



Alice Clark
Chairperson
Independent Planning Commission
Suite 15.02, 135 King St,
Sydney NSW 2000

20th July, 2022

Dear Commissioner,

RE - MOUNT PLEASANT OPTIMISATION PROJECT SSD 10418

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 sectors including accommodation, retail, hospitality, consulting, trades, engineering and professional services.

The Mt.Pleasant Optimisation Project offers the continuation and growth of these economic benefits. In particular, we sight the benefits identified in the NSW DPIE Report which includes -

- Continued direct employment of an average of 600 people at the mine.
- Over 1500 direct & indirect jobs in NSW with an estimated 1100 of those jobs in the Hunter Region.
- Direct capital investment of \$950 million in the project.
- \$1.4 billion (NPV) net contribution to gross State product.
- Indexed Planning Agreement contributions of \$20 million to Muswellbrook Shire Council and \$6 million to Upper Hunter Shire Council toward community enhancement projects.

These economic inputs will have a substantial positive impact on the Muswellbrook economy as well as the NSW and National economies.

On behalf of Muswellbrook Business, the Chamber makes the following points of view that we believe are broadly held in the Muswellbrook community and based on the Chamber's thirty (30) years of experience and engagement.

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 strong 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 are 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, has made substantial cash and 'in-kind' contributions to local sporting clubs, community service organisations, community events and special needs and interest groups. Since 2017, 35 local organisations have received over \$750,000. MACH also took over the Aboriginal Community Development Fund which was established by Rio Tinto in 2005. This fund has contributed over \$4 million to education, cultural and economic development programs for indigenous people in Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter Shires. In 2022 MACH Energy's contribution to the ACDF will be in excess of \$700,000.
8. Our Chamber has been able to support 200 local businesses of all types with sponsorship from MACH. Our Business Awards Program and Making Muswellbrook Program have their ongoing support which allows the Chamber to recognize and promote excellence in all types of businesses. MACH management personnel attend our monthly breakfasts and engage with local business to support local procurement.
9. 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 experts 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 beneficial after mining land use. MACH Energy Mount Pleasant has demonstrated their commitment to this approach and the Chamber trusts that, with realistic conditions of consent, the Optimisation Project can deliver economic benefits as well as environmental benefits.

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

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Michael J. Kelly.

Michael J. Kelly

President