



MUSWELLBROOK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY INC.

7TH JULY, 2022

PRESENTATION TO IPC PUBLIC HEARING

MOUNT PLEASANT OPTIMISATION PROJECT SSD 10418

PRESENTED BY CHAMBER PRESIDENT – MIKE KELLY

Good afternoon commissioners and thank you for the opportunity to address this hearing.

On behalf of our 200 member businesses, the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry supports the Optimisation of MACH Energy Australia's, Mount Pleasant Operation to 2048.

Our Chamber has supported the Mount Pleasant Operation with submissions to government since the beginning of the project which was approved in 1999.

We supported Mod 1. in 2011, Mod 2. in 2017 & Mod 3. in 2018.

The purchase of the project by MACH Energy Aust., in 2016, was welcomed by local businesses. The commencement of construction and the production of 'first coal' in December 2018 brought immediate and significant economic benefits. We have seen a workforce of around 380 operational people and a construction workforce of up to 350 people over the last six (6) years. We have also seen growth in local businesses supplying, labour, materials and services to MACH and their major contractors on site and in all business sectors including accommodation, retail, hospitality, consulting, trades, engineering and professional services.

The Chamber will make a written submission to the IPC with more detail of the benefits seen to date and the expected benefits provided by Optimisation Project.

Today, I would like to use the limited time available to make some points and views that are held by the Chamber on behalf of Muswellbrook Business and more broadly in the Muswellbrook community.

1. The Muswellbrook economy is largely dependent on the mining, processing and transport of coal to provide employment and prosperity.
2. The economic benefits from local mining are spread throughout the Hunter Region, the State & the Country.
3. The cessation of mining at Muswellbrook Coal this year and the planned closure of Mt. Arthur Coal in 2030 as well as the closure of Liddell Power Station in 2023 and Bayswater Power Station in the 2030's is of great concern to local businesses.

4. Despite the move to a decarbonized economy there is little evidence of the labour-intensive, export industries that could match the economic inputs of coal in the short to medium term.
5. The NSW Minerals Council forecasts global demand for high-quality, low-cost Hunter Valley Coal out to 2050.
6. The professed negative impacts of mining on livability and other industries is not supported by the continuing diversity of the Hunter Economy and the demand for housing in Muswellbrook and the Upper Hunter generally.
7. Over the last six (6) years MACH Energy, along with other major companies, has made substantial cash and 'in-kind' contributions to Muswellbrook sporting clubs and community service organisations. Our Chamber has been able to support local businesses of all types with sponsorship from MACH. Our Business Awards Program and Making Muswellbrook Program have their ongoing support. During the Covid pandemic MACH joined with others to sponsor Locals Supporting Locals & Buy Local Campaigns as well as Covid Recovery Workshops. These programs benefitted a wide range of businesses, but especially those in the tourism, hospitality and retail sectors.
8. MACH Energy Australia is a responsible corporate citizen and is seen as an integral part of the Muswellbrook community.

The Chamber will leave the environmental assessment of SSD10418 to those expert in that field. We would however record our observation that over the last twenty (20) years Mining Companies in the Upper Hunter have taken a more holistic approach to their developments with stronger community engagement, the recognition of the transitioning economy and after mining land use. MACH Energy Mount Pleasant has demonstrated their commitment to this approach and the Chamber is confident MACH will maintain it with the Optimisation Project.

We commend the Project to the IPC and look forward to your favourable determination.

Thank you

Mike Kelly

President MCCI