and Rehabilitation

There is global movement away from coal toward cleaner energy sources. In light of this, we question a decision to approve further mining activity at the expense of agricultural land. While recognising the challenges of environmental and economic forecasting, it must also be questionable whether a market will exist for the coal extracted by the time the mine reaches its conclusion. We respectfully suggest that this eventuality needs to be planned for now, through stringent financial, environmental and "make-good" approval conditions for the mine. Recognising that a company in financial distress will not be able to fund restoration and rehabilitation projects, we urge you to take steps now to safeguard this environment for future generations. We believe it should be incumbent on the mine to restore the land to its current profile, and that the current proposal for an unremediated void is woefully inadequate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and for your consideration of our concerns.

Yours Sincerely,

D. E. Campbell
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