

10 March 2021

Office of the Independent Planning Commission
NSW Level 3, 201 Elizabeth St
Sydney NSW 2000
Attention: **Prof. Snow Barlow**

RE: MANGOOLA CONTINUED OPERATIONS PROJECT

I write this letter in support of the above-mentioned project that is before the Independent Planning Commission.

Mangoola Coal Mine has had a great working relationship with the community and its stakeholders. The employees at Mangoola are predominantly from the local area and the socio and economic benefits to the community and local business from that alone is of great significance to us in this Shire.

Mangoola Coal opened an invitation for Council to attend their operation for an information and a question session for councillors and staff. Those that took up the invitation also undertook a tour of the Mine. I was one of 5 (4x Councillors and 1x Staff) that took that opportunity to attend and have concerns and questions addressed, whilst visually taking in what impact the operation will have and what plans are in place to mitigate any issues.

In relation to Mangoola's current Rehabilitation work they undertaken already; they have certainly set a benchmark for Mining Rehabilitation in our area.

As this is an existing operation, the expansion I believe is of benefit to the community. I do understand and take on notice those concerns raised by residents affected and ask that Mangoola undertake the measures stated in their application and specifically to continue to consult those directly affected residents.

I note to the IPC that as a Councillor the first communication I had regarding Council's decision to oppose the Project, was from the IPC transcript and related media. I have since spoken to several Councillors who were in the same position. I had since had a meeting with the General Manager who advised "Council does not oppose the project, though oppose elements of the project".

I note the minutes dated 22 December 2020 state:

***{12.1 STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
196 RESOLVED on the motion of Crs Rush and Scholes***

that:

- 1. Council establish a State Significant Development Standing Committee with the function of providing advice to Council on state significant development, prepare submissions and responses relating to state significant development in the Muswellbrook Shire and such further functions as may be delegated to it from time to time.*
- 2. For the purposes of such Committee:*

a. the Committee be constituted by the:

- i. Council Spokesperson on Infrastructure, Development Assessment and Regulation (as Chair);*
- ii. Council Spokesperson on Innovation, Land use Planning, Heritage and Events;*
- iii. Council Spokesperson on Utilities and Sustainability;*
- iv. General Manager; and*
- v. Such further Staff officers as the General Manager may appoint.*

b. the Committee meet at such times and at such places as it may determine; and c. the Committee may invite such persons to participate in its processes as it may determine most efficiently and effectively allow it to discharge its functions.}

and whilst unfortunately due to medical reasons I was absent from this meeting, the resolution is very ambiguous and states; “providing advice” and also “prepare submissions and responses”, nothing in relation to “submitting” on behalf of Council. In previous similar sub committees the function of “advice” and “response”, the process would then be that the recommendation then come before Council to endorse. This being a State Significant, this should have been a given in the process. It would have also allowed for Public Participation. None of this of which did occur.

I also note that between receiving Dr Cherie McCulloughs report on the 24th November 2020, on which Council relays on in our response, and the decision to construct the subcommittee, there have been two Council Meetings including an Extra-Ordinary Meeting in February, both of which Councillors were not advised of the position nor was it an agenda item, that would have enabled the democratic process to enable us to undertake our fiduciary requirements to vote on.

Therefore, I am in support of the ongoing operation of MANGOOLA OPERATIONS PROJECT. Clearly there is a fragmentation in Councils communication to Councillors, especially in this instance, something I am sure will be fixed. I am in the support of the whole of Council having an equal responsibility in the decision-making process, not just a select few. One of the strengths of Council is the collective experience of all Councillors.

I appreciate the time of the panel to consider this submission.

Regards

Cr Steve Reynolds