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**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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**INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**RE: DENDROBIUM MINE EXTENSION PROJECT**

**COMMISSION:**           **STEPHEN O'CONNOR (CHAIR)**  
**JOHN HANN**

**COUNSEL ASSISTING:** **RICHARD BEASLEY SC**

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**DATE:**               **10.14 AM, THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2020**

MR S. O'CONNOR: Good morning, and welcome to day 2 of the Independent Planning Commission's electronic public hearing into the state significant development application for the Dendrobium Mine Extension Project. I'm Steve O'Connor, and I am chair of this panel. Joining me is deputy chair of commission and fellow commissioner, John Hann, on my left. We also are fortunate to have Richard Beasley SC as counsel assisting the commission at this public hearing. Richard is on my right. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we variously meet and pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and to the elders of other communities who may be participating today.

This state significant development application has been lodged by Illawarra Coal Proprietary Limited, a subsidiary of South32, the applicant. South32 owns and operates the Dendrobium Mine, an underground coal mine located eight kilometres west of Wollongong. The mine produces metallurgical coal for steel-making in Australia and overseas. South32 is seeking planning approval to extend the current mining operations to allow the extraction of an additional 78 million tons of run-of-mine coal from two new mining areas identified as area 5 and area 6. The proposal is also seeking to extend the life of the mine from 2030, as is currently approved, to December 2048.

The application has come to the commission for determination because it received more than 50 unique public objections. I note that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in its assessment report has recommended approval for the project. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has directed the commission to hold this public hearing. He asks the commission to determine the matter within 12 weeks of receiving the whole of government assessment report from the Department. In line with regulations introduced in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have moved this public hearing online, with registered speakers provided the opportunity to present to the panel by telephone or videoconferencing. In the interests of openness and transparency, we are livestreaming proceedings on the commission's website. A full transcript of the three days hearing will be published in the next few days.

We have many speakers on today's schedule. As such, I would ask everyone presenting to please try and keep to their allocated speaking time. As chair, I will enforce timekeeping rules to ensure everyone receives their fair share of time. However, I do reserve the right to allow extra time for the panel and counsel assisting to ask questions or to hear new information. I would encourage presenters to avoid repeating or restating submissions previously made in this application, noting that we will be particularly interested in hearing your views on the Department's assessment report and the recommended conditions of approval. Thank you. It's now time to call our first speaker.

MR J. HANN: The first speaker is Emma Rooksby. Ms Rooksby, are you there?

MS E. ROOKSBY: Yes. Can you hear me?

5 MR HANN: We can. We can see you and hear you, so please go ahead.

MS ROOKSBY: Okay. I will try and be as concise as I can. I'm here today speaking on behalf of the Illawarra Escarpment Alliance, or EscA. I would also like to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land. I'm on Dharawal  
10 land in the Wollongong area. Now, Illawarra Escarpment Alliance or EscA was established in 2019 as an alliance of local individuals and groups who are concerned to protect the cultural and environmental heritage of the Illawarra escarpment. EscA would like to object to this project in its current form and we would like to see some changes. I will go through them. We're concerned about the potential impact of the  
15 mine expansion on the Illawarra escarpment's environmental and cultural heritage.

We're concerned about its general contribution to global climate change and its specific contribution to local fire risk in areas to the west of the Illawarra escarpment. We're concerned about the negative impact of the project on local biodiversity and  
20 the challenges of offsetting those negative impacts, and we're concerned about the damage it may do to Aboriginal heritage in the area, which is where I will start. I'm not indigenous, but EscA includes several indigenous members and supporters, and we're aware that the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council has objected to the project. The project area has been found to contain many culturally significant items,  
25 and it seems that risk of damage through subsidence to them really needs to be taken seriously.

I think the last subsidence report for other areas where this mine is operating appear to have underestimated the extent of subsidence, and if the local Aboriginal  
30 community continues to have concerns, I think they should be fully consulted and their concerns heard and responded to. This, judging from the objection, hasn't happened to their satisfaction yet. I will move on to climate change. I have a number of points here about the impacts of climate change, but I'm not going to go through them in detail, because I think the simple point here is we all know climate  
35 change is happening. It's getting – its impacts are getting worse, and they have resulted in things such as contributing to the catastrophic bushfire season last summer.

Now, we appreciate that the scope 3 emissions are not counted at the point of  
40 production under the Paris Agreement, but we would like to note that the project will contribute an estimated 235.9 million tons of carbon – that equivalent to global carbon emissions over the proposed life of the mine, which is substantial, given increasing numbers of commitments, including at the New South Wales State Government level to move to net zero carbon emissions by 2050. We also wanted to  
45 point out some direct impacts that may not have been taken into account. I couldn't see anything about this in the assessment report or in the proposal, which is around

the capacity of the coastal upland swamps in the mining area to provide carbon capture and storage ecosystem services.

5 I couldn't see any calculation of the project's impact on the upland swamp's carbon capture and storage services, nor on the potential for those swamps to release previously stored carbon dioxide and other gases into the atmosphere if they were to be substantially dried out by mining impacts. And just finally on that, I just wanted to say briefly that I know there's a strong economic case for this mine made in the documentation, and I would just like to say that the replacements for metallurgical coal for steelmaking are happening, though they're early in their development. The need for action on climate change is so urgent that we believe the project maybe shouldn't have such a long approval period, one that assumes that the status quo will continue until 2048, particularly in Australia, which is, you know, doing its carbon reduction and transition at the moment.

15 That 2048 year is only two years before the New South Wales Government's deadline for reaching net zero emissions. We would really prefer to see a coordinated plan for transitioning the Illawarra towards green jobs, including low emission and green steel made locally. It doesn't need to be an either/or, either mining jobs or no jobs at all. And I would also like to move specifically to local bushfire risk. I couldn't see anything about this, but – in either the assessment report – or not any detail in terms of the impact of bushfire risk. The project is adjacent to a portion of the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area, and potential impacts of the project should ..... should be – on the state conservation area should be considered.

25 That state conservation area probably would have been designated as a national park long ago if it weren't for mining rights in relation to portions of the area. We're concerned that drying impacts of the vegetation on the special areas west of the escarpment cliff line may increase local bushfire risk. So we came across some research that finds that when upland swamps dry out, they don't recover from fire and they may become more fire-prone. I will just briefly cite an open letter to the Premier of New South Wales by scientists published in May this year which made that point and called for a suspension of approval processes for any further planning applications or post-approval plans for mining in the schedule 1 special areas of the Sydney drinking water catchment.

30 I know this area – this affects Avon as well, but I think that that call is out there, and it's presented by a number of eminent scientists. So EscA's specific concern is the potential that dried out vegetation in the special areas would have for the Illawarra escarpment, as well as the City of Wollongong itself. I did some research in fire history, and there is a history of fires approaching the Illawarra Region from the west and damaging natural areas and property, such as the 1968 fire that burned down the escarpment from the west, where it was able to spread rapidly northwards after a wind change, and more recently the Hall Road fire in 2013 and the Morton fire at the beginning of this year at times moved westwards towards the Illawarra Region, though thankfully neither of them reached the escarpment itself.

The Illawarra was lucky not to be affected during the horrific fire season of 2019 and '20, but that luck is most unlikely to hold for the entire life of the project, and anything that dries out the vegetation to the west of the escarpment poses greater risk to the escarpment and the City of Wollongong. So I would just like to express that  
5 concern. I would also like to point out that the Illawarra escarpment is home to critically endangered Illawarra-Shoalhaven rainforest of the Sydney Basin Bioregion and deserves protection in its own right, and it currently is considered to function as a fire barrier. I would also like to note that the vegetation of the Woronora Plateau and the Illawarra escarpment is one of the last large unburnt natural areas in New  
10 South Wales and critical for local biodiversity conservation.

I will speak very briefly to the negative impact on biodiversity. I'm sure others will speak to this as well. But the proposed mining area which is adjacent to the escarpment, where EscA's concerns are focused, itself contains upland swamps listed  
15 as endangered ecological communities under federal and state legislation. Of 46 upland swamps in the project area, it's estimated 25 would suffer surface cracking as a result of mining, reducing their capacity to retain water after large rain events such as east coast lows. The assessment report states that this may lead to a drier swamp community or even turn the vegetation into woodland, ie, degrade or destroy areas of  
20 the endangered ecological community, and also of erosion and increased bushfire risk. EscA doesn't think that that's acceptable, the extent of damage, and we don't understand the proposal to offset the endangered ecological community. We can't see how it can be restored after damage and we're not aware of any areas that could be used to replace it.

25 So to conclude, we would like to see a revised project proposal that takes more seriously the Aboriginal community's concerns, that does less damage to endangered upland swamps, and that anticipates a timely transition to green steel in line with the New South Wales Government's commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.  
30 This can be partly achieved through a shorter approval period for the project, shorter longwall mines, and perhaps less destructive mining methods such as bord-and-pillar rather than longwall mining. Thank you.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Emma. You timed that very well, just right down to  
35 the last second. I just want to be clear on one point that I think you were making, and that relates to the upland swamps and their capacity to act as carbon sinks. So you're saying in your reading of the documentation, looking at the greenhouse gas accounting, that there was no allowance made – that if those swamps dry out and their carbon is released, that's not captured in the methodologies they used to  
40 identify the potential emissions.

MS ROOKSBY: I couldn't see it and I couldn't find anyone else who had seen that. That's not to say it's not there. I may have missed it. But I was – I couldn't find it  
45 in, yes, my effort.

MR O'CONNOR: Good. Thank you. Any questions on that?

MR HANN: No.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you for your time.

5 MR HANN: The next speaker is Bianca Perry. Ms Perry, go ahead.

MS B. PERRY: Thank you so much. Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that I speak to you from today, Dharawal Country. I'm the CEO of i3net,  
10 Illawarra Innovative Industry Network. We are the only network that is solely formed for industry-based companies working from the Illawarra. We have a very long and respected history in our region. Our organisation has been going for 18 years, and our purpose is to promote the collective capabilities of Illawarra industry. Our members represent some of the largest companies in Australia all the way  
15 through to the small and medium enterprises and supplier organisations, with over 10,000 employees.

So today I'm speaking on behalf of i3net and all of our members. I will now share with you why we support the extension of Dendrobium. Our support is due to jobs  
20 and the economic sustainability of the great Illawarra Region. This is possibly the most significant decision currently being ..... by the New South Wales Government affecting our region, due to the potential impact on Illawarra's industrial supply chain. The region's economic sustainability is incredibly sensitive to price changes, and ongoing supply of competitively priced metallurgical coal from the southern  
25 coalfields is essential feedstock for the Port Kembla Steelworks, thereby supporting local businesses, local jobs, and the economy, the local economic activity that comes as a result of this.

The strategic interdependencies between local supply and Illawarra steelmaking are  
30 significant. One will not be able to exist long without the other. Today we are respectfully asking you, the Independent Planning Commission, to consider the vulnerability of the local industrial supply chain while making your decision. I would like to share with you how much coal and coal supply impacts on the local businesses. We understand from BlueScope that the Port Kembla Steelworks  
35 consumes approximately three millions of tons of metallurgical coal per annum, which is over 90 per cent – over 90 per cent of that is sourced from the Illawarra Region. And one of the principal coal sources for BlueScope is, of course, South32.

Any interruption would jeopardise BlueScope's ongoing ability to produce steel and  
40 coke at Port Kembla, and in 2019 BlueScope said that without this supply, steelmaking would struggle to remain viable at Port Kembla. This statement is certainly alarming, not only for the Illawarra but for New South Wales and the sovereign capability of Australia. Due to the significant interdependencies, the decision regarding the extension of the Dendrobium Mine must consider the net  
45 contribution to the New South Wales community because of the complex network of coal, transport, iron smelting, steelmaking and steel fabrication businesses in the local region. And what does local business – local industry say? Well, for many

years, mining has been a major driver for the Illawarra community, and also manufacturing. It has created jobs, investment opportunities and other opportunities right across our great region.

5 Mining is one of the bedrocks of the Illawarra economy, and it is likely to be so for years to come. Over time, we may certainly see new technological changes in manufacturing technologies and techniques, such as in steelmaking, but those are a long way off yet, and particularly for commercial use. So for the foreseeable future, steelmakers will continue to require the high quality metallurgical coal such as is  
10 produced by South32's metallurgical coal. Our local businesses in the Illawarra Region are watching the outcome of this decision very, very closely. In July of this year we held an event where South32 spoke. That event sold out despite COVID. We also held an event in November where BlueScope spoke; that event also sold out. We held an event in August which spoke about opportunities in the hydrogen  
15 space; that also sold out. Illawarra industry is very engaged and very motivated in this space.

The outcome of this decision is significant for our region and would be devastating for the 500-plus local manufacturing businesses and the expanded fallout from there.  
20 Looking forward, the great news is that industry is looking at alternative steelmaking technologies, but as I mentioned before, this is a long way off. For many years, mining has been a major driver for the Illawarra community. Over time we are seeing and we will see new technology that changes manufacturing techniques such as in steelmaking. As I mentioned, the commercial use at the scale that is required,  
25 that is a long way off yet.

In the meantime, we need steel, and we should be making our own steel. We should be using Australian steel in Australian infrastructure processes. In fact, the New South Wales Government stated that the use of local steel and other building  
30 materials will be prioritised as part of the New South Wales Government's plan to create renewable energy zones in regional areas, and we're currently importing more than 86,000 tons of steel that form the foundations of critical energy infrastructure, including some finished manufacturing goods.

35 This is not good enough. We need our own local supply chain, our local manufacturers and local jobs. We have great capability in the Illawarra Region. Industry and innovation is in our region's DNA, and manufacturing is not only a significant part of our local heritage, but it is a sector that can flourish due to the local expertise that we do have here. And to close, wouldn't it be wonderful in the  
40 future if the blades of wind turbines and other renewable energy infrastructure were made from Illawarra coal and Illawarra steel? And that can only continue if we continue to source locally from mines located in the Illawarra Region. Thank you for your time.

45 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Bianca. I will just see if there's any questions. John? No. Richard? No. Thanks for your presentation. Next speaker is Gary

Schoer from the National Parks Association Southern Sydney Branch. Please go ahead, sir.

5 MR G. SCHOER: Thank you very much. National Parks Association Southern Sydney Branch's position on the future use of water catchment lands. Our vision is to ensure that all remaining substantial tracts of natural lands in the region are added to the national parks estate or given the highest possible zoning protection status. Our policy is that we believe that the water catchment lands should be mining-free and be designated as nature reserve under the National Parks Act, reflecting the very  
10 high nature conservation values that are especially supported in such reserves, while excluding all potentially damaging human activities within the catchment.

All the documentation by dedicated state and federal conservation agencies within this report allude to support for the high environmental values within the catchment  
15 and point to predicted continuing significant environmental impact should this mining expansion recommendation be approved. The history of government support of mining in an unsuitable area does not justify continuing permissions of the scale and type foreshadowed. Our branch asks that the commissioners gain some scientific and moral direction in assessing this issue by heeding the key management  
20 objectives promulgated by the only government department to formally object to this proposal, Water New South Wales, and Water New South Wales' nine strategic management objectives guiding as principles for managing mining and gas impacts in drinking water catchments.

25 The goal below should have provided a guide as to how the New South Wales Government developed its much-flawed report, namely the goal is to maintain ecosystem integrity, including threatened plant and animal species, endangered populations, endangered ecological communities and other natural values. The science-based objectives of Water New South Wales and other conservation  
30 authorities within DPIE have effectively been marginalised and ignored in this proposal. NPA looks to the independent wisdom of this commission to allow their objections to be truly heard.

35 So NPA joins with other submitting branches and NPA New South Wales in rejecting the proposal to expand longwall mining to areas 5 and 6 of Dendrobium's operation. In so rejecting the proposal, we also submit four points. Number 1, that our economy should be transitioning away from carbon-based fuels as a serious commitment to reducing greenhouse gases and reducing the impacts of anthropogenic global warming. Secondly, this particular proposal endangers our  
40 precious drinking water, both through quantitative loss and compromising of quality during the project and well beyond.

Thirdly, this particular proposal endangers important ecosystems and the species within, especially but not limited the endangered Sydney coastal upland swamps that  
45 are crucial to the protection of our water supply. And lastly, with the accelerating impacts of climate change and observed impacts of, for example, associated megafires on ecosystems and their composite animals and plants, it is beholden on

governments to place ecosystem conservation top and centre of its consideration of developments likely to harm the environment. This has not been the case in this coal extraction maximising proposal. What natural areas we still have intact must be managed to stay intact.

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The drinking water catchments, by their very name, special areas, signal that a special cooperative arrangement between NPWS – that was to manage terrestrial ecosystems – and Sydney Water at the time, managing the water and water infrastructure, would be a mechanism to continue this newfound enthusiasm for better managing our natural assets in a more integrated manner. We all grew up knowing that we could be fined zillions if we dared place an ill-judged foot into these special places, or indeed peed against a tree while there. But there were exceptions to this value-signalling naming of these lands. Longwall mining was the high-tech super-industrial saviour of the struggling smaller bord-and-pillar enterprises.

15

Companies like BHP, Peabody and South32 managed to partner with many – with successive New South Wales governments to allow a world exclusive to commence, persist and grow: major coalmining operations in a drinking water catchment. In South32’s case, their sustainability policy includes promotion of, and I quote, “enduring environmental benefits”. That is clearly not being acted out in this 27-year maximum coal output scenario that fails to avoid damage to the many endangered coastal upland swamps in the area.

If the commissioners believe that the hundreds of submissions by coal workers about perceived threats to their employment is unchallengeable proof that this proposal is in the public interest, we would ask the commissioners to appreciate that 10,000 signatories to a petition opposing Peabody’s plans to mine under the pondage at Woronora were collected not in a labour stronghold but in the conservative belts of seats in Sutherland Shire. There, water security for the shire was the issue that ensured most people approached signed it. And I was a witness to this at Gynea Fair. I was warned that these conservative people would not sign such a thing, but they rarely resisted signing.

Likewise, multiple groups in Illawarra and Southern Sydney have mobilised on the back of CSG threats and other longwall proposals to advocate for the water and the natural world as this behemoth proceeds with the giant machines that leave water security, quality and many threatened parts of the ecosystem even more threatened, even with asserted government support. NPA asks that you as commissioners do not merely nod to this seemingly simple government recommendation, but make your own truly independent assessment as befits your title. A number of PACs in the wider area have already demonstrated this independence and principled consideration of valid and significant scientific arguments by rejecting destructive coalmine extension proposals.

Commissioners, you are effectively being hoodwinked to ignore the valid arguments of groups like Water New South Wales and the biodiversity arms of the Department of Environment and the broader interests of the general public if you approve this

proposal. In the record of the meeting between South32 and the IPC, the proponents allude to the position of DPIE, and I quote, that “has acknowledged the major economic and social benefits for the region and New South Wales, and that residual impacts are effectively minimised, managed and compensated”.

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The use of the terms “residual” and “effectively minimised” puts environmental biotic and water impacts in a box of its own, full of nothing much, that marginalises the strong science-based opinions to the contrary by government authorities responsible for biodiversity and water conservation within this super-ministry, overshadowed by the probably hard-fought executive recommendation by DPIE that has effectively marginalised the in-house expertise. It behoves the commissioners to be guided scientifically by these contributors and not the final conclusion and recommendation of the summarising wordsmiths, whoever they were.

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When the impacts of longwall mining started to be known to the general public through hard-gained access to the impacted areas by members of various mining companies’ community consultative committees and some members of the general public – and I was one, representing NPA – it soon became clear that impacts were not minimal and certainly not negligible. If the commissioners have not yet read the total reasons why the Sydney Basin coastal upland swamps were declared a threatened ecological community under the then-Threatened Species legislation, I recommend they do so. And under the same legislation, the declaration of the “Alteration of habitat following subsidence due to longwall mining” as a threatening ecological process negates South32’s assertion that the longwall mining has a mere residual impact. Such declarations are made by a group of highly qualified scientists after extensive research and time and feedback from the wider community.

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The original Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 alluded to the responsibility of the State’s environment department, and I quote, “to develop strategies for mitigating or managing this threatening process on our wildlife”. Are the commissioners convinced that this proposal achieves this goal? The commissioners need to ask, “How do we know that the survivability of impacted animals for the endangered Sydney coastal upland swamps has been fully considered under this maximum yield mine design model?” After all, South32 asserts that, “One of our key approaches is to avoid impacts” – and that’s their quote. This goal is actually a nonsense statement when it failed to accept that the indicative alternative mining plan which had developed avoiding impacts to upland swamps was summarily rejected as uneconomical. You have heard economic arguments to the contrary.

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Offsetting issues: there is also too little detail in what the purchased offset property that a so-called stewardship site can achieve in reducing the overall impacts in this proposed expansion. The commissioners should critically address this issue. NPA and many other environment groups reject the concept of offsetting, for the net effect is not to improve the conservation status of ecosystems allowed to be compromised by legally identified threatening processes in particular. The claims of the value of offsetting are grossly exaggerated and misleading.

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Despite providing numerical weightings for offsetting impacts on particular species to help determine what type of offset is required, there is no guarantee that there will be like for like, that the offset will be in the same bioregion, that the offset will be on land that has resilience of a scale and long-term sustainability in a setting beyond the network of swamps to be impacted in this area. This is not offsetting. This is destruction at any cost. The net area of threatened and other communities will go backwards under this scheme of convenience. That is not a substitute for ethical decision-making that puts some real value on keeping fast-disappearing ecosystems intact. According to DPIE, the project would provide major economic and social benefits for Wollongong and its surrounding region and New South Wales. The Department considers that South32 has designed the project in a manner, and I quote:

...that achieves a good balance between maximising the recovery of a coal resource of state significance and minimising the potential impacts on the water resource, biodiversity values and other environmental values of the metropolitan special area.

There is no doubt the Department can assert it maximised the recovery of a coal resource. The company provided an indicative plan, as I mentioned, to avoid undermining upland swamps, but it basically says this is uneconomical. We have not found a critical analysis of this assertion. We wish to advise the commissioners that many groups assessed a similar commission to this, which was a PAC, when BHP announced withdrawal of a proposal to expand mining further into the Bulli Seam into the eastern domain of its holdings – that was 10 years ago – and undermining many upland swamps.

After the PAC was highly critical of the probable significant damage to upland swamps and was not adequately justified, the assertion by BHP that rejection would lead to a major economic consequence was not realised. Indeed, it was implied that effectively the sky would fall in. The commissioners saw beyond that assertion and rejected the proposal. With no mining under this area, a new Dharawal National Park was presented and announced several times by several MPs about how this was a great win for the environment and the social good of the people who stood up for important natural areas.

Similarly, the best use for areas 5 and 6 is for water conservation and gazettal as nature reserve to conserve the very high environmental values. What makes this balance achieved in this national park any worse than the one being spruiked here to maximise coal output? And it is noteworthy that there was a highly valuing of the social good for those many citizens that spoke the truth about values beyond the economic. Water New South Wales' assessment of the potential loss of water flows in this catchment does not augur well for koalas and other water-dependent animals in the future predicted climate change regime of reduced flows for eastern Australia together with cumulative impacts of mining. And I quote:

*In a dry year, surface water may reduce the yield of Avon Reservoir by 3.9 per cent, Pheasants Nest Weir Catchment by 2.7 per cent, and a prediction of 100 per cent reduction in stream flow –*

5 that's in those class 1 and 2 streams –

*to Avon Reservoir, and 67 per cent reduction in stream flows to Pheasants Nest Weir from that portion of the catchment directly overflowing area 5 in a dry year.*

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Effectively minimise impacts indeed. It is just not the loss of water for animal drinking that has concerned some of the contributors to the DPIE report, BCD, Water New South Wales and IESC. They summarise:

15

*While direct clearing of vegetation is small, the likelihood of subsidence over a much more extensive area is high, and this is predicted to have a significant impact on multiple threatened coastal upland swamps and other water-dependent ecosystems and threatened species. Yet there is negligible reference in this DPIE study about the potential of newer cumulative impacts such as longwall mining combined with climate change that threaten both the upland swamp EEC and other communities. Of some highlighted concern was how drying of swamps will make them less resilient to increased intensity and frequency of fires.*

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And we've seen that borne out in Professor Keith's presentation. There is no determination within this study to help ensure the swamps do not dry out, and when they do, the habitat of at least 12 threatened and endangered animals will be lost. I have only seen photos of the endangered giant dragonfly, a species whose ancestors would have been part of a Jurassic swamp, but soon I suspect I may be witness to its demise. This is part of the extinction crisis we are facing in this world. What cost can one place on such a loss? Decisions here will determine if we truly value keeping such species as the giant dragonfly.

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MR O'CONNOR: Gary, you need to wrap up now, please.

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MR SCHOER: Yes. And those losses will be duplicated in threatened ecosystems that will surely be impacted if inappropriate uses of our water catchment lands are allowed to continue unchecked.

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MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Gary, for that very detailed submission. I will just see if we have any questions.

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MR HANN: Gary, sorry to ask you to repeat something you said, but did you say that it's your association's policy that all the land in the Sydney Water Catchment should be categorised as a nature reserve under the National Parks and Wildlife Act?

MR SCHOER: That's correct. The - - -

MR HANN: Is that because of the conservation value of the land - - -

MR SCHOER: Yes.

5 MR HANN: - - - the ecological and biodiversity value, or is that to protect the water reserve?

MR SCHOER: Extremely – yes – extremely high conservation values due to the fact that the many other cumulative impacts that have affected places like the Royal  
10 National Park and created 17 local extinctions, that degree of impact has not occurred in the overall water catchments, except of course the known damage to the upland swamps. But overall, it's a fairly pristine ecosystem that forms an integral part of the connectivity between all the reserves of southern Sydney, the Illawarra escarpment, Sydney Water lands, etcetera. So that's the level it should be at.

15 MR HANN: All right. Thank you.

MR O'CONNOR: Thanks again, Gary, for your presentation.

20 MR HANN: Next speaker is Craig Perritt. Mr Perritt. Mr Perritt, can you hear me? You might need to put your mic on.

MR C. PERRITT: Yes. Can you hear me and can you see me?

25 MR HANN: Yes. Go ahead, please.

MR PERRITT: Thank you. I would like to give my respect to the traditional owners of the Dharawal land from which I speak. As noted by other submitters, Water New South Wales is opposing the extension. This suggests that the risk must  
30 be serious, and I would like to ask whether DPIE can explain whether they have a plan to deal with catastrophic failure of either the dam or the catchment. Is there a disaster recovery plan, and if so, can it be tabled, please? What I've observed in this process and previous processes is it highlights Australia's most endangered species: someone who speaks for the public interest even if it's against their own. Self-  
35 interest passionately argued is not the same as the public good.

I work in the supply chain that we're talking about. I understand the importance of jobs, but jobs have context, and my job is dwarfed by the magnitude of the risk that experts, including Water New South Wales, have identified. In general, I've  
40 observed through these proceedings that those objecting generally don't want the steelworks to close. I don't think that's the issue. In fact, it is part of our national security and a critical part of our infrastructure for sustainable energy production. The issue seems to be that the proponents tend to amplify the revenue and discount the environmental value when it should be the other way around.

45 This pattern of amplifying short-term benefit and discounting broader environmental and long-term value is why the Earth has turned on us with climate change. What

I've also observed is that we like to pretend, since it's easier than dealing with the reality – we pretend that mining companies diligently manage and monitor their compliance to conditions, that the projected damage equates to the actual damage, and that government agencies meet their obligations to monitor and enforce  
5 compliance to mining conditions. The evidence against this is overwhelming, as experts have and will show throughout these proceedings, but we struggle with hard decisions. We accept and even welcome loaded business cases. And what I mean by a loaded business case, the business case that says, “What’s the easiest way for my business to do what it has always done, even if that’s damaging?”

10 And it comes back to this concept that has been raised a number of times where the Illawarra is built on coalmining, always has, always will be. .... the way things are. And I would suggest that the question that DPIE should be requiring of the proponents is not, “What’s the easiest way for my business to do what it has always  
15 done,” but, “What sourcing strategy maintains steel viability while minimising damage to our most precious and precarious asset?” I really believe that this problem is solvable if the Government demanded it of the proponents. And my last question is, given the damage the proposed mine design anticipates, can the Department of Planning explain why it isn’t demanding that that question is  
20 answered, and answered transparently? Thank you.

MR O’CONNOR: Thank you, Craig. Any questions? No. Thank you for your presentation, Craig. Next speaker, please.

25 MR HANN: Next speaker is Lena Huda. Ms Huda, can you hear me?

MS L. HUDA: Yes. Sorry, I just unmuted myself.

30 MR HANN: Please go ahead.

MS HUDA: Yes. I have moved to this beautiful area near Wollongong with my Aussie husband and our small kids just a year ago. When we arrived, there was a water shortage ..... the heavy smoke from bushfires most of the summer. Many  
35 Australians have asked me, in the bushfire summer when I first arrived here, if I enjoyed Australia. I said that was a hard question, because sitting in my smoky house with my kids and avoiding going outside because of hazardous air quality level for weeks is not what I pictured it to be like to live in Australia. I’m objecting to this proposal because I want that my children and their children can grow up in an  
40 Australia where breathing healthy air in summer is still deemed to be normal, not the exception.

When I heard that New South Wales was considering coalmining under our water catchment, I was stunned. After this summer’s experience, I would have guessed that projects that increase water shortages and increase bushfires would surely find it  
45 hard to get government support. So what do we know about this project? Mining-induced accidents will damage the water ..... and swamps that feed our drinking

water reservoirs. De-watering of further forest, bushland and swamps above the mining will make the area more prone to bushfires.

5 From my experience, I know that we have to be very careful with projects that can  
have an impact on water supply if they go wrong. I grew up in a small town in  
Germany where 10 K away from my house, intermediate radioactive waste was  
stored in a former salt mine. The idea was to store the waste there in a safe manner  
for the next one million years, as research suggested the mine would be safe forever.  
10 In '72, officials claimed that ingress of water can be ruled out with a probability  
bordering on certainty. Unfortunately, only two decades later, water started to get  
into the mine, and now it's at risk of collapsing and at risk of polluting the  
groundwater.

15 So in 2013, it has been decided that the nuclear waste will be taken out of the mine at  
taxpayers' cost, at the moment expected to be A\$5 billion. .... water is precious.  
What an extraordinarily expensive mistake made by politicians 50 years ago. Now  
here the mining will take place in the special area of the Greater Sydney Water  
Catchment, areas that forbid public access because of their sensitivity and strategic  
importance. This project will lead to a loss of water. Water New South Wales is  
20 concerned that any increase in heavy metals will have a negative effect on water  
quality. Water New South Wales says in their latest annual report that the impacts of  
underground coalmining are complex and difficult to quantify.

25 If something goes wrong, this can affect the water supply of five million people. So  
one of the most disturbing things I found out is that Water New South Wales, a state-  
owned corporation looking after our water supply, is strongly opposed against this  
project. How come we're even discussing this project here today? The Department  
of Planning have acknowledged the damage that the expansion will cause, and yet  
still supports the expansion. Do we seriously think a strong opposition by Water  
30 New South Wales is something we just see as one opinion and consider this against  
the interests of private mining corporations? I don't think this proposal .... and I  
think you will find it hard to explain .... why this proposal even came so far. Sydney  
is the only city in the world that allows longwall mining in a publicly-owned water  
catchment. Why?

35 We all know that the future lies in renewable energy and not in coal, so just .... and  
mining are not the jobs of the future. It's a massive opportunity for Australia to  
create jobs, green jobs. Countries like Germany are very keen to invest in Australia  
as a trading partner for green hydrogen, because there are not many places in the  
40 world with abundance of solar and wind power, skilled workers, and stable  
investment conditions. Green steel made with hydrogen instead of coal is already  
being made in some German steelworks that are preparing for a ban of coal for  
steelmaking from 2050. Green steelmaking in Australia has a natural competitive  
advantage, because we have more sun here. Steel is also easier to transport than  
45 hydrogen. What an opportunity for the steelworkers here in Port Kembla. I hope  
that you look at the public interest and determine your decision is that you will reject  
this proposal.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Lena, for that presentation. Any questions, John or Richard? No. Thanks for your time this morning.

MR HANN: Next speaker is Jamie Eastwood. Mr Eastwood.

5

MR J. EASTWOOD: Yes. Good morning, commissioners. Thanks for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Dendrobium Mine Extension Project. My name is Jamie Eastwood, and I'm 60 years old, and I've lived in the Wollongong area all my life. Currently I live in East Corrimal with my wife Julie, and I have  
10 three sons, Brenton, Josh and Hayden. Two of my sons have worked in the mining industry, and one is still employed Dendrobium with IMC as a mining supervisor. I have worked at IMC for 17 years. I came into the industry as an operator, and I'm now a mining supervisor supervising up to 24 people on weekday afternoon shift. My crew is made up of a range of skillsets and ages, and we all help each other out  
15 ..... Prior to this I worked in an earthmoving company in Illawarra, which was also – indirectly benefited from the mine.

It won't be the first time you've heard this, but growing up in the Wollongong area, the area is known for coalmining and steel working. These industries present the  
20 opportunities to young people to get a job. These industries are known for hard work and to ensure the output is there and to ensure everyone stays safe and well. I'm speaking today to show my support for the Dendrobium Mine Extension Project. I'm supporting the continuation of the mining operation, as we currently employ around 400 people at the Dendrobium Mine site alone. .... through the Illawarra area  
25 for businesses big and small that we deal with on a daily basis is also enormous. South32 works hard to give back to the community through community partnership programs, community investment like participating in local events and opportunities. We also ..... promote fundraising for good causes.

30 Everyone gets together to support a good cause for those in need. Just last month, there were a few Movember teams around our sites, and South32 was contributing to all employee teams by matching all their donations. This is just one small example of how we make positive impacts. I now know that we raised almost \$30,000 across the business. We have also provided a lot of investment to the community through  
35 sponsoring of local supporting teams promoting good health and teamwork. Now, support is also recognised all over the area, and we support other business through our supply opportunities and goods and services. I know some local businesses who would really suffer if Dendrobium wasn't there to supply their goods and services to. .... the young men and women who we work with or employ and are given a bright  
40 and prosperous future for themselves and for their families. I would like to thank you for your time.

MR O'CONNOR: Thanks, Jamie, for your presentation. Any questions, John? No.

45 MR HANN: Not from me.

MR O'CONNOR: Richard?

MR R. BEASLEY: No.

MR O'CONNOR: Thanks again. Next speaker.

5 MR HANN: Next speaker is Tim Flannery. Mr Flannery.

MR T. FLANNERY: Thank you very much, committee members, for hearing me today. I'm calling in from Thirroul in Dharawal country, and I want to speak against the development of the Dendrobium Mine. My concerns are really around the  
10 climate impacts of the extending coalmining in Australia. And the key thing that I'm concerned about is the fact that we are approaching some climatic tipping points which represent a real extreme risk for us. The science behind all of this is published in a paper in Nature, the world's leading science journal, in April this year by Tim Lenton and others, and in that paper they lay out the evidence that we are very, very  
15 close to triggering some very serious deteriorations in the climate system, which include the destruction of the arctic ice, so the Arctic Sea; the destabilisation of the Greenland icecap; the destabilisation of the oceanic circulation system; and the drying out of the Amazon rainforest that could lead to a vast amount of carbon getting into the atmosphere, along with the thawing of the Earth's permafrost.

20 They make the point that if we're to have a high chance or a chance, at least, of avoiding those tipping points, we need to stabilise Earth's temperature at about one-and-a-half degrees about the preindustrial average. That is going to require substantial cuts in our carbon emissions. The extent of those cuts required was  
25 outlined in a United Nations report released today, and that report is – I will just get the name of it for you – that report, the production gap report, argues that we need to cut our emissions by six per cent per year if we're to achieve that outcome. So rather than extending our coalmining and our other fossil fuel use, we need to be cutting six per cent year every year between now and 2020 to keep ourselves safe from these  
30 dangerous tipping points. I won't go into detail about - - -

MR O'CONNOR: All right. I think we're going to come back to Mr Flannery when we can get him back, and we will go to Alison Smith, if she's there at the moment.

35 MR FLANNERY: - - - industries and those employed in them. I care for them deeply.

MR O'CONNOR: Mr Flannery - - -

40 MR FLANNERY: But there are better ways. Yes?

MR O'CONNOR: Sorry, Mr Flannery?

45 MR FLANNERY: Yes, speaking.

MR O'CONNOR: Can you hear me? We lost you. We lost you for about a minute.

MR FLANNERY: Sorry.

MR O'CONNOR: So we will – don't worry – we will start the – we will give you back that time.

5

MR FLANNERY: Thank you.

MR O'CONNOR: But you had only just sort of wrapped up on the recent UN report when the screen froze.

10

MR FLANNERY: Thank you very much. Look, I was just saying I don't want to outline in any detail the impacts of crossing these tipping points for Australia, but they include things like increasing and inevitable damage to the Great Barrier Reef, more megafires of the kind we saw last summer, longer, hotter, more damaging heatwaves, damage to coastal infrastructure through rising sea levels, and so forth, so there's - - -

15

MR O'CONNOR: A lot of that – a lot of that was covered in the IPCC report in about 2014, which had a chapter on Australasia which made various predictions which seem to be coming true.

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MR FLANNERY: Indeed.

MR O'CONNOR: Yes.

25

MR FLANNERY: This is what we're seeing. We're getting closer to those tipping points, and scientists like myself are getting concerned that if we cross them we will be opening a door to a really much impoverished future. I just wanted to add to that that I am really concerned also about my community here in the Illawarra. Those jobs are very, very important, and the right decisions need to be made by our industries if we're to see those jobs go forward into the future. Coalmining is not going to be the future. We can see that as we get closer to these tipping points, there's a pushback all around the world and there is a growing view that we need to cut emissions rather than increase them. And there are ways forward.

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The hydrogen economy offers us a way of producing steel with 98 per cent less CO2 than by using coal. In fact, already, Thyssenkrupp, one of Germany's leading steelmakers, is partnering with RWE, an energy company in Germany, to scale up so that they will be producing 50,000 tons of steel per year – green steel per year using hydrogen by 2025. I note also that BHP on 8 November announced that they were going to be investing in hydrogen for steelmaking in China. We can't be left behind on this. What happens if we are has been shown in Germany, where some new coal-fired power plants that were built just five years ago are now being closed, and the community is paying through tax to see those closures. If we make the right decisions now, we get on the right track, we can have a very prosperous community here in the Illawarra with steelmaking at the heart of that. If we make the wrong

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decisions, the costs, both environmental and financial, will be very large indeed.  
Thank you very much.

5 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Tim. I'm sorry that was interrupted. Do you have any questions, John?

10 MR HANN: Tim, you've probably looked at this well, but it's fair to say, isn't it, that if the commissioners were to have any regard to climate change reports from reputable bodies, whether it's the IPCC or the Californian climate change reports, which have – deals with very similar climatic conditions to south-eastern Australia, all their old reports, the predictions have come true if not been slightly conservative about the changes we're starting to see now.

15 MR FLANNERY: Look, that is correct. We've been on the worst-case scenario trajectory in terms of emissions, and so the outcomes have been as bad if not worse than were projected.

MR HANN: Yes. Thank you.

20 MR O'CONNOR: Thanks for your time this morning, Tim. Next, please. Alison.

MR HANN: I think we're hopefully going back to Alison Smith now.

25 MS A. SMITH: Good morning.

MR O'CONNOR: Sorry about that delay, Alison.

30 MS SMITH: No, it's always good to hear from Tim. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I would like to acknowledge that I'm speaking on Dharawal country, and I'm in Wollongong. I object to the expansion of Dendrobium Mine. I object to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, the daily loss of millions of litres of drinking water, the increase in the risk of bushfires in the catchment and the escarpment, which is in the City of Wollongong. I object to the air pollution and the pollution of waterways that will result from this expansion. I object to the damage to ecosystems, including the irreplaceable upland swamps, rainforest and koala habitat. 35 And I object to the damage to the living cultural heritage of the Dharawal people and the damage done to their country.

40 It's not just the specific sites. It's the whole – the whole of their country. Many people addressing this commission have asserted that the expansion of Dendrobium Mine is vital for the ongoing operation of the steelworks at Port Kembla. I think we should keep in mind that BlueScope is just one of South32's customers. The DPI report – sorry, DPIE report says South32 expect to take a total of 78 million tons of coal out of the mine, and in that same report it says that BlueScope uses about one- 45 and-a-half million tons of metallurgical coal each year from that mine.

I note that Mr Nowlan said yesterday they use up to three million tons, but I think in the report it does say 1.5. So according to the DPIEs report, South32 also supplies metallurgical coal from Dendrobium to Liberty Steel and exports coal overseas. So BlueScope is part of the picture. It's not the whole picture. And the story that  
5 advocates for this mine are telling us is an anachronism. Things are changing week to week in the coal industry and the steel industry right now. Literally week to week. Yet I've heard many speakers talk about his mine as though I were happening in a stable and predictable economic context, as though the coal price isn't dropping, as though the rapid technological developments in steel manufacturing aren't  
10 happening, as though we weren't facing longer and more severe droughts, more heatwaves.

Even the more intense rainfall events associated with climate change are an issue for projects like that, and we saw this when very heavy rain preceded the failure of one  
15 of South32's tailings dams, with the result that Brandy and Water Creek in Wollongong, a waterway that runs through a residential area, a creek that kids play in, was polluted by this mine, Dendrobium Mine, earlier this year. It's not a good time to damage our water catchment in the pursuit of profits for the fossil fuel industry, profits that, as Peabody and Wollongong Coal know, are far from certain.  
20 We heard yesterday that neither the New South Wales Government's Department of Planning nor South32 were able to tell the commission whether or not this mine can be sealed at the end of its life.

We were told that this matter is complex and answers would be provided after the  
25 hearing. I think the question of whether this mine can be sealed was reasonable, and I think that if that question can be answered, it should have been answered in South32's application and in the DPIE's report. I think a mining company and a government department should have been able to provide an answer to that question at this hearing. I wonder if, even when we do get the answer to this question after  
30 the hearing, it will still be essentially we don't know. So I want to say very simply that the damage that this expansion will cause outweighs the benefits it is hoped that it will create. The damage is certain. The benefits are uncertain. They are affected by a decrease in coal price and the steel manufacturing industry in rapid technological change.  
35

Expansion of this mine may create short-term benefits for a relatively small group of people. I understand that we are talking about thousands of jobs, but as we've heard, there's good evidence to show that there are also thousands of jobs in  
40 decarbonisation. But we're talking about the water supply from millions of people. Millions of people living in Sydney and Wollongong right now, and who knows many millions of people in the future, as water continues to be lost every single day, day after day. We know that we can expect this continent to get much drier. It's not a matter of offsetting water in the catchment by building another desal plant or fixing Sydney Water's leaky pipes. The reality is that we are going to need to do all those  
45 things. We're going to need every drop of rain that falls, plus desal and improvements in water infrastructure.

MR O'CONNOR: Alison, you will need to wrap up now, thanks.

MS SMITH: If we allow ourselves to think clearly about the changes we're going to see in the coming years, we know we can't afford to lose millions more litres of  
5 drinking water every single day. Change is certainly going to be a challenge, but it can be done. The pathways to rapid decarbonisation with good jobs do exist, but we have to take those paths. It's not going to get easier. Now is the right time.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Alison, for your presentation. John and Richard?  
10 No, we don't have any questions. Thanks again.

MR HANN: Next speaker is Naia Webb. Hello, Ms Webb.

MS N. WEBB: Hi, how are you?  
15

MR HANN: Good, thanks. We can hear you, so go ahead.

MS WEBB: Perfect. So, hi, everyone. My name is Naia, and I'm a born and raised local with a family history in coalmining, and I have lived in the Illawarra for the 20  
20 years I've been alive. As many Aussie kids are, I was born into drought. One of my earliest and fondest memories was when I saw my first actual rain when I was two years old. We often see water as mundane or disposable, but remembering the pure wonder and joy I felt seeing it come down from the sky for the first time in my life reminds me that water is precious and should be treated with the same care and  
25 respect that I treated it with then, as I put out as many buckets as I could find to try and catch it.

As many Aussie kids are, I was raised to be water-wise. Have five minute showers, not baths. Don't use sprinklers. Make sure the tap is turned off all the way. And a  
30 personal childhood favourite: if it's yellow, let it mellow. We were taught with so much vigour to save water, we even had book-writing and poster-making competitions; who could make the best things to encourage people to be water-wise? I remember my own excitement when winning this competition with my own book. I was raised to know that having a water tank in your backyard was a point of pride  
35 and dancing with joy was the only acceptable reaction to rain falling.

That's why I, like many Aussie kids and young people, feel so betrayed by the way that our Government carelessly allows our most precious resource to be leached away from our communities through mining in our water catchment. It astounds me  
40 that the Government can ply its constituents with adverts and educational campaigns on how they can save water for their country, and yet still considers allowing such damaging mining to occur under a water catchment that provides for five million people. The predicted water loss daily from the proposed expansion at Dendrobium Mine averages to the equivalent of 130,000 people's daily water usage. Half of the  
45 Illawarra Region would have to stop using water altogether to be able to compensate for these losses.

No amount of letting it mellow if it's yellow is going to make up for the losses of this one proposed mining expansion under our water catchment. It's incredibly disheartening to the local community, and, to be frank, hypocritical that the Government would consider giving a project with this astounding of water, cultural  
5 and ecological losses the green light. These aren't minor losses that money can be thrown at to fix, as much as South32 would like to think so. The losses from this proposed mining will be felt hundreds of years into the future. That's generations of local Aussie kids going without water that should be theirs, and instead being  
10 brainwashed by government ads putting the responsibility on them to save water. As an Aussie kid, I was never told that it would be up to me and my fellow locals to compensate for the irresponsible water losses of a company whose only concern is profit.

As an Aussie kid, I was never taught that our Government would throw away more  
15 water than I could ever hope to save by refraining from bubble baths all for the sake of a declining industry that openly contributes to climate change and the destruction of our beautiful world. That's why I feel so urged to be here today to plead that the proposed expansion to the Dendrobium Mine does not go ahead, so that Aussie kids, and the kids of the Illawarra especially, have a future with running streams, full dams  
20 and water that doesn't need to be imported, so that they don't need to be constantly hounded throughout their childhood about saving water only to be heartbroken, like me, when they find out that their own Government was responsible for it being lost in the first place. So for the Aussie kids of today and the future, I urge you to please reconsider this proposal and the impacts that it will have on the Illawarra and the  
25 Greater Sydney Water Catchment as a whole. Thank you.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Naia. Questions, John or Richard? Thanks for your presentation, Naia. Next, please.

30 MR HANN: Next speaker is Nina Errey.

MR O'CONNOR: Ms Errey.

MS N. ERREY: Yes. Good morning, commissioners.  
35

MR O'CONNOR: Please go ahead.

MS ERREY: Thank you for listening to me this morning. You can hear me okay?

40 MR O'CONNOR: All good. Please go ahead.

MS ERREY: Fantastic. Okay. So last year, Sydney's dam storage levels were sitting below 50 per cent for the first time in more than a decade. Currently they're at over 90 per cent, however, this influx of water will not last. A senior CSIRO  
45 scientist, Dr Cai Wenju, lead author of a paper published in the journal Nature, Climate Change, writes that weather patterns are shifting. The western Indian Ocean is warming faster than the east. This increases the likelihood of more frequent and

intense dry spells for south-eastern Australia. The Indian Ocean dipole, IOD, is described by the Bureau of Meteorology as the most significant Australian climate driver. The IOD refers to the year to year tropical sea temperatures in the western and eastern Indian Ocean. Dr Cai and a team of international researchers examined  
5 how the IOD is changing due to global warming.

Their conclusion was that extreme events will come more often and will be more extreme. Australia is the driest continent on Earth, and it is becoming progressively drier. We cannot risk losing water. The South32 Dendrobium Mine expansion is  
10 estimated to lose 3.3 billion litres of water every year. Let us not forget the water restrictions that we had to deal with last year. These restrictions will need to be reinstated as conditions worsen. Next time they might be harsher. If you like to water your garden, if you like to take the kids out for a swim at the pool, these activities will potentially be banned in the future as droughts worsen in Australia. If  
15 you decide to approve the expansion of this mine, you personally will be affected by this decision. This is your water, this is our kids' water, and we will need every last drop. Thank you very much.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you very much for your presentation. Our next speaker,  
20 please.

MR HANN: Next speaker is Deidre Stuart. Ms Stuart. Can you hear me, Ms Stuart? If you can hear me, we can't hear you.

25 MS D. STUART: Can you see my screen?

MR HANN: We can now, and we can also hear you now, obviously.

30 MS STUART: Okay.

MR HANN: Please go ahead.

MS STUART: Okay. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am speaking on  
35 Protect Our Water Alliance's behalf, POWA. POWA was formed in early 2019 in response to community shock and despair at ongoing damaging mining beneath Sydney's water catchment. Located on unseeded Dharawal country in Wollongong, POWA is affiliated with grassroots groups and environmental organisations across the Illawarra, Southern Highlands and Greater Sydney regions. POWA advocates for protection of the water catchment and calls for a ban on mining in it. The southern  
40 coalfield inquiry report pointed out that the single most important land use in the southern coalfield is as a water catchment.

I note that the Dharawal peoples who lived in this area and who cared for country through thousands of years distinguished themselves as fresh, salt and bitter water  
45 peoples. They clearly recognised the critical importance of water in life, in society, in country, in this place. I hope that we alive present here today can also demonstrate care for country. Protect the equity in the country to have equity in the

society, was what Daniel McConell said yesterday. Only by striving our utmost to care for country do we genuinely show respect for elders past, present and future.

POWA considers approval of this mine expansion under any circumstances with any  
5 set of conditions would be morally wrong. We have no right as humans to destroy  
things we cannot recreate, not our climate system, and not species or ecosystems.  
We need to remember that we are part of nature rather than separate from it, and that  
nature sustains us. We submit to you, commissioners, that your decision on this  
Dendrobium Extension Project will not be a technical decision; it's a moral decision.  
10 As the Chief Scientist in her 2014 report acknowledged about decisions about mining  
and the water catchment, these are about values.

We ask you to keep uppermost in your mind the value choices that you will make  
and who benefits compared to who pays, and the need to protect the most vulnerable.  
15 We ask you to make your decision for the long-term public wide interest rather than  
for short-term narrow vested interests and convenience. By approving something  
and making it legal or merely saying something is legal, does not make it not wrong.  
If you were to approve this proposal, then you would be legitimising permanent  
damage to the catchment's water systems. You would be legitimising both  
20 groundwater and surface water damages and being stolen from our catchment. You  
would be legitimising South32 and Planning's endorsement of dishonesty around net  
gain to the catchment.

You would be endorsing the sham of the indirect or direct offsetting that were  
25 proposed, which places the risks and costs on the community now and in the future.  
In that whole offsetting proposal, groundwater is not even considered, though  
ecosystems and biodiversity rely on groundwater; why not? Who pays for this in  
perpetuity? It's the current and future generations and nature itself. An approval  
would legitimise ecosystem damages. That's the destruction of endangered Sydney  
30 Basin coastal upland swamps and forest ecosystem habitats, with potential loss of  
species. And I note that the IPMC part 2 report indicated there is no evidence that  
swamps can be restored or remediated.

An approval would legitimise the nonsensical offset system that is in our legal  
35 system. It would legitimise denial of our duty of care towards nature as the most  
vulnerable and unprotected in our legal system. It would be denial of our natural and  
social heritages and a denial of nature's right to existence and autonomy of itself. I  
note that the EPBC Act review undertaken by –chaired by Graeme Samuel, in its  
report – these are the first statements of its report. It notes that the current  
40 environmental trajectory in Australia is unsustainable.

An approval would legitimise further disrespect of indigenous people. There is – it's  
obvious from reports, both Planning and South32's report, there will be indigenous  
cultural heritage, landscapes, practices destroyed. These are over 2000 years old.  
45 There's no requirement for avoidance and no recourse for indigenous people. This  
would effectively be teaching disrespect towards Australian indigenous people, who,

as we all know, already experience severe disadvantage, severe discrimination and hardship. It would legitimise climate inaction.

5 If you approve this, you are supporting business as usual continuing for 28 more years till 2048. You would be legitimising Planning's disregard of the greenhouse gas emissions as not a key consideration in the project's assessment, or the claim that scope 3 emissions are not relevant, in direct contrast to the Mining SEPP and to principles of ESD. You would be ignoring that greenhouse gas emissions associated with the loss of swamp carbon capturing and carbon storage capacities weren't even  
10 included or assessed. You would not be including – the assessment doesn't even include greenhouse gas emissions associated with the proposed indirect or direct water offsets.

15 And the proposal's economic assessment has an unreal assumption that carbon abatement costs in the future are going to be the same as today, when, you know, even in the last year and a half or whatever, it has increased by more than 10 per cent, and that's way beyond inflation. Approval would legitimise climate inequalities. The special report from the IPCC in 2018 said that we need a 58 per cent reduction in coal as a primary source of energy by 2030, and that's even with  
20 carbon capture and sequestration supports. The other scenarios that are considered without that had much higher emissions, but from coal requirements.

Australia and New South Wales have commitments. Australia as a country has climate responsibilities. We have a high per capita emission rate and we are a major  
25 coal exporting nation. Another aspect of the economic assessment is that scope 1 and 2 emissions apportioned to New South Wales as a proportion of global population, that is in itself effectively demonstrating that most negative impacts fall on those who are not benefiting, instead of consistent with "polluter pays" principle. Planning's suggestion that South32 could benefit from a coal innovation fund for  
30 methane flaring infrastructure is utterly galling to the community, this proposed subsidisation, again instead of "polluter pays".

I think a true perspective of what this approval would mean in terms of climate injustices is that in 2015, which was the latest date I could get conveniently with the  
35 list of all, you know, countries, 67 out of 211 listed countries had emissions less than the annual amount for this project. So, commissioners, you have the opportunity to do something really good instead of kicking the can down the road, like many others have been doing before you. Reject this proposal, and your decision will mark a shift and drive change towards sustainable development.

40 It could be consistent with ESD principles. It would be consistent with the relevant objects of the EP&A Act. A rejection would mean preventing damage in area 5 and area 6 in the Sydney Water Catchment. It would mean that we have less likelihood of bushfire in our area. It would mean that your decision would give hope to young  
45 people around here, and to old people around here. Reject this proposal, and your decision would show respect for ongoing indigenous culture. We can do better, and

we must do better. And like many other residents, I hope for a better future with green hydrogen, green steel, and lots of renewable jobs.

5 MR O'CONNOR: Can you wrap up now, please, Deidre.

MS STUART: We ask you to deny this approval. No damage is acceptable. And I thank EDO and experts who will speak on our behalf in the future. Thank you, commissioners.

10 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Deidre. Can I just clarify something: I understood you to say that the carbon emissions associated with water offsetting have not been accounted for. Can you just explain what you mean by that?

15 MS STUART: Well, as far as I can tell in the proposal, the water offsetting involves – you know, it would involve pumping, it would involve water treatment plants, things like this. None of that is accounted for. They're proposing either in a direct offset it goes off to Port Kembla, or alternatively that doesn't happen and it just pays money to the Government, but the Government – wastewater treatment systems do not, you know, run on thin air. They use fuel. There's materials and energy  
20 involved with that. None of that has been accounted for.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you. I understand.

25 MS STUART: And similarly with the swamps.

MR O'CONNOR: Yes. I understand what you're saying now. John, do you have questions?

30 MR HANN: No. No, thanks.

MR O'CONNOR: Richard? Thank you, Deidre, for your detailed presentation. We will now take a break, and we will return at five minutes past 12. Thank you.

35 **ADJOURNED** [11.35 am]

**RESUMED** [12.05 pm]

40 MR O'CONNOR: Welcome back. We'll now have our next speaker, please.

MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Dave Richards. Mr Richards.

45 MR D. RICHARDS: Good afternoon, commissioners. Can you hear me okay?

MR O'CONNOR: All good. Please go ahead.

MR RICHARDS: Great. Well, thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of the Dendrobium Mine Extension Project. My name is David Richards. I am the general manager at Port Kembla Coal Terminal or PKCT. PKCT is a coal export facility on Australia's east coast within the Illawarra ecosystem. The facility services the southern and western coalfields of New South Wales, exporting coking and therming coal to customers around the world. Coal from IMCs Appin and Dendrobium Mines is exported through PKCT to the world's steelmakers. This product from IMC makes up around 70 per cent of all coal shipped through the terminal, making IMC a key customer.

At PKCT, we employ around 100 employees and contractors, the majority of whom live in the Illawarra. We prioritise local businesses and suppliers and are proud of our long history in the area. We have recently completed a major refurbishment project on our facility, investing around \$300 million to support the coal industry in the Illawarra and to ensure we can meet our customers' needs long into the future. It is my understanding that the Dendrobium Extension Project will secure the future of Dendrobium Mine, the jobs and opportunities of hundreds of local employees and businesses and ensure that ongoing supply of high-quality metallurgical coal to domestic and international customers.

For that reason, and for the continued long-term economic prosperity of the Illawarra Region, I am pleased to speak in support of the project. Coal mining has a long history in this region and the mines, along with the port, BlueScope Steelworks and other industries. We form an extensive interlinked industrial sector. The value of this industrial sector is outlined in the BAEconomics report commissioned by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, which found that the loss of coal-mining and steelmaking industries would result in the loss of up to five and a half thousand direct jobs in the Illawarra and up to 25,000 direct and indirect jobs across the whole economy.

The same report suggested that without IMCs tonnages, PKCT would become unviable, which could impact the future of other coal mines in the region. The report also goes on to explain that without the coal from Dendrobium, port handling charges would increase by 75 per cent on a per tonne basis. As part of the ecosystem, we greatly value the ongoing contribution of Dendrobium Mine, and through this expansion, it will continue employment, community partnerships within our local region and the significant royalty contributions to the New South Wales Government. On a personal note, I've just moved to the region with my family and we really enjoy the lifestyle and opportunities here in the Illawarra and I'm proud to support the extension of this project and the real value it will continue to bring. Thank you again for this opportunity to voice my support.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Dave, for your presentation. John, questions or - - -

MR BEASLEY: Dave, what was the 300 million you mentioned that the company just expended? Was that an infrastructure structure upgrade or what was that spent on precisely?

MR RICHARDS: Yes, so some of the major infrastructure was replaced with new assets and – so that was the main .....

MR BEASLEY: How recently was that done?

5

MR RICHARDS: It was completed across a number of years, and – so 2015 to it – the majority was completed, and still some – some work is just being finished off from that – from that major product.

10 MR BEASLEY: All right. Thank you.

MR O'CONNOR: And just to ask, Dave, did that increase the capacity or was it just replacing and refurbishing?

15 MR RICHARDS: No. It just ensured that we could maintain the capacity the terminal was designed at.

MR O'CONNOR: Good. Thanks. Thanks for answering our questions. Our next speaker is David Keane. Mr Keane.

20

MR D. KEANE: Thank you very much indeed. I represent Linfox Logistics, an Australia-owned company. My responsibilities at Linfox is I'm general manager of business development for the resources and industrial portfolio. For the information of the commission, Linfox commenced a six-year relationship with South32 Illawarra Coal on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2019 for the transport of their coal and related products. We were awarded this long-term contract by South32, because of our industry-leading commitment to safety, compliance, sustainability and chain of responsibility. Specifically, we commissioned the design of a unique vehicle, which we have called the Lin-Double, with the highest levels of safety and innovation in mind.

25

30

The Lin-Double has increased productivity for South32 by 20 per cent. That means that heavy vehicle movements in the Illawarra Region for Illawarra Coal have significantly reduced, as had the emissions by a similar quantity. In an Australian first, Linfox partnered with Volvo Australia to specify a Lin-Double prime mover, which has a bespoke braking system for the Mount Ousley topography and world-class safety and sustainability features. The attributes of this design have been recognised by the industry regulator. Linfox has invested \$25 million in new equipment, which is specialised and dedicated to the Illawarra Metallurgical task, as well as property in the Illawarra Region to actually executive the transport scope.

35

40

We employed 125 people last July and approximately 100 indirectly. Those indirect engagements include haulage contractors, maintenance providers, tyre contractors, truck washers and the list goes on; it's quite long. The sustainability of our contract and the job security of these team members is heavily reliant on the success of the Dendrobium Extension. Prior to commencing the contract with Illawarra Coal, Linfox was not operating within the Illawarra Region. Hence, we don't have other

45

business units in the Illawarra to transfer our team members to if the future of Illawarra Coal was impacted by an adverse decision on the Dendrobium Extension.

5 So in conclusion, we are in favour of this application by South32 for the Dendrobium Extension. It is essential for the job security of our team members and the sustainability of the operations we have in the Illawarra. Thank you.

10 MR O'CONNOR: David, I just have a question. I'm not quite following the – the coal's transported by rail from Dendrobium Mine to the port, so are you - - -

MR KEANE: Yes, I can expand on that.

MR O'CONNOR: Yes, yes.

15 MR KEANE: But – once it is actually washed in BlueScope Steel, it then has to be transported by – from BlueScope Steel to the Port Kembla Coal Terminal. And we're engaged under this contract to actually cart that or transport that particular product across to Port Kembla Coal Terminal, as well as the fact that after that product is washed, it produces a by-product, which is called coal wash, and we're  
20 responsible for transporting the coal wash to beneficial use projects and to obviously in placement, if that's required as well.

25 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you. That certainly clarified that for me. Thanks very much. Any questions, John?

MR HANN: Your only contract is with Illawarra Coal, is it?

MR KEANE: No. We are quite a – a large operation, but in terms of - - -

30 MR HANN: No, I meant in the Illawarra Region.

MR KEANE: Correct.

35 MR HANN: Yes.

MR KEANE: Our presence in the Illawarra Region in terms of operations is solely dependent on Illawarra Coal.

40 MR HANN: All right. And how many employees does that involve?

MR KEANE: 125 direct employees - - -

MR HANN: Yes.

45 MR KEANE: - - - and approximately 100 contractors or indirect employees.

MR O'CONNOR: Thanks, David.

MR KEANE: Pleasure.

MR O'CONNOR: Next speaker is Ben Patten. Mr Patten, can you hear me?

5 MR B. PATTEN: Yes, absolutely.

MR O'CONNOR: All right. We can hear – hear you, so go ahead.

10 MR PATTEN: All right. Hi, commissioners. So thank you for the opportunity to address the commission and taking the time to listen to myself and my colleagues regarding the Dendrobium Mine Extension Project. My name is Ben Patten, and I'm the construction manager at Dendrobium Mine. I've worked in the industry for 13 years and I'm very passionate about this project being approved, as I really enjoy my career. I have a mining engineering degree and have I attained all levels of statutory  
15 supervision up to mine manager's certificate several years ago, and am currently studying an MBA at the University of Wollongong here at a local campus to further my knowledge of business acumen.

20 So personally I grew up in the Central West out near Cowra and have always wanted to work here in the mining ever since my first trip to Cadia Gold Mine out near Orange. So since then, I've been lucky enough to work and live in the Illawarra Region and call this wonderful place home. Something I've noticed since living here is that this area is referred to as the Coal Coast, due to its rich mining heritage down here. So in Bulli, there's a gym called the Coal Coast Fitness. I've had many  
25 letterbox drops from the monthly magazine called the Coal Coast, and have seen coffee and brewing businesses that leverage off this name as well.

It's evident that the coal mining has always been a part of this region, working in with local communities. Speaking of this, the mining industry is extraordinarily  
30 complex and we work really hard at South32 to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our people and the communities in which we operate. Recently, we were recognised for the work we do as well. So Dendrobium Mine was named Mining Operations of the Year at this year's New South Wales Minerals Council Award. And I was nominated by IMC in the category of Outstanding Young Achiever Award. But the  
35 truth is, there are a lot of people that are outstanding performers in South32.

We have quite a strong cohort and we work to ensure we do everything to the best of our ability, while managing the areas in which we operate. So I believe this project needs to go ahead for the future of the area, for future jobs, future prosperity for the  
40 region and the economy and I believe we can continue to operate in a responsible and sustainable manner. I've worked in a number of different roles that have afforded me the opportunity to set the direction of the business and I know how much focus South32 places on corporate social responsibility. Sustainable development is something that I'm really passionate about, and I can see how highly regarded this is  
45 from the South32s perspective.

That strongly aligns with my personal values and plays a major role in why I enjoy working for South32. This project will set the pace for our future, the continuation of 500 jobs at Dendrobium, and the continuation of our metallurgical coal supply to BlueScope, which is also used around Australia and the world. Our workforce is  
5 made up of many different demographics: some at the end of their careers, and some are just starting out. We want to make sure that there's jobs for people in our region well into the future. This project will see a lot of great people continue to enjoy this area and help to build a future for them and their families. So in closing, I'd like to thank you for your time and reiterate my support for the project.

10 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you for your presentation, Ben. Any questions?

MR BEASLEY: Not from me.

15 MR HANN: No.

MR O'CONNOR: No, we have any questions at – thank you. Next.

20 MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Keith Cole, C-o-l-e. Mr Cole.

MR K. COLE: Commissioners, good afternoon. My name's Keith Cole, and I'm an underground operator at Dendrobium Mine. I've worked underground for 18 years, but all my working life, whether it be ..... making concrete or working on the docks has revolved around coal mining. Although I'm reaching the end of my career, I'd  
25 like to express my complete support of the project and the future of the jobs, the economy and the landscape of the Illawarra. I've lived in Illawarra all my life and, at the moment, I live in Bulli with my wife, Cathy, and my two kids, David and Riley. I've been gifted with an opportunity to live close to the beach and experience all the beauty the Illawarra has to offer, all because of Dendrobium Mine and IMC.

30 If this project does not go ahead, it'll change the landscape of the Illawarra, and not for the better. It would mean that hundreds of people directly would not need to look elsewhere for job opportunities, but also affect thousands of others in related industries. Most likely, many people would have to leave the area. It'd mean that  
35 royalties to the New South Wales Government would decrease dramatically. It would mean that local businesses that we support, local community groups, schools, events and programs would not receive the funding from our operations or our community investments programs. It's more than just jobs here. We're a family, and it's the comradery and the mateship you have at work, where you meet the  
40 people and become lifelong friends.

Those friendships are not limited to a certain demographic or skillset. I'm an operator underground, but I've known the current general manager for over 40 years. We all work together. Our industry has grown and become more diverse, which is  
45 really great. What this means is the industry is providing opportunities for those looking for a career in STEM, traineeships, apprenticeships and so many other areas. We all look out for each other and work really hard to do the right thing. I'm proud

to have been able to work in the industry for as long as I have and it's come a long way. I support the project's approval, so we can continue to give back to the community and keep people in jobs in the local area and surrounds.

5 MR O'CONNOR: Thanks for your presentation, Keith. Any questions?

MR BEASLEY: No.

MR O'CONNOR: No questions. Thank you, Keith.

10

MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Rob Doyle. Mr Doyle, how are you?

MR R. DOYLE: I'm very well, thank you, Mr Beasley. How are you?

15 MR BEASLEY: I'm good, thanks. Good to see you again.

MR DOYLE: I have a presentation that hopefully is coming through. Can you see that?

20 MR BEASLEY: Not – not yet.

MR O'CONNOR: Yes.

MR DOYLE: You can't see my head, but can you see the presentation?

25

MR BEASLEY: I can see your face, which is why I recognised you, but I can't see your presentation.

MR DOYLE: What about now?

30

MR O'CONNOR: .....

MR BEASLEY: No, not quite yet. No, I'll tell you if it comes up, but - - -

35 MR DOYLE: Excuse me for a minute. This technology - - -

MR BEASLEY: Something's happened now. Yes, that's come up. If you put it – if you maximise it, it will probably be best.

40 MR DOYLE: Is that working?

MR BEASLEY: It is, perfect.

MR DOYLE: .....

45

MR BEASLEY:

*I support the Dendrobium Extension. Rob Doyle.*

MR DOYLE: Correct. Good afternoon, gentlemen. I'd like to thank the  
commission for the opportunity to speak, and I congratulate them for providing a  
5 leading example with the acknowledgement of country. It's a simple act of  
recognition, but it's important in changing culture and attitudes, so thank you. I've  
been born and bred in Wollongong, and I remember as a child walking with my  
father around Coomaditchy Lagoon. It would have been in the early sixties, and I  
asked him what was off in the distance. And he said, "Humpy's". And I asked,  
10 "What's a Humpy?" And he explained it to me. I can't remember a bloody word  
he's told me about, but I can remember the empathy in his voice.

If you haven't read already the Uluru Statement of the Heart, I urge you to do so. I  
personally look forward to the day when there is a voice to Parliament and that there  
15 is a treaty for the traditional custodians. I grew up on the slopes of Mount Kembla,  
an area of great natural beauty. I've spent a lot of time in the bush, camping with  
Cubs in Windy Gully, near where many of the victims of the Mount Kembla disaster  
are interred, although at this time I was oblivious to the existence of coal mines. In  
Scouts, we camped at Mount Keira in a dense rainforest. The Hoskins were  
20 responsible for developing the Australian iron and steel industry of Port Kembla, and  
this Scout camp was also part of their development. The inscription reads:

*In appreciation of the inspiration and generosity of Sid Hoskins, whose vision  
and energy brought this camp into being, that our use may benefit in character,  
25 courage and thoughtfulness for others.*

Scouts gave me a great appreciation for the environment of our unique landscape and  
the history of the Illawarra ..... gave me a sense of balance between industry and  
nature. Scouts were very much a male-dominated domain in my youth. Thankfully,  
30 it has become more inclusive. The Hoskins lived in what is now part of the  
Botanical Gardens and their home is used for the Conservatorium of Music. People  
from all backgrounds have contributed to the overall vibrancy of the region and our  
life as a community. While people make a significant difference, the area where we  
live is extraordinary. The scenic splendour of the Illawarra, this place between the  
35 mountains and the sea, is spectacular.

I'm not saying it's pristine, but it is outstanding. I went to local schools and local  
high schools, as our children did as well. At the University of Wollongong, I studied  
a degree in science, graduating in geology. I gained employment locally and worked  
40 for over 20 years with BHP Illawarra Coal. I continued my education by completing  
a master's degree in geomechanics at the University of New South Wales. This gave  
me a greater understanding of the impacts around coal mining and the successful  
mitigation measures that can be used on those impacts. I love the mining history of  
our region. The Sea Cliff Bridge shown here provides an image of stunning  
45 engineering achievement, but almost invisible is any trace of the mine immediately  
below the bridge, where today rehabilitated and sealed adits masked the once  
dominant Coalcliff Colliery.

As a geologist, I was involved with coal exploration in the area of the water catchment, and went underground at all of BHP mines, including Dendrobium. Mining provides numerous benefits, not only for the employees, but also for the local community, which contributes – extend to the state and more widespread across the nation. While I guess everyone is aware of royalties, few would rate their importance. Royalties are fourth overall as the largest source of revenue for the New South Wales State Government. There’s tax, GST and then the payments from the gambling industry. For the last decade or so, royalties have contributed in excess of \$1 billion per year, year in and year out to the economy. This levy goes towards the operations of our hospitals, our schools, our emergency services, etcetera.

I recognise that climate change is a critical issue that demands earnest consideration. My observations over the last 40 years in mining is that most operations are looking to see how they can mitigate their impacts by becoming more sustainable and by introducing technological solutions reduce their carbon footprint. Mines such as Dendrobium work hard to develop a sustainable an operation as possible. I personally know many of the people involved in the operations at South32 and have observed their leadership in making industry better and more sustainable. I admit that this slide is rather complex; my apologies.

On the left-hand side it shows the various sources of greenhouse gas emissions. There are basically four main groups: coal, natural gas, oil and direct emissions. The latter category includes agriculture, the clearing of land and waste. I believe that any action on climate change must seriously look at all of these areas, not just coal. Consider clearing of land for grazing of cattle. Cattle produces 1000 times more methane than humans. Methane is 25 times worse than carbon dioxide and there are about a billion cattle on the planet today. In contrast, coal mines Appin and Tower and West Cliff capture methane to generate power. This is a great demonstration of sustainable leadership.

Sadly, Australia’s population has become all too obese. Well, at least I know I have. We are clearly eating too much, exercising too little, producing too much for ourselves. We have the power to make personal changes to our individual carbon footprints, and we should do so. Australia needs a detailed and well-considered roadmap that considers all greenhouse gas emissions. A target is simply not enough. We must cut back on the use of fossil fuels when we can, but we must also consider agriculture and the destruction of forest. We also need to think about reclaiming ineffective farmland and regrowing forest for carbon storage and to improve the habitat of fauna and flora.

Many would like to see a transition away from thermal coal to renewals to generate electricity, but few would realise that renewals only generate about 20 per cent of the power needs for New South Wales. These figures from the New South Wales Government in 2018 show that 80 per cent of the power of the state is generated from non-renewables; mostly coal. Despite this, some people would like to see thermal coal shut down immediately. I would argue that we need to consider the consequences of such a decision. As one example, what will the impacts on the

elderly be if we reduce or non-existent power for heating to keep them warm in winter or air-conditioning in summer?

5 Coal is still a vital resource that is still required to generate electricity, until we can  
make the necessary transition to the world of – with a lower carbon footprint with  
sufficient alternate generation in place. Dendrobium’s main focus is the production  
of metallurgical coking coal. Coking coal is currently an essential component to  
produce steel, which is vital to construct renewable infrastructure, such as windmills.  
10 The production of steel ensures the production of other vital items as well, like  
surgical steel, whitegoods or pipes for the Snowy Hydro 2.0, etcetera. As already  
stated, the people of the Illawarra live in an area of breathtaking scenic beauty.

This is despite the impacts of coal mining extending back in time for over a century  
and across the entire escarpment and well into the hinterland. Mining has not marred  
15 the region’s natural beauty. Mining companies use design to eliminate impacts  
where possible and, where those impacts can’t be eliminated, mitigation works are  
undertaken to reduce the effects of any impacts. As in a lot of things, it’s a balance  
and I believe the balance lies in favour of the extension of the existing mining  
operation at Dendrobium. Finally, the Dendrobium Mine Extension is critical for the  
20 ongoing security of employment for many and critical to businesses, which have  
flow-on effects and many synergies within the other industries in the region,  
including BlueScope steel and the Port Kembla Coal Terminal. I strongly support  
the extension and ask the commission to approve it. Thank you.

25 MR O’CONNOR: Thank you, Rob. You timed that extremely well. I’ll just see if  
there’s any questions? No?

MR HANN: Not for me.

30 MR O’CONNOR: No. We’ve finished right on time. Thanks very much, Rob.

MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Phil Diamond.

MR O’CONNOR: Mr Diamond. Sir, I don’t think you’ve got your mike on yet.  
35

MR P. DIAMOND: Can you hear me now?

MR O’CONNOR: Yes, go ahead.

40 MR DIAMOND: Okay. Well, good afternoon, commissioners and ladies and  
gentlemen watching online. I’m Phil Diamond, and I’d like to acknowledge the land  
on which I live, which is that of the Dharawal people. I’ve got a background in  
media and conservative and land management, and I’ve been on the Dendrobium  
Community Consultative Committee for the last 10 years. In the role as a DCCC  
45 member, we’ve had the chance to visit the catchment annually generally, and we  
were due to go in the day that the commissioners went in with mine representatives  
and Ann Brown from National Parks. It’s an amazing place to see.

The tours are a great way to get up close to some magnificent landscapes and ecosystems, though I note that if more than 10 mil of rain has fallen in the prior 24 hours, the tours are called off due to erosion concerns, which are kind of ironic in light of the damage caused by longwall mining. It's at this point that I must stress  
5 I'm in no way representing the DCCC, but I'd like to take the chance to express some personal thoughts to reflect others in Mount Kembla and beyond on the South32 operation and proposal to extend operations into Areas 5 and 6, a total of about 40 square kilometres. In my dealings with the mine personally, I've always been cordial. I like the people, but I have grave misgivings for their plans in Areas 5  
10 and 6.

Walks through the catchment have included to virgin ground prior to longwalls in Area 3B and impacted ground. A couple of years back, we were taken to Area 5 and 6, when the DCCC function was expanded to include a working group that met every  
15 second month in addition to the bimonthly DCCC meetings. The working group's task was to be briefed and consider the upcoming proposal to move into Areas 5 and 6. I appreciated the mine was reasonably transparent throughout the process and it took the DCCC into confidence. DCCC also has access to about \$8000 annually to invite external experts to research and present findings to us; hydrological and  
20 geological professionals have helped answer some of those concerns.

On trips to lands and swamps over the mined areas, I've been shocked and disheartened to see the extent of the damage. The cracks are astonishing, in some cases, especially on exposed rock, while much of the fracturing is covered by flora  
25 and mulch. One tour included a walk down a stream to the edge of Lake Avon, where'd then been a rockfall just above the high-tide mark, caused by longwall about 300 metres away in Area 3B. The Maldon/Dombarton rail corridor passes over Area 3B longwalls and when you look along the track, the ground ripples like corrugated iron. It's a very visual representation of the ground slump over the extracted area.  
30 The rail corridor also extends to many of the longwalls proposed in Area 5.

Dendrobium's operations so far have been an 18-year science experiment. Evidence concludes that 305 metre longwalls have a catastrophic effect to the water-holding capacity of affected areas. Many of yesterday's presenters talked on that, so I won't  
35 rehash, except to say that in its current form, the layout of longwalls in Areas 5 and 6, let alone 3B, should be modified to limit the height of fracturing, by narrowing longwalls or limiting the height of extraction currently close to four metres, alternatively, in light of Russell Vale Mine's proposal to extract using bord and pillar to minimise environmental damage. I recognise the importance of coal in mining to  
40 the Illawarra and state, but at times they are a-changing.

China has cut coal imports by 20 per cent so far this year. Peabody is easing operations for two months, due to having no market for their already-processed coal. Developments of green steel, with inputs from other – inputs other than coal, and  
45 they're still making progress and progressing, in other countries, as Tony Wood from The Grattan Institute spoke on yesterday. .... green steel is amplifying and the institutional insurance agencies backing the sector and mines are getting behind the

drive to get carbon out of the equation. It's time to realise the Dendrobium hopes to be digging coal in 2048 is not an aim that should be acceptable or responsible.

5 I echo the thoughts of Ann Brown from National Parks, who also presented  
yesterday, that the mine should re-examine the proposed longwall width. Modelling  
on anything but 305-metre wide longwalls was never comprehensively presented at a  
DCCC meeting that I've been asking for about two years. In light of technological  
changes and chances for going green to satisfy market forces, that would mean that a  
10 realistic end date for Dendrobium's operation should be around 2045, including Ares  
5 and 6, plus Area 3C, and will not be mined immediately after Area 3B is  
exhausted, due to high levels of CO2 in Australia. The proposed order of extraction,  
in my understanding, is to complete Area 3B, then two longwalls near the edge of  
Area 3C.

15 Operations then move to Area 5 to allow the drainage of the CO2 in Area 3C. Once  
that gas is reduced, that area will be mined and then ..... finally moved into Area 6. It  
should be noted that when Dendrobium submitted longwall plans for Area 3B, they  
were granted permission to work five longwalls immediately. Applications for  
subsequent longwalls have been on an individual basis, with the process of approval  
20 seeming to take more time, as operations and effects have been scrutinised further.  
But this has not mitigated the damage to the catchment or led to any remediation of  
note. A TARP or trigger action response is only confirmed what has been expected  
from longwall mining.

25 As mentioned earlier in the evidence, a further cracking that would trigger the  
TARPs is covered by ..... bushfire will expose more fractures. The TARP system is  
flawed and should be re-examined to have some teeth to limit environmental and  
heritage damage. Many speakers yesterday and today have had the same concerns  
that I share and have been bringing up in DCCC meetings over the decade. I  
30 remember that in the early years, I would always question the connectivity to the  
surface, but was reassured that cracks didn't go from the surface to the mine  
workings and that the water would present further downstream after disappearing  
from the surface streams and swamps.

35 Much of it did, though it was yellow, due to the mineral staining, and much on that  
has been presented in reports on the toxicology of the water ..... systems and dams.  
Water discharge readings always showed that there was a connection to the surface.  
After rain events, the water pumped out of the workings would increase. The height  
of fracture report concluded that there was certainly a connection from the surface to  
40 the mine. And DCCC is not just about the effects of the catchment, but we've also  
discussed the local community concerns, like traffic, noise, air pollution, including  
CO2 and fugitive gases and particulates. Rail operations, as the coal is transported  
by the train, approximately 13 times a day on 22 carriages – it goes down the rail  
corridor on the edge of Mount Kembla.

45 Grants to local organisations and events is also appreciated. I applaud the efforts by  
the mine to mitigate the local concerns and found them generally receptive to input

from the committee. But this project has far-reaching effects beyond the Illawarra. It has the potential affect the drinking water of more than one and a half million people and the businesses in Sydney, plus Greater Wollongong Region. It will certainly change the fire regime and ecosystems in the catchment for the worst and  
5 increase greenhouse gas emissions. So I think it's prudent and pragmatic to reject the current proposal for longwalls in Areas 5 and 6 in their current form and to be realistic that a shutdown time of 2048 is not acceptable.

I reinforce that longwalls should be no more than 150 to 200 metres wide. Pillars in  
10 between the longwalls should be matching in width or a comprehensive examination of bord and pillar methods should be undertaken. I know this will frustrate the mine, but this is our only chance to stop the wholesale destruction of a large part of our special areas of future generations. There is way – there is still a way to extract the coal needed, so the mine and BlueScope win and the environment has way less  
15 damage. This will also pressure the industry to adapt to a 15-year ordered transition to the inevitable changes, demand for green steel, while BlueScope still provide the steel needed for the transition to a green future in the immediate term. In an ideal situation, mining would not be allowed to expand in the catchment, but I realise that onshore production of steel is important, particularly in light of global dynamics. So  
20 basically it comes down to being a moral and commercial decision, and I thank you  
.....

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Phil. Questions? Yes, go ahead, John.

25 MR HANN: Thank you, Mr Diamond. You mentioned that you believe it ought to be rejected in its current form, and you spoke earlier about a term more in the order of 2035. What form would you suggest is more appropriate?

MR DIAMOND: Well, the current proposal is 305-metre longwalls. I think about –  
30 economic arguments say that they don't – they can't do that economically at 150 metres. I doubt that. I think if the bord and pillar situation is going to go ahead at Russell Vale, I can't see why the dynamics would change that dramatically to a mine eight kilometres away to the south. I think the cost to the environment really hasn't been given a cost, as much as it should be. And the water loss and the CO2  
35 emissions and fugitive gases from an operation of this size, really, the fugitive gases and the CO2 and also the methane that comes from the cracking from an operation like this really is not gathered to its full extent. And so it is causing damage in the long term. Does that answer that question?

40 MR HANN: Yes. Why 2035 in particular?

MR DIAMOND: Well, I think the world is moving towards a green future, and I think to be realistic about this, you know – and, I mean, we've got greenhouse gases peaking like they never have. It's causing dramatic results to our weather and  
45 climate, and I think this is a middle ground that we can – both parties, so the mine and the environment, to some extent, can meet in the middle.

MR HANN: Thank you, Mr Diamond.

MR O'CONNOR: Okay. And Richard?

5 MR BEASLEY: Not from me. Thanks.

MR O'CONNOR: No further questions. Thank you.

MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Phillip Laird. Mr Laird.

10

MR P. LAIRD: Thank you, Mr Chairman and counsel assisting and other member.

The submission is in four parts. The first is a general concern about the potential impact on the water catchment, and I think this has been well covered by

Wollongong City Council and other submissions. My second issue relates to

15 ensuring that not only BlueScope, but also Whyalla has enough coking coal to ensure long-term operations. This raises a number of questions, and I'd be grateful if the mine is to be conditionally approved, a further condition might relate ensuring that there's enough coal to keep steelworks going at Port Kembla and Whyalla in the long term.

20

The third issue is the potential impact to the proposed new mine workings on the long overdue 35-kilometre Maldon/Dombarton rail link. To me, it's of concern that the planning secretary's final assessment report was silent on this issue. And this is despite it being raised in documents submitted by the proponent, including the .....

25 and appendices. One of these documents calls the Maldon/Dombarton rail corridor disused. "Disused", I think, is a pejorative term. It's simply not correct. Transport for New South Wales in 2017 in its 40-year vision for regional New South Wales transport includes the Maldon to Dombarton link to meet future .....

30 The documents tendered say there could be as much as 14, 15 millimetres of vertical subsidence. They also talk about slip subsidence. And I think the evidence of the former speaker that mining under 3B has impacted the formation of this railway, which incidentally was constructed in the mid-1980s. Now, Wollongong City Council has also raised the Maldon/Dombarton railway in its submission, and I agree

35 with the council that the integrity of this rail corridor should be preserved. If this needs bord and pillar extraction near the identified routes for the new railway or a more narrow longwall extraction, then so be it.

My fourth issue relates to the haulage of up to 1.6 million tonnes of coal wash every

40 year over public roads. I think – I'm not sure where it's starting from, whether it's from the outlet of the mine or whether the washery, but if it's from the outlet of the mine near Mount Kembla, it appears to be over 46 kilometres of public roads. And a question for the commission, not covered by the department, is why is there coal waste going up from 1.1 to 1.6 million tonnes per annum? Is it because the poorer

45 quality coal is being extracted? I do not know. Now, contrary to some claims, there is unrecovered road system costs from bulk haulage.

The difference between New Zealand road user charges based on user pay and what pertains in Australia amounts to one cent per net tonne kilometre. In other words, if you haul a tonne of coal waste one kilometre, you – there's a hidden of subsidy of one cent. There are other external costs, as well, well covered in IPART 2012 report  
5 in the review of access pricing for the New South Wales grain line network. If you take their estimates for haulage and urban and non-urban, do some math, you find there's a hidden subsidy of \$1.44 per tonne. And so if we're talking it's 1.46 million tonnes a year of coal waste, then there's 2.3 million.

10 So it's submitted that the proposal that's conditionally approved, some – looking further at transport conditions, amazingly, the department, the secretary's report, was fairly silent on this. And I'm surprised even the RMS was silent on it as well. So, in summary, it's very, very hard for me as a resident of the Illawarra and the state of  
15 New South Wales to understand the support of the New South Wales Department of Planning for this proposal in its present form. And I – I think we need to ensure long-term supply of coal for the Port Kembla and Whyalla steelworks, protect the integrity of rail corridors and remember – go back to 1985, the summer of '85, where someone - - -

20 MR O'CONNOR: You need to wrap up now, please.

MR LAIRD: Yes. Well, just to conclude, someone mined too close to the South Coast Railway line, causing \$6 million worth of damage. We can't afford anything like that again, so I do support calls for a vice proposal, less coal over fewer years.  
25 And let's look after our steelworks, but not at the expense of our precious water catchment.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Phil. Questions?

30 MR BEASLEY: Not from me.

MR O'CONNOR: No. No questions from us. Thank you very much for your time.

MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Chris Schultz. Mr Schultz.  
35

MR C. SCHULTZ: Good afternoon, commissioners, and thank you for your time this afternoon. My name's Chris Schultz, and I'm speaking in support of the Dendrobium Project, having seen the positive outcomes Dendrobium Mine has had on the local community and the broader Illawarra region since 2002. I live in  
40 Wollongong and I'm currently working for Illawarra Metallurgical Coal in the environment team. As part of my role, I am responsible for a number of environmental employees and consultants who monitor the interaction of our mines on the environment and in communities around us. Across our operations, we implement leading environmental management practices.

45 This includes an extensive water monitoring network overlying our Dendrobium Mine, consisting of over – of over 1100 water monitoring devices. Some of the data

obtained from these monitoring networks can be access in real time to inform our decision-making processes and improve the way we operate our mines. I am proud to work with so many leaders in the field who have over the years established Illawarra Metallurgical Coal as a leader in underground mining in regard to safety,  
5 environmental monitoring and operational performance. Recently, this was recognised by the New South Wales Minerals Council, who presented Illawarra Metallurgical Coal with the New South Wales Mining Operation of the Year Award in 2020.

10 Our focus on the health and safety of the people who work across our operations has allowed us to continue operating throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety protocols developed and deployed across our sites have ensured we have been able to sustain continued employment of the 2000 men and women who work across our operations, provide constant business opportunities for the hundreds of local  
15 suppliers who service our operations and continue to supply metallurgical coal for the BlueScope steelworks at Port Kembla. Collectively, the continuation of the coal mining and steelmaking industries during 2020 has supported the ongoing employment for at least 5000 direct employees, as well as thousands more who work in the local businesses that support these cornerstone industries.

20 Personally, I appreciate being able to work locally. I enjoy the lifestyle I am provided by being able to work so close to home. Wollongong has a long history of coal mining and steelmaking and these industries have contributed significantly to the growth of the region from both a social and economic perspective. Since I have  
25 lived in the Illawarra, I have seen contributions from the local mining industry benefit the Illawarra Region. These contributions have supported the development of community sporting clubs, enabled the construction of walking paths and trails throughout nearby villages, provided much needed funding to local schools for improvements to infrastructure and learning initiatives, supported community groups  
30 throughout the provision of solar panels to reduce long-term energy costs and supported the Science Space in North Wollongong, which is home to one of the country's most advanced planetariums.

35 The mining and steelmaking industries were fundamental in the establishment of Wollongong University, through the donation of land portions of land for the first campus in the 1950s. For those of us lucky to work in the mining industry, we understand and respect the value of our industry to the local region. Each day poses a new challenge and South32 looks to embrace technology and innovation across our sites to address these challenges and continuously improve the way that we operate.  
40 I appreciate the opportunity to express my support for the Dendrobium Project. Thank you for your time.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Chris, for your presentation. Any questions?

45 MR BEASLEY: Not from me.

MR O'CONNOR: No, thank you.

MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Luke Oliver. Mr Oliver. Go ahead, sir.

MR L. OLIVER: Can you hear me? Good afternoon, commissioners. Thank you for taking the time to hear from those who work at Illawarra Metallurgical Coal. So  
5 it's these people who are – who live or lives would change if the project did not go ahead. My name is Luke Oliver. I'm the lead logistics at Illawarra Metallurgical Coal. I've worked in the industry for nine years. Prior to that, four years at BlueScope Steel, an industry that obviously utilises our supply of coal. Born – born  
10 in Bulli and living in Towradgi with my family, I have a strong bond to this area. I work in logistics and we keep our business moving. We work hard to manage our stockpiling operations, trucks – trucks and train.

We try to maintain as little impact to – to our community and to the environment as possible. Our teams are all locals and we take great pride in where we work and the  
15 difference we make. One of the key projects we've recently worked on that really strengthen our relationship, I believe, with our community has been reducing rail noise. There – there – there has been numerous improvements from – from rail track alignment and corner elevations, as well as developed of train brake shoe design and much more implemented by us and our contract partners to – to reduce that impact  
20 on our community. The – the – the industry provides opportunities in so many disciplines from – from operators to – to engineers, finance, technology, communications and – and a team dedicated to community consultation and engagement.

25 There are so many areas where our team dedicates so much of their time to business, while maintaining important relationships with our community to ensure we act responsibly. The future – the future of operations for Illawarra Metallurgical Coal is dependent on Dendrobium Extension Project. Our region highly depends on the jobs directly with South32 and – and as contract partners and – and supply services that –  
30 that's all but our industry. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to speak to you today about this very important project. Appreciate the time. Thank you.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you for your presentation, Luke. Questions?

35 MR BEASLEY: No.

MR O'CONNOR: No. Next speaker, please.

MR BEASLEY: Anthony Del Santo. Mr Del Santo.

40 MR A. DEL SANTO: Yes, good afternoon, commissioners. My name is Anthony Del Santo. I'm speaking to support the South32 Dendrobium Mine Extension Project. Thank you for the opportunity today to speak before you as an employee of South32 Dendrobium Mine, as a father of children who are employed directly and  
45 indirectly at the mine and its service industries and a member of the local community. I've been working at Dendrobium since 2004, when my family and I moved to the area to take up a position as a mine technician. Throughout this time,

my employment has provided my family and – with financial stability and opportunities that might never otherwise had.

5 My employment in a local location that provides access to great educational choices, diverse local services, wonderful lifestyle to raise a family has been invaluable. In my 16 years' experience working at Dendrobium Mine and more recently with South32 ..... the organisation take responsibilities towards health and safety ..... as well ..... about this time, I progressed to a position of a mining supervision and the participation ..... in development programs focused on health and safety of  
10 employees, employment diversities and the operational improvement. Importantly, I have seen these implications of outcomes with these put into place.

I am proud and grateful to work for an employee that invests in innovation, safety and who was recently announced as New South Wales Mining Operation of the Year  
15 by the New South Wales Mineral Council for 2020. As a father, over the years, I have had many discussions about my workplace experience and daily activities with my family ..... the values and principles of South32 Illawarra Met Coal enabled me to feel confident encouraging my children to pursue a career in the mining industry. My eldest child, Jessica, is currently completing an electrical apprenticeship at  
20 Dendrobium Mine while studying a double degree in electrical engineering and computer science at the University of Wollongong.

The values of South32 Illawarra Met Coal and the diverse working environment has supported her development with her career. My eldest son, Jackson, who's expecting  
25 his second child with his partner in a couple of weeks, currently works at Dendrobium Mine with the projects division of Nexus Mining, a South32 contract partner. My youngest son, Brendan, works for a local business that supplies specialised services to Dendrobium Mine, Dendrobium Washery and BlueScope Steel. If the Dendrobium Mine Extension Project did not gain approval, it would  
30 have both emotional and financial devastating effect to my family.

Importantly, this impact would be felt throughout the workforce and across the Illawarra. Over 500 employees work directly and Dendrobium Mine and, like my fellow colleagues and contract partners and their families, I would be directly  
35 affected if this project does not proceed. Over – not only would this impact negatively on the – the immediate employees and their families, this would also impact local businesses, the community and the broad extent ..... the State of New South Wales. Over – over my time working at Dendrobium Mine, South32 have supported and have been an active member of the community. They've helped the  
40 local primary school secure new air-conditioning, contributed to improvements in local parks and walkways, supported local teams, assisted and support the University of Wollongong, TAFE New South Wales, as well as contributed to many community fundraise activities.

45 South32 and Illawarra Met Coal is a significant contributor to the regional economy of Illawarra, spending over 160 million with over 400 local businesses in 2019. The royalties that generate from South32 Dendrobium Mine have supported the New

South Wales Government revenue. This has been highlighted in recent times in supporting New South Wales Government in the COVID-19 crisis. This revenue provides services for all the state and our local communities. In summary, whilst approval for this project would be a positive outcome for both myself and family, but  
5 also benefit the whole community. Without – without the approval, the financial and emotional impact of hundreds of families would be devastating. The Dendrobium Mine has proved itself to be a positive influence in the local community and deserves the opportunity to continue. I fully support the Dendrobium Mine Extension. Thank you for your time.

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MR O'CONNOR: Thank you for your presentation, Anthony. Any questions?

MR BEASLEY: Not from me.

15 MR O'CONNOR: No. Next speaker.

MR BEASLEY: The next speaker is Mat Reh. Mr Reh. Go ahead, sir.

MR M. REH: Yes. Good afternoon, commissioners. Thank you for your time in  
20 taking the time to listen to myself and my colleagues regarding the Dendrobium Mine Extension Program – Project. This morning, you have heard from Ben, Keith, Chris, Luke and Anthony talking about the project and what it means for us as local business and our community. My name is Mat Reh, and I'm a third generation coal miner. I've worked in the industry for 25 years, alongside my brother, Greg, Brad,  
25 brother-in-law Pete, who also works at Dendrobium. My father, Klaus, was a deputy at Dendrobium and he retired in the industry at the age of 64. Also, my grandfather, Barry Brooks, who worked at .....

I would like my son to become the fourth generation of our family, because I don't  
30 want to be the one in the family who has to close off the gates at Dendrobium, and would like him to see the great rewards and friendships that I've made from this industry. I grew up ..... went to school in ..... I started in the steelworks as an electrical apprentice and got the change to start in the coal industry. I've come from a family of rugby league players and fans and South32 has supported sporting groups  
35 in the local area for decades, throughout sponsorship and funding. My wife, Charmaine, her grandfather is the late Fred ..... who opened the monument, which is located outside the Wollongong City Council administration building.

This memorial pays tribute to the courage, struggle, sacrifice and comradeship  
40 that are hallmarks of Wollongong's mining community. It recognised honest ..... of gratitude owed by the city to the men and the women who have worked in the mining industry since inception in 1849. We are made up of a team of over 700 people here at Dendrobium, working across nine locations. We are a responsible team made up of experts in the field with 90 per cent of the workforce living locally here in  
45 Illawarra. I'd like to finish by saying the landscape of home would look very different without Dendrobium. Their operations are critical to BlueScope, our small businesses and other community who we support through projects and developments.

This project should be approved, not only for the continuation of jobs ..... the next generation of our future to support businesses and STEM career opportunities as we work responsibly into the future. Thank you for your time for listening to me today, commissioners.

5

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Mat, for your presentation. Any questions? No. No questions. Thanks, Mat.

MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is – okay. We're going to lunch.

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MR O'CONNOR: Okay. We've finished speakers for the moment. We will have a lunch break and return at 1.45. Thank you.

15 **ADJOURNED**

**[1.02 pm]**

**RESUMED**

**[1.45 pm]**

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MR O'CONNOR: Welcome back. We will have our next speaker, please.

MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Jess Dal Santo.

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MR O'CONNOR: No. Nicole.

MR BEASLEY: Sorry. Nicole Morahan. Sorry, Ms Morahan. Go ahead.

MS N. MORAHAN: Yes.

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MR BEASLEY: Yes.

MS MORAHAN: Hi, commissioners and assistant. I would like to thank you for taking the time to hear from me today. My name is Nicole Morahan. I am from Coledale. I'm a chartered accountant in the area, and I'm completing my Masters in Sustainability and working as a sustainability consultant in the area. I would like to pay my respect to the true custodians of the land and pay my respect to their elders past, present and future. I want to begin by declaring my objection to the expansion of the Dendrobium Mine, and in addition, I want to object to all mining under the water catchment area. I have reviewed the conditions – sorry. We know that subsidence is already causing significant groundwater and surface water losses, and it's affecting the quality and the quantity of our water.

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I have reviewed the conditions provided, and I don't believe that these are strong enough to protect our water and our community. All I see is more reporting on the issues and not reducing them. The Dendrobium Mine has not met past performance measures, and that has resulted in damage to our catchment, so I don't believe that

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the conditions will stop any further damage. All there seems to be is subsidence monitoring plans, water management plans, biodiversity plans, swamp plans, trigger action plans, but all of these are after the fact. They're adaptive management plans in case there's already damage. From all the reports that have been commissioned  
5 over the years, including the Independent Expert Panel into Mining of the Catchment, they all say that damage is appearing now, and then it will continue to appear long after initial mining operations.

10 So these conditions will not prevent the damage. And are they even comprehensive anyway? Are there significant knowledge gaps still present about the cumulative impacts on our water catchment? The Independent Expert Panel confirms that the predictions that we're seeing remain incomplete, that the monitoring in our analysis process is inadequate to fully understand the consequences, and they also confirm  
15 that the contribution to upland swamps, which we're seeing serious damage to from the Dendrobium Mine – they're saying that this is actually irreversible, and this is all of our experts. So we're commissioning all of these reports from the Independent Expert Panel, the height of cracking report, your water catchment audits. They all say the same thing, so why aren't we listening to them?

20 We know that the mine, this expansion will result in losses to the Greater Sydney water supply and that the answer seems to be offsets, water offsets, biodiversity offsets. But like for like offsets is not an acceptable method. Offsets or payments to Water New South Wales to improve leaky water infrastructure is not the same thing. It's not going to help the quantity of water that's at risk here and the cost of the lost  
25 water flows that will affect the whole ecological integrity of the area. The quality of water is reduced with the flows, biodiversity is lost, swamps are impacted, and all of these affect the water catching, storing and purification processes.

I would also like to raise the issue of the mine closure. I want to see more detailed  
30 information of what's going to happen after the closure and when water fills up the voids. This is before any expansions are made. I hear supporters when they say that it's going to be an issue anyway because the mine is already going to fill, but I am extremely worried about this. More than one of my friends are going to get a job, and who sponsors the local football team? The idea that water can fill contaminated  
35 and overflow or leak into our water catchment honestly keeps me up at night. Water security is something that's a real worry to us.

What if one of these triggers happens and there is damage and then, boom, the mine gets closed? What happens to all the workers? They're suddenly out of work, like  
40 up in Helensburgh Metropolitan Mine, where I grew up. They're all out of work this week. I would prefer to see a just transition for my family and friends that work in mines starting now, and this is the whole supply chain, including BlueScope and their ideas that they need the coal, and they're going to have to adjust their furnaces. They're going to have to adjust their furnaces anyway, so let's do it now with the  
45 transition to green hydrogen steel, which I'm learning about everyday at uni and is working all over Europe.

Our water catchment is at threat from – a triple threat from population growth, climate change and mining, so please, commissioners, reject this, because we’re going to see hotter and drier days in the future with less rain, and we need our water catchment to be healthy for water security. Thanks for your time.

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MR O’CONNOR: Thank you, Nicole. I’ll just see if there’s any questions. No. No questions. Thanks very much for your presentation. The next speaker is Blake Eager. Mr Eager.

10 MR B. EAGER: Good afternoon, commissioners. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today. My name is Blake Eager. I’m proud to be a fourth generation coalminer, born and bred in the Illawarra. Many of my family members and close friends are coalminers. The coalmining industry has provided us with the employment and our families with a fantastic lifestyle in a world class environment.  
15 In turn, we have invested socially and financially within the local community. Pretty much everyone in the Illawarra knows someone who has worked or works in the mines.

20 IMC is a significant contributor to the regional economy of the Illawarra, spending over 300 million with hundreds of local businesses in FY19. We contribute to local businesses, the government and the communities in which we operate. Many IMC employees have dedicated their lives outside of work to the local sporting and community groups. Personally, I was fortunate to secure a mining engineering traineeship at BHP back in 1987 and started work at Nebo Mine at Mount Kembla,  
25 the current Dendrobium Mine site. I’ve worked continuously in the coalmining industry in the Illawarra since that time. Nebo Mine commenced operation in 1947; however, Mount Kembla has been a mining community since around the 1860s. It is safe to say the village of Mount Kembla exists due to its coalmining history.

30 In my time in the industry, the technology of the mining equipment has developed rapidly. Mining equipment and processes are dramatically safer than they were when I started my employment. I feel the mining industry is at the forefront of safe work practices and procedures, including the approach taken with respect to the environmental impact. My mining education was achieved at Wollongong  
35 University and the Wollongong TAFE. I’ve also learned so much from the people working at the mines around the Illawarra and from BHP and South32, the companies who have employed us. They value safety and teamwork amongst their many values. The company is always improving the people that work for it by furthering our education in all areas of our work, especially safety and management  
40 leadership.

I’ve taken numerous friends that work outside the mining industry underground and commonly they all say the experience was positive and vastly different to what they imagined. I’ve always found the owners and operators of IMC to be employers who  
45 value their employees’ safety, the environment and the community. Since my employment began in 1987, the company has dramatically increased its workforce and spending to decrease its footprint, and it works tirelessly with the government

agencies to comply with all regulations and requirements necessary to operate a coalmine in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

5 The Dendrobium Mine Extension Project will secure the future of the Dendrobium Mine, the hundreds of local employees and businesses that support the operation and ensure that continued high supply – continued supply of high quality metallurgical coal to our domestic and international customers, including Australia’s largest steelmaker, BlueScope Steelworks. With an 85 year history of mining in the local region, IMC is part of the fabric of the Illawarra. The Dendrobium Mine Extension  
10 Project will ensure the continuation of 400 existing employment opportunities at the Dendrobium Mine and indirectly the employment of a further 1700 personnel across IMC. The project would support continued opportunities for the Illawarra business community and sustain the high quality of metallurgical coal for BlueScope. I offer my full support for the Dendrobium Mine Extension Project. Thank you.

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MR O’CONNOR: Thanks for your presentation, Blake. I don’t think there’s any questions, so we will move on to our next speaker.

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MR BEASLEY: The next speaker is Jess Dal Santo. Go ahead, Ms Dal Santo.

MS J. DAL SANTO: Yes. Good afternoon, commissioners. My name is Jess Dal Santo, and I’m speaking in support of South32s Dendrobium Mine Extension Project. Growing up in the Illawarra, my family has a strong connection with the local mining industry. My father has worked underground for over 20 years, and as  
25 children, we would be fascinated as he told us about his day to day spent working hundreds of metres below the ground, mining coal that would be turned into steel at the steelworks. After years of dad’s recount of his love of working in the mining industry, coupled with my growing passion for all things maths and science, I am fortunate enough to have started my electrical apprenticeship at the Dendrobium  
30 Mine, working alongside my dad, an underground deputy, and my brother, an underground operator.

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I have been studying at the University of Wollongong since 2016, and I’m currently in my fourth year of a double degree, studying electrical engineering and computer science. Seeking an opportunity to gain some practical and hands-on experience while completing my degree, I applied and was accepted to complete my electrical apprenticeship through TAFE New South Wales while working at the Dendrobium Mine. This opportunity has allowed me to work towards obtaining my electrical trade qualifications and get some valuable practical experience in applying the skills  
40 I have learned over the past four years during my studies at university.

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Right now, the workload is pretty full on. Having said this, I am encouraged by the thought of obtaining the necessary qualifications that would put me in the best possible position to obtain full-time employment in the mining industry once I have completed my studies. I am really enjoying my time working underground at Dendrobium Mine. I am able to solve new problems and am constantly challenged by the work we undertake on a daily basis. I am excited by the level of innovation

being implemented Dendrobium. Utilising systems that allow us to operate and monitor our equipment remotely is not only exciting to work on from an electrotechnology point of view, but it's continually improving the safety and efficiency of the way we operate.

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This is a great example of the everchanging nature of the mining industry and something which has placed Dendrobium at the forefront of safety and operational excellence in underground coalmining. In 2020, I was proud to hear that Illawarra Metallurgical Coal was announced as the New South Wales mining operation of the year at the New South Wales Minerals Council Industry and Supplier Awards. The Dendrobium Mine Extension Project currently being assessed by the commission will provide me with the opportunity to secure a full-time job at Dendrobium Mine following the completion of my studies and apprenticeship.

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Over the next few years, I hope to gain further experience working underground to be able to obtain my statutory qualifications which allow me to take on more responsibility and accountability at the mine as part of my role. In summary, my part for the Dendrobium project is based on many reasons – sorry – my support for the Dendrobium project is based on many reasons. This includes the opportunity it has provided me and my family to gain local employment, the ability to work closely with my dad and brother, sharing our stories and unique experiences from our time underground, being able to work both in the industry I love and in the region I've grown up, staying close to my family, friends and the beach, and being able to use my skills and experience to drive change in an industry that has not only created huge opportunities for my family, but has underpinned the Illawarra community for almost 100 years.

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As Dendrobium looks to a long and successful future of producing coal from areas 5 and 6, I look forward to being a part of the mine's success and supporting the implementation of emerging technologies which result in continued safe, efficient and sustainable operations, gaining benefits for me, my family and the Illawarra community for decades to come. Thank you for your time.

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MR O'CONNOR: Thanks for your presentation, Jess. Any questions? No. No questions. Thank you, Jess.

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MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Nick Southall. Mr Southall.

MR N. SOUTHALL: Hello.

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MR BEASLEY: Yes.

MR SOUTHALL: Can you hear me?

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MR BEASLEY: Please go ahead.

MR SOUTHALL: Okay. I'm Dr Nick Southall. I grew up in Wollongong. I work at the University of Wollongong, and I'm a lecturer in international development studies. I acknowledge the indigenous custodians of this land. I also acknowledge the Illawarra Aboriginal Lands Council is opposed to this development proposal. I  
5 join their opposition. South32 admit this proposal will result in a range of irreversible impacts to the water catchment special areas, massive loss of drinking water, dangerous effects on water quality and damage to countless Aboriginal cultural heritage sites. It also threatens ongoing impacts to the climate, the environment, ecosystems and people, including increased likelihood of bushfires on  
10 the Illawarra escarpment.

Large numbers of Australian water experts and the New South Wales Local Government Association are opposed to mining in the water catchment. Wollongong City Council's response to the expansion warns of the cumulative loss of water from  
15 the extension of this and other coalmines and that losses will be far greater than predicted. This proposal would significantly reduce local water quality and supplies at the same time as demand increases. Water New South Wales says this expansion must not go ahead. The proposed damage cannot be accurately calculated and may involve the loss of water forever. The damage cannot be repaired, and South32s  
20 offer of compensation for the loss of water cannot address the value of a priceless resource.

Water is essential for sustainable development, critical for healthy ecosystems and healthy communities. Water is the primary medium through which we feel the  
25 effects of climate change. A recent Bureau of Meteorology report explains how the dehydration of the escarpment will create conditions for a major inferno which could devastate local bush, ecosystems, wildlife and risk human life. The burning of fossil fuels and the undermining of our water catchment is turning our region into a tinderbox. This expansion would help to guarantee that in the years ahead, the  
30 Illawarra burns.

Financial accounting cannot measure priceless resources, ecosystems and heritage sites. But since the focus of those who seek to profit is on money, let's be clear. The  
35 economic gains will go mostly to South32. While many of the suggested financial and employment impacts claimed by the company and those doing economic modelling for them are based on assumption that do not hold up to scrutiny. This proposal is unlikely to provide even medium-term job creation or financial benefits to our community.

40 Consider the example of Metropolitan Mine. Since their recent expansion process began, Peabody's share price has collapsed, the company is facing bankruptcy, a large number of jobs at the mine have been eliminated, and the pit is now being shut down. Meanwhile, this year, South32 have axed around 100 jobs at Appin. 250 of  
45 South32s labour hire workers had their contracts terminated. Some of those jobs were readvertised but with a possible 40 per cent wage cut and poorer, more dangerous working conditions. Coalmining is increasingly reliant on labour hire and

casual workforces. It is delusional to suggest that there is a stable future in coal jobs and incomes. Our region's future prosperity increasing lies elsewhere.

5 Regarding BlueScope's reliance on South32, I urge the commissioners to carefully check the accuracy of company claims about the use of Dendrobium coal and alternative supplies. BlueScope's blast furnace will soon be retired, and a decision will likely be made in 2025 about the future of steelmaking at Port Kembla. BlueScope, along with the federal and New South Wales governments and the CSIRO are now supporting the development of Port Kembla as a green hydrogen  
10 hub, including a production facility worth more than \$500 million. Meanwhile, Liberty Steel in Whyalla is investing over 1 billion to rapidly produce decarbonised green steel because this is what global markets will demand.

15 In conclusion, South32s proposal is a twofold attack on our water supplies, undermining them from below and evaporating them from above. No money can compensate for something that is priceless and for destruction which will be perpetual. You cannot offset ecosystem and species loss. Coalmining in the water catchment does not offer a guarantee of secure jobs, decent jobs or economic growth. It will cause irreparable long-term damage to our future prospects. Our region must  
20 transition to a more sustainable future. This future needs your support, and that support must include protecting the water that nourishes our community, the economy and our environment. I strongly urge you to refuse this application.

25 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Nick, for your presentation. Any questions? No. No questions. Thank you, Nick.

MR BEASLEY: The next speaker is Mirtha Cox.

30 MS M. COX: Mithra Cox. Thank you, commissioners, for your time today. I'm a Wollongong city councillor and am speaking today from my experience both listening to and representing our community and also from my familiarity with council's long-term strategic goals for our city. I live in Corrimal, which is Dharawal Country, in northern Wollongong. Last summer was very hot and dry. Our water supplies were down to 27 per cent, bushfires were raging, and we were on  
35 very strict water restrictions. There was a very real fear in our city that we could run out of water entirely. As a councillor, I was being contacted by people who were very concerned about this. They would ring me with suggestions, like that we should be switching off the bubblers in the parks or the showers at the beaches.

40 The Bureau of Meteorology confirmed that 2019 was, in fact, Australia's hottest and driest year on record. But climate change is real, and scientist are telling us that extraordinary years like last summer are set to become more common, perhaps even the norm. In fact, it is quite plausible that if warming continues on the path that we're on, which Dr Flannery – Professor Flannery earlier today said that we're  
45 tracking on a worst-case scenario – it's quite plausible that last year will be comparatively mild compared to the summers that we can expect in the coming decades.

Wollongong is a city of a quarter of a million people. It would be catastrophic for our city to run out of water. I don't believe that there is any viable plan B in terms of our water supply. Even the Sydney Desalination Plant can only supply 15 per cent of Sydney's water needs when it's running at fully capacity. We're still very much  
5 reliant on our water catchment. Meanwhile, Water New South Wales, as we've already heard, has warned that the expansion of the Dendrobium Mine could see the loss of 3.3 billion litres of water.

10 The continued mining at Dendrobium also poses a significant threat to the long-term strategic transport plans for our city. The Port Kembla Terminal is planned to expand as a container port when Port Botany reaches capacity in the next few decades. The rail link between the Illawarra and southwest Sydney is a critical link to enable the port expansion. Just last week, a consortium, including Wollongong City Council, the University of Wollongong, the Illawarra Business Chamber and  
15 Wollondilly Shire Council, released a new research report to demonstrate the need and urgency of building this link before 2036 so that it can be operational when the expected port expansion occurs both as a freight line and as a passenger service linking to the western Sydney aerotropolis.

20 I note that in the submission that council wrote in September to the IPC last year, we identified the potential impact of mining subsidence on the Maldon to Dombarton rail corridor. This is the rail corridor to connect the Illawarra to southwest Sydney, including the airport. The proposed longwalls in area 5 underlie this corridor. Subsidence has already been observed, and council's submission does provide more  
25 detail, but crucially it says that:

*In council's view –*

and I'm quoting –  
30

*the integrity of the Maldon to Dombarton rail corridor should be preserved, and, therefore, council requests that an appropriate management plan and monitoring program be developed to manage subsidence-related impacts.*

35 I am not aware that this has occurred, and I believe it would be reckless to approve these longwalls without any assurance that the rail corridor would be protected. I also note that Wollongong Council has a target of net zero emissions by 2050, as does the New South Wales Government, as, in fact, does BlueScope Steel. Continuing to mine and burn coal for the next three decades is totally inconsistent  
40 with this and seriously jeopardises the climate and the safety of all of our citizens. There are renewable technologies, as we've heard, for making low emission steel, such as hydrogen. Yes, these technologies take time to implement at scale, but work needs to begin now in order to make that transition.

45 I note that the BAEconomics report which examines the economic interactions between the mine and related entities in the Illawarra only looks at the likely consequence of a non-approval of the Dendrobium Expansion Project and doesn't

model the scenario that BlueScope needs to make steel without coal within the next decade to remain congruent with both international commitments to net zero emissions and to remain competitive on the world market. The existing mining licences give a full decade of further coal expansion to enable this transition to take place.

In recent months, many of our major trading partners have announced intentions have net zero emissions targets. That includes China, Japan, South Korea, the United States, joining trading partners that have already done this, such as the EU and the United Kingdom. Unless we have a plan to transition our steelworks to net zero emissions, there will be no market for steel made with coal because the countries that are making it with low emission technologies will have beaten us to it. Furthermore, the New South Wales Government has recently legislated \$50 million to develop this green hydrogen industry. They have recently identified Port Kembla as a hydrogen hub.

I will just finish by saying – by asking you to consider the decision that you are making today is not about mining coal at Dendrobium in 2020. It is a decision that needs to stand the test of time and is a decision about mining coal in 2030, 2040 and 2050, and I do ask you to consider whether this decision will stand the test of time and whether we will consider coalmining under our water catchment to be necessary or even defensible in 20 or 30 years time from now.

MR O’CONNOR: Thank you, Councillor, for your presentation. No. No questions. Thank you very much.

MR BEASLEY: Next speaker is Carol Berry.

MS C. BERRY: Hello. Thank you. Look, I’m going to talk quite quickly because I’ve got quite a lot to say and I want to contain it within the five minutes, of course. First of all, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I really appreciate it. My name is Carol Berry, and I live in Mount Kembla about 800 metres from the entrance of the Dendrobium Mine. I’ve lived in Mount Kembla for nearly 10 years, and all up I’ve lived in the Illawarra for over 20 years. Today, I’m speaking against the proposed expansion, and it was not an easy decision to choose to speak publicly today, but I feel strongly about this proposal. I understand the significant economic benefits that the mine brings in terms of jobs, export dollars and the flow-on benefits to the Port Kembla Steelworks, for example, but despite that, I’m still opposed to the expansion.

My opposition is based on the fact that on balance I don’t believe the economic benefits of the proposed expansion outweigh the costs. If someone put forward a proposal today to build a tourist park in the middle of the watch catchment, it would never be approved. This would be despite the fact that a tourist park could bring hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars to the Illawarra economy. So why would that proposal not be approved? Because such activities are not allowable in water catchment areas and for very good reason. As I understand it, the law stipulates that

activities in the water catchment areas must have negligible impact on water quality, and that's why those areas are closed to the public.

5 Given that mining does have an impact on water quality and quantity in the water catchment, I find it perplexing and even perverse that we are allowing this activity and considering an expansion of this activity. As I understand it, Water New South Wales is strongly opposed to this proposed expansion, saying that the predicted loss of surface water of up to 5.2 megalitres per day associated with this proposal would be unacceptable. Some things are priceless, and the integrity of our water supply is 10 one of those things, and the crux of my argument is that we should not be comprising and risking a priceless resource for a short-term economic benefit, and we all know that 30 years goes by very quickly.

15 The main reason that I'm speaking today is, of course, because I'm a resident that lives near the mine. Our community of Mount Kembla is a tight-knit village. We have about 350 homes in our community, and I would like to tell you a little bit about our town. Local families in our village are trying to preserve some time honoured traditions, such as neighbours keeping an eye on each other's kids so that 20 children can have all the freedoms to roam that we all enjoyed when we were kids. As a result, you often see kids walking to school in large groups unsupervised or riding their bikes around the neighbourhood together, and kids in Mount Kembla also do something extraordinary: they play and swim in our local creeks.

25 I read a report a number of years back about the pollution caused to local creeks and streams by the Dendrobium Mine, and I've not had the heart to revisit that report because the thought of the creeks and streams that flow through our little town being polluted horrifies me. Just this weekend gone when we had our heatwave, I was driving down the main road in Mount Kembla, and I saw a dad and his two kids with their swimmers on and towels slung over their shoulders, heading down to the creek 30 for a swim. Our ability to enjoy these very simple and innocent pleasures can easily be lost.

35 When I think about my own best childhood experiences – and I invite you to do the same – they often involved memories of my siblings and my friends playing free of any cares at the beach or in the bush or in our local creeks. It saddens me enormously that kids playing in the creeks in Mount Kembla might already be unsafe because of the mine. If we allow even further expansion of the mine, the damage to creek beds, the water losses and pollution of water only intensifies. To think that the mine can expand without causing this damage is naïve at best. 40

45 The climate is warming at an alarming rate. The most recent drought hammered home how quickly our water security can be compromised. We must make hard decisions now about what activities we allow to protect the integrity and availability of our water supply into the future. When making your decision, if you could spare a thought for those of us that live very close to the mine and want to live in a clean environment, that would very much be appreciated. Even as recently as August, it was reported in the media that water samples that were taken from local creeks after

heavy rain on the Illawarra and south coast caused a black sludge to wash downstream from the mine. South32 released a statement over the weekend of August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> explaining how the – the origin of this contaminated water, and I quote:

5

*Following heavy rainfall over the weekend, South32 identified a structural issue with a sediment pond located at Dendrobium Mine's Kemira Valley coal loading facility which has resulted in a release of water containing fine coal particles into a nearby creek.*

10

The statement said. Some things are so valuable that you cannot put a price on them. Clean water, creeks and streams are priceless. Thank you.

15 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Carol. Thanks for sticking to your time. Any questions? No. No questions. Thank you, Carol.

MR EDEN: David Eden is the next speaker. Mr Eden.

20 MR D. EDEN: Hello. Yes. I declare I'm a community member of the Independent Hearing Assessment Panel for Wollondilly Local Government Area. I also declare that my views submitted on this Dendrobium Extension Project are not part of the Wollondilly Local Planning Panel. I'm president of Undermined Incorporated, a community action group addressing damage caused by longwall coalmining in Wollondilly Shire. Undermined campaigns for remediation, repair and restoration of  
25 local creeks, rivers, lakes impacted by mining. We're concerned because we lost all the water from the five Thirlmere Lakes, which coincided with the closest approach of longwall coalmining by Tahmoor Colliery in the years 1997 to 2001. So what I'm trying to do is share with you our experience so you will make the right decision.

30 I speak for Undermined Inc and for the community affected by coalmining. What we've learned at Thirlmere Lakes leads us to object to further environmental damage. Sustainability is the key issue that you, the Independent Planning Commission, must address. In this submission, Undermined explains the  
35 information based on science that leads to only one conclusion: this application for an extension is not sustainable. Were you to allow the project to proceed even with conditions, the harm the project will do to the environment will make living conditions unacceptably worse for some people and for some people it will be unendurable.

40 I'm going to show you a video produced by the New South Wales Nature Conservation Council on – and also Chris Jonkers. The video shows the effect of coalmining under upland swamps. I know you've had a look courtesy of South32 at the swamps that South32 intends to destroy or has already affected, but I don't think you've seen as much damage as what has happened in other swamps. So I will just  
45 go to this, and here we go. If I could go backwards. We will get there. All right.

Well, I'm going on to say that in 2019, almost exactly a year ago, the Green Wattle Creek fire at Oakdale occurred earlier in the fire season. The fire killed more mature trees than a similar fire in 2001 this year – or last year. It was because of climate change. And the photo I'm sharing with you shows our tree plantation established in 1998 being burnt. My family had 18 years to prepare for that fire. This photo shows our neighbour's property going up in flames. This is what we lived through. The wildlife found refuge in one of our house paddocks, but 95 per cent of the rest of our property was destroyed, and we still don't see native bees, small birds that depend on undergrowth. We've just got burnt and black sticks.

My personal experience is that the worldwide one Celsius average rise in atmospheric temperature that we've had in 2019 is no longer endurable. It's not because I'm a man or that I'm Australian, nor that I've been an engineer that we survived the 2019 Green Wattle Creek fire. It was with the help of the New South Wales Fire Service and the RFS Fire and Rescue. It was with the help of neighbours and good luck that I've survived to say now is the time to act. We must act now to limit how much more unendurable our climate is becoming. You can't approve this project. It's only going to make things worse.

The recommendations that you have from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment don't say what conditions you should impose on South32 to make the world more endurable for the rest of us. Now, the only advice we're given is to pack up and go. But you're not offering and nobody else is offering travel advice for the greater gliders who might have returned by now to the bushland that we have if they hadn't been burnt. In 2019, we had the hottest days ever recorded in our part of Wollondilly. In February - - -

### VIDEO SHOWN

MR BEASLEY: Thank you. We saw that video.

MR EDEN: All I've got to do now is come back onto the screen.

MR BEASLEY: We can see you.

MR EDEN: You can see me. All right. In that case, what I want to say is the following quotation from the Director, South East Branch, Biodiversity and Conservation Division, Environment, Energy and Science, part of the New South Wales Department of Planning, Industry and Environment explains why we are concerned:

*In its current form, the proposed mine layout at Dendrobium remains likely to have a significant impact on threatened species and ecological communities and, in our opinion, does not satisfactorily demonstrate the avoid principle has been met.*

We can't wish a problem as bad as this will go away or that our children will solve it in the next generation. The problem is immediate. I think my bushfire photos showed that. We've got to refuse the application. Under the Environment, Planning and Assessment Act 1979, you, the Independent Planning Commission, must  
5 consider the environment, heritage and public interest. It's well-established that when determining a development application for a major fossil fuel development such as the Dendrobium Extension Project, the IPC has a duty to consider the likely direct and indirect impacts of the development on climate change. It's also well-  
10 established that a consent authority is required to consider these impacts, along with the likely impacts as a component of the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

The development is clearly not in the public interest, even though some people will have jobs in the meantime before steelmaking in Port Kembla becomes a stranded  
15 asset. And the people who work there would be wise to start looking for jobs soon so they don't get stuck in well-paid jobs that are comfortable and are what people have been doing for generations but are no longer sustainable. I'm going to give you an example of what happened to me at the University of New South Wales in 1970 when I was studying for Master's degree in Business Administration. The university  
20 asked Rod Carnegie to give a two hour lecture on business strategy. He later became Sir Roderick, a director of ..... Rio Tinto, a business leader and titan of industry. He described the innovations adopted then 50 years ago to get the world's biggest copper mine on Bougainville up and running. One innovative idea was to involve the people living on Bougainville by giving them jobs at the mine and shares in  
25 Bougainville Copper.

Now, my eldest brother was a mining engineer, working there. My brother had described to me mine waste – well, tailings is the word used by mining people to make it sound better – were dumped into creeks at the mine site so it would wash  
30 down to the sea. My brother said that downstream where the people lived on riverbanks, the rivers were 30 feet or 10 metres above their houses. Here was my chance to ask a company director about damage being caused to the environment. Do you know that 50 years ago, I knew that if I suggested the environment was worth considering, I would be shunned? I was in a room full of emerging leaders,  
35 yet because I didn't want to lose work in the future, I was not brave enough to ask how indigenous people would feed themselves on Bougainville.

Are we going to learn something from this? CRA and Bougainville Copper lost the world's biggest copper mine. It's now just rusted machinery. The environment will  
40 get you in the end. The environment is what we live in. The damage intended to be done to the environment by the Dendrobium Mine Expansion is too great a price to be paid for any of the jobs and growth results expected to be achieved by the proposed development. We have to deal with climate change scientifically. We learned something from COVID-19 and the pandemic. We learned to wear masks.  
45 We used science to guide our behaviour. Take advantage of what we know. Don't ignore the problem. It's going to be hard. We must do something to make this world survivable. I recognise the traditional owners and custodians of the land, air, seas

and rivers of Australia. I pay my respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders past, present and emerging. I aspire to learn from traditional knowledge and customs we can live together sustainability, protecting our environment, cultural heritage - - -

5 MR O'CONNOR: ..... your time has expired. You'll need to wrap up, please.

MR EDEN: Thank you.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you for your presentation, David.

10

MR EDEN: Do you have any questions?

MR O'CONNOR: Yes. I will just check. No. No questions. Thanks very much, David.

15

MR BEASLEY: Our next speaker is Bella Gould. Are you there, Ms Gould?

MS B. GOULD: Thank you.

20

MR BEASLEY: Go ahead.

MS GOULD: To begin, I would like to pay my respects and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today. For me, that is the Wodiwodi People of the Dharawal Nation. I'd like to thank the Independent  
25 Planning Commission for allowing me the opportunity to speak in opposition to the Dendrobium Extension Project. I am a concerned young person from the Illawarra who is upset by how this expansion will directly impact both the future of our local environment and the preservation of the rich cultural sites that we are so lucky to have in our area.

30

The Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment records and physical survey of only 6.91 per cent of the affected area in the proposed expansion identified 58 Aboriginal heritage sites likely to be affected by longwall mining in area 5 and area 6. These are mostly rock shelters with or without art deposits and axe-grinding groove sites  
35 located in creeks. There have been – there has already been significant damage and destruction to some sites, including Whale Cave, where the damage was only uncovered when the Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council was granted access to the site for the first time in decades, as these sites sit within the special areas of the water catchment.

40

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Biodiversity Conservation division proposed changes to South32s mine design to avoid impacts to six of these Aboriginal heritage sites. However, changes are made to South32 that would protect only one site. There is no requirement to preserve or avoid these sites and no  
45 penalties to South32 when it destroys them. To reiterate this point, these invaluable cultural sites will be under major risk of being destroyed by mining whilst the area remains out of bounds for local Aboriginal communities. The temporary monetary

gain from this mine expansion does not validate the immense destruction of Aboriginal heritage sites. Some of these sites are thousands of years old and could be lost in a mere matter of years. This potential loss is unacceptable and must not be overlooked.

5

South32 predicts that its 305 metre wide longwall panels in the extension may result in subsidence of two to 2.45 metres. Previously mines of similar width caused 2.5 to three metres of subsidence, so South32s prediction may be erring towards a best case scenario prediction. The mining and associated subsidence will cause cracking of the land on the surface, including rivers, creeks, small water courses and swamps that feed our drinking water reservoirs and subsequent water loss to the catchment. This is irreversible damage.

10

The mining will come to within 300 metres of the Avon and Cordeaux reservoirs. It will result in water losses from Avon, which is the sole source of water supply to over 310,000 residents and businesses in the Illawarra region, as well as Cordeaux Reservoir, which along with Cataract Reservoir is the main water supply for Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly Council areas, and even as far afield as Nepean Reservoir, which is the water supply for the nearby towns of Bargo, Thirlmere, Picton and The Oaks. All three affected reservoirs, Avon, Cordeaux and Nepean, also supply water to Sydney.

15

20

It will take 100 years for groundwater levels to stabilise in area 5 and 200 years for area 6. Thus, the dewatering impacts of the mining will become the burden of my children and grandchildren, who will also be suffering the incredible impacts of climate change through more extreme weather events, longer and more severe droughts and more serious bushfire risk. This extension will continue the dewatering of the forest, bushland and swamps above the mine, making the area even more prone to bushfires. The water catchment was one of the few unburnt areas of bushland in the 2020 fires, and it is imperative that it is protected from mining induced degradation.

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30

Please consider the severe implications that the Dendrobium Extension Project will have, especially the environmental impacts, loss of water and destruction of Aboriginal heritage sites. My generation has already been tasked with the job of cleaning up your generation's mess and attempting to preserve our environment. Let's work together now to stop this becoming the burden of my children and grandchildren as well. Thank you.

35

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MR O'CONNOR: Thanks for your presentation, Bella? Questions?

MR BEASLEY: Not from me.

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MR O'CONNOR: No. No questions. Thanks very much, Bella.

MR BEASLEY: I think we have Kim Wagstaff on the phone.

MR K. WAGSTAFF: Yes, I'm here.

MR BEASLEY: Go ahead, Mr Wagstaff.

5 MR WAGSTAFF: Today, I'm speaking on behalf of Oatley Flora and Fauna  
Conservation Society, also known as OFF, established in 1955, based in the Lower  
Georges River area and has over 300 active members. OFF's mission statement is  
working to protect, conserve and enhance the nature environment locally and  
globally, and so we have a keen interest in the precious environment of the Sydney  
10 and Illawarra water catchment areas.

On that basis, OFF objects to the Dendrobium Mine Extension Project for the  
following reasons. Mining induced subsidence will damage the water courses and  
swamps that feed our drinking water reservoirs. And I think you've just heard these  
15 statements. South32 predicts that its 305 metre wide longwall panels may result in  
subsidence of two to 2.45 metres. Previous mines of similar width have caused 2.5  
to three metres of subsidence. So South32's prediction may be conservative.

The mining and associated subsidence will also cause cracking of the land on the  
20 surface, including rivers, creeks, smaller water courses and swamps that feed our  
drinking water reservoirs, and subsequent water loss to the catchment. No level of  
damage is acceptable to the special areas. The mining will come to within 300  
metres of the Avon and Cordeaux reservoirs, resulting in water losses from both. As  
an important component of the Greater Sydney water catchment, these reservoirs,  
25 along with the Nepean, supply between 20 and 30 per cent of Greater Sydney's water  
in normal times. In dry years, the water courses in the mined area that flow into  
Avon reservoir are expected to totally dry up.

Secondly, millions of litres of water will be lost. The cracking and dewatering of  
30 water courses, swamps and aquifers is expected to add the loss of many millions of  
litres of water each day to the 10 megalitre daily water loss from Dendrobium's  
current and past mining. For the 28 year duration of the expansion project,  
Dendrobium's average daily water loss will reach 22 megalitres, more than double  
the existing. South32 wants to purchase water licences and pay cash compensation  
35 to Water New South Wales for the water they take from the catchment. It cannot  
possibly compensate for irreversible damage to the special areas and for the legacy of  
water loss. The New South Wales Independent Advisory Panel for Underground  
Mining says that:

40 *At this stage, because there is a lack of clarity as to if and how Dendrobium  
Mine can be sealed, it should be assumed that surface losses from the  
catchment will occur over the long term and potentially in perpetuity.*

"Potentially in perpetuity". This is a staggering impact of the mining proposal.  
45 Thirdly, damage to upland swamps. The upland swamps of Woronora Plateau play  
an important role in the water catchment by capturing and holding water, filtering it,  
and in times of drought releasing it slowly into the creeks and rivers that feed into the

reservoir. These swamps are also classified as endangered ecological communities and are significant in terms of their biodiversity and contain rare plants and animals. The upland swamps provide a mosaic of permanently wet peaking soil within a dry sandstone landscape.

5

Dewatering the swamps will result in local extinctions in breach of state and federal legislation. Specifically, 25 of the 46 swamps in the mining area are expected to be cracked by the mining. Water drains away from swamps into the mining void, the swamps desiccate, the flora and fauna die off, and dryland species take over. The swamps lose their capacity to hold water in drier times. They are more prone to erosion and more prone to bushfire.

10

Fourthly, damage to valuable Aboriginal cultural heritage. Mining induced damage to Aboriginal heritage sites at the Dendrobium has also been recorded. Assessment of the proposed affected area identified 58 Aboriginal heritage sites likely to be affected by the proposed longwall mining areas 5 and 6. Only very limited attempts have been made to redesign the proposal to avoid potential damage at these sites, so further desecration will be added to the existing legacy of mining. The foregoing are just some of the issues that are, to say the least, problematic for this mining proposal and justifying its rejection.

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Justification. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment recommends an approval based on the economic value of the metallurgical coal from the Bulli and Wongawilli seams, its relationship with domestic steel production, export royalties and a contribution to the regional economy of Wollongong.

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MR O'CONNOR: Kim, you'll need to wrap up now. Your time has expired.

MR WAGSTAFF: Okay. The DPIE has not even considered alternatives, and there are a number of alternatives to this proposal design and locations from where they get their coal. However, in conclusion, considering the foregoing, the OFF members consider there is insufficient justification for proceeding with this proposal against the significant devastation it will cause to the highly valued water catchment areas. We, therefore, object to this mining proposal and recommend its rejection to the IPC. Thank you very much.

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MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Kim, for that presentation. Any questions?

MR BEASLEY: Not from me.

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MR O'CONNOR: No. No questions. Thanks, Kim.

MR BEASLEY: The next speaker is Gavin Workman.

45

MR G. WORKMAN: Yes.

MR BEASLEY: Go ahead, sir.

MR WORKMAN: Yes. Can you hear me?

MR BEASLEY: Yes.

5 MR WORKMAN: I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land I now reside  
on. Pupu Springs is in the Takaka Valley in Golden Bay, and it's the place I go to in  
my mind when I need solace and nurturing. Te Waikoropupu is cold water springs,  
cleanest water in the world, where the water is tapu, sacred. I have been there a lot  
recently since I started reading of the Dendrobium Mine Expansion. I have never  
10 been insulted by such arrogant, aggressive language in all my life as this proposal.  
South32 think they have the right to destructive behaviour with their reckless mining  
method. Basically, they say they will pull back from named geological features but  
will undermine and destroy everything else.

15 Let me tell you about an unnamed environmental feature I have been blessed to  
experience. I've only been into the special areas of the Sydney water catchment  
once. We trudged through a couple of kilometres of dry eucalypt forest and dry  
banksia scrub and came across an oasis. It was a Te Waikoropupu moment for me.  
The air suddenly changed. It became more humid. It was alive and green and damp,  
20 and the ground softened and welcomed beneath my feet. There were suddenly birds  
and reptiles and dripping water. The colour palette changed dramatically from  
greyish grey and brown to vibrant green. There was life and there was hope.

That refuge has been tagged CCUS4 by the mining company, and longwall 6 is  
25 supposed to pass directly underneath it. I stood there in this awe, wondering how  
could anyone think that the coal 300 metres below my feet was more important than  
this paradise. I believe all water is tapu and that this perfection surely couldn't be  
just collateral damage for a mining company. If this swamp had have been above  
Dendrobium, it would have been destroyed. I hope you have been given the  
30 opportunity to see some of the upland swamps and to touch our earth.

The planning and IPC and DPIE must mean something. Our ancestors had the good  
sense to put aside thousands of hectares to secure our water needs into the future, and  
now we are contemplating destroying it. Planning is for the future for all people and  
35 all future generations, and it's not just New South Wales. These decisions now  
impact on the planet with the emission of millions of tonnes of CO2. Last summer,  
Black Summer, burned a hole in Australia and scarred the Australian psyche. It was  
a wakeup call that cost the lives of billions of wildlife and insects, leaving a burnt  
wasteland of 18 million hectares.

40  
Greta screams at us, "You say you love your children above all else, and yet you  
steal their future in front of your eyes." You know, we shouldn't make these  
decisions. Our grandchildren should. We should at least ask them what would they  
want, what do they want, what do they need, rather than focusing on some short-term  
45 gain. What will you tell your grandchildren? We have come to a point where today  
is tomorrow. This climate nightmare is upon us. What we do right now determines  
our future, our children's chance of survival.

MR O'CONNOR: Gavin, your time has expired. Can you please wrap up.

MR WORKMAN: Yes. Please reject this proposal. Please.

5 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Gavin. Questions? No. Thanks for your presentation.

MR BEASLEY: The next speaker is Melinda Menning.

10 MS M. MENNING: Good afternoon. Can you hear me clearly?

MR BEASLEY: Yes. Thank you.

15 MS MENNING: Look, I apologise for presenting on the phone and not giving visuals, but my internet connection is just terrible, unfortunately. Yes. We've had a lot of problems in the area. So I'd just like to acknowledge that I am sitting on unceded Dharawal land. I live in Helensburgh, very close to the Metropolitan Mine and the Woronora catchment area. I am an avid bushwalker and a great lover of plants, and I'm a member of the New South Wales Greens and New South Wales  
20 Parks Association and our community group, Protect Our Water Alliance. I'd like to acknowledge the work and the time and the emotional effort that has been put into these presentations, and I'm just a bit upset after listening to Gavin, because I know the sacrifices that people are making to do this. But I still want to present. I have a few quick points of emphasis.

25 I would like more detail on the purchase of land at Maddens Plains by South32. I would like to know whether that land was previously mined by Corrimal Coal and whether it actually has intact coastal upland swamps. If this is an offset, it needs to be done properly. Now, I don't want to repeat anything that anyone has said. I told  
30 you that I'm an avid bushwalker, and I have noted that there has been a lot of dieback of plants in my area here. I have done research, and I would like to question whether the environmental impacts of this mine have been fully considered by South32 and the New South Wales Department of Environment, given that there is no mention of an invasive plant species that is called phytophthora cinnamomi.  
35 Now, anyone can google this. It's spelled p-h-y-t-o-p-h-t-h-o-r-a cinnamomi. Phytophthora cinnamomi. It has not been mentioned, and I think that it needs to be mentioned specifically, and I'm going to tell you the reasons why.

40 Phytophthora infects plant roots and has the effect of slowly killing susceptible plants and degrading habitats of fauna. Infection of native plants by phytophthora cinnamomi is listed a key threatening process under the New South Wales Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and 1991 – 1999. A statement of intent – and this is all on the public record – a statement of intent has been prepared in New  
45 South Wales as a response to this key threatening process listing. It's a key threatening process. That's all you've got to google. Dieback caused by the root rot of this fungus is also listed as a key threatening process under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. That would be the

EPBC Act. A threat abatement plan for this disease in natural ecosystems has been prepared by the Commonwealth, and I do not see any evidence that this has been adhered to or even looked at.

5 Now, these federal and state listings are evidence of extensive research and scholarship in this area, and there are several experts writing on it. To the best of my knowledge, as I've said before, the DPIE and South32 have not made mention in their reports of the biosecurity risks of introducing or spreading this invasive plant pathogen within these catchment lands. Now, it's important for you to know that it has been proven that it is spread by human activity on the surface. It includes roadbuilding, powerline maintenance and plant works for mining. It is even spread on the shoes of bushwalkers, by mountain bike, trailbike riders and feral pigs. Given that catchment lands have had minimal previous impacts by human activities, we could presume that it may not be there. We don't know if it has ever been tested. If it's not there, they need to not introduce it. If it is there, they need to put in abatement plans so that they don't spread it.

I would like to point out that there has been well-documented and controlled studies done and that this pathogen is already known to be in the Royal National Park, in Dharawal National Park in areas of the South Coast. It causes dieback of a variety of plant species. There are situations where it can be present and lie dormant in the land for years and not cause dieback and only begins to cause it in certain circumstances. I would like to see follow through. I want follow through from South32. I want to see a cohesive abatement plan. I want to see that they are going to take this seriously. They have no right to introduce a pathogen into that area if it is not already there, and they have no right to spread it. It will cause - - -

MR O'CONNOR: Melinda, you will need to wrap up, please. Your time has expired.

MS MENNING: Yes. I know. I will cause ecosystem collapse, and it really needs to be considered. I'm very, very upset that nobody has considered this, and they have spent all this money doing their due diligence, and I don't see any evidence of it. It's devastating. And I'm so, so sorry to see the damage of this land. It really is appalling.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Melinda.

MS MENNING: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

MR O'CONNOR: Yes. We do have - - -

MS MENNING: I'm doing a written presentation. I will send you all the links. I will send you the research that was done in Dharawal National Park. It's all in the public domain. I do not understand why this has not been raised. I'm really, really disappointed. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

MR O'CONNOR: Before you go, Melinda, we do have a question for you.

MS MENNING: Yes.

5 MR HANN: Ms Manning – yes. I just – you mentioned Maddens Plains, which is a proposed - - -

MS MENNING: Yes.

10 MR HANN: - - - offset area by the applicant.

MS MENNING: Yes.

15 MR HANN: Just for clarification, are you questioning whether there has been or there's some impact related to underground mining in that area?

MR O'CONNOR: Are you still there? I think we've lost her.

20 MR HANN: Ms Menning – yes. It sounds like we've lost you there.

MR O'CONNOR: All right. Well - - -

25 MR BEASLEY: Yes. We'll go now to Mark Fetterplace. Mr Fetterplace, are you there?

MR M. FETTERPLACE: Yes, I am.

MR BEASLEY: Please go ahead, sir. We can hear you.

30 MR FETTERPLACE: Good afternoon. I'm a retired vet surgeon from Coledale in Wollongong. I'm not a research scientist, but I'm a scientist, and I accept the overwhelming evidence for manmade global warming. And incidentally I appreciate the attention you're, obviously, paying to our submissions. And I'm sure you've heard a lot about the damage that will be done from this proposal. Damage to  
35 ecosystems and our water supply is unacceptable.

I'm sure you've heard this a million times, but we have to stop burning coal. In the near future, I think it will be considered strange that Australian politicians took so long to accept this or selfish or negligent, in the same way that we now consider it  
40 strange to deny women the vote or to not wear seatbelts. I was at the current Arthur Streeton exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and saw that in Streeton's time, there was a coalmine opened on Sydney Harbour. He called this environmental vandalism and campaigned successfully to have it closed. I guess it offended him visually. Mining under our catchment and the sensitive ecosystems isn't as visible in  
45 the same way, but it's also environmental vandalism. It has to stop. Not to be increased, but stopped.

The one benefit to this mine expansion is jobs. The one benefit to this mine extension is jobs. However, this is dishonest to the workers. Coal is a fading industry, and there needs to be fair and just transitions put in place to support miners as the mines close. Just this week, Peabody announced the temporary and possibly  
5 permanent closure of their mine in Helensburgh. There's no mention of transition arrangements for the workers, but hopefully they exist. This needs to be the focus, not expanding mines. The damage from this mine far outweighs the relatively few, probably temporary jobs created, and I ask you to reject the mine extension. Thank you.

10 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Mark. Thanks for that presentation. No questions?

MR BEASLEY: Not from me. No.

15 MR O'CONNOR: No.

MR BEASLEY: The next - - -

MR O'CONNOR: Next speaker, please.

20 MR BEASLEY: - - - speaker is Gene Cooper. Mr Cooper, we can see you just.

MR G. COOPER: Good afternoon, commissioners. Thanks for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Gene Cooper, and I'm a fitter at the Dendrobium Mine.  
25 I've been at the mine for nearly 15 years. I was born and raised in Mount Kembla Village, where the mine is situated. I went to the primary school down the road, and I had my first beer at the Mount Kembla pub. I love the local area, and although I've moved off the hill, I find I still spend a lot of my free time around Mount Kembla. Mount Kembla Village has always been a mining village and it has always been very  
30 proud of it. We learned about the history of the village at school, about the Mount Kembla mining disaster in 1902, and we went to services at the Miners Church on Cordeaux Road. Mining is a part of Mount Kembla's identity. It's who we are.

The village was without a working mine for a few years when I was a teenager when  
35 we got word that IMC were looking at opening a new mine at the old Nebo site. Residents were rapt with the vitality that a new project such as the mine would bring to the region. The village welcomed the IMC and Dendrobium, and the mine responded. Today, the Dendrobium is one of the few mines in New South Wales which produces coking coal. This coal is used to produce steel at our local  
40 steelworks run by BlueScope at Port Kembla. One of the very few reasons the steelworks exists is its access to Illawarra metallurgical coal. This has been the case for almost 100 years. And the Dendrobium project I speak in support of today seeks to continue this supply of coal to feed Australia's largest steel manufacturing plant.

45 As a fitter, I work on large and complex pieces of underground equipment. Our longwall system at Dendrobium is one of the most advanced in the world. The technology that supports our longwall has dramatically improved safety. It can be

operated remotely, making the longwall mining process both safer, more efficient and more accurate. IMC and South32 have been great supporters of our local community. They've built pathways and scenic walks, they sponsor our local football team, and they have generously supported the Mount Kembla Primary School and contributed to many other significant community projects. It has been a relationship beneficial to all and one that has had a positive impact on nearly every resident in the local region.

If you look wider than Mount Kembla to the whole of the Illawarra, it's clear just how important this industry is to our region. The Illawarra thrives because of our coalmines and our steelworks, not in spite of it. It employs young people through apprenticeships and graduate opportunities, provides steady employment for thousands of families and work for countless other flow-on businesses and individuals. It puts food on my table every night for my wife and two kids. Wollongong would be a very different place without the industry that built the town in the first place, and the change would not be for the better. I would like to see this beautiful coastal town thrive well into my young kids' futures. I would like to see the opportunities provided to me and my mates available to the next generation of young men and women. You've heard from my workmates today, and we ask you to support us, our future. I support the approval of Dendrobium's Mine Extension Project and urge you to also. Thank you.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Gene, for your presentation. Any questions?

MR BEASLEY: No.

MR O'CONNOR: Thanks very much.

MR BEASLEY: The next speaker we have is Dr Roderick Anderson. Go ahead, Dr Anderson. Sir, I think you might need to put your microphone - - -

DR R. ANDERSON: Can you hear me now?

MR BEASLEY: Yes. We can hear you now. Thank you.

DR ANDERSON: Okay. So good afternoon, commissioners. I offer my respect to the traditional owners. I strongly object to the Dendrobium Extension Project, and I'll make a brief presentation. I am a recently retired GP, living in Sydney, and I have a longstanding interest in the environmental effects – the effect of the environment on health. My main concerns here are for the effect on our water supply and the contribution of new coalmines to global warming. A reliable supplier of clean drinking water is, of course, fundamental to health, and with global warming, we're facing recurring droughts.

This project is a 30 year proposal for expanded longwall mining under our water catchments, doubling water loss. That loss may last for 200 years and it may be forever. There is risk of damage to several dam walls and there will certainly be

subsidence and cracking, which will allow iron and arsenic and other minerals to leech into streams and dams. It will desiccate wetlands, increasing ecological loss and bushfire risk. New coalmines will help to push our planet over 1.5 degrees of global warming, with all the expected consequences, which are well-documented.

5 You've heard enough already.

Australia already has a poor record as a greenhouse gas polluter and exporter mostly in relation to coalmining and burning. The department's position that we are not responsible for scope 3 emissions is morally bankrupt, in my opinion. The department are hand in glove with the Federal Government, which has been an isolated international embarrassment for our lack of action against climate change. I'm sorry to say this, but we are like drug pushers to poorer nations struggling to break their addiction to coal. We are culpable if we continue to develop new coalmines. The Dendrobium extension project should not proceed. Thank you very much.

15 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Roderick, for your presentation. Any questions - - -

MR BEASLEY: No.

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MR O'CONNOR: - - - John or Richard? No. Thanks very much for your time this afternoon.

MR BEASLEY: Yes. Thank you. We have Jeffrey Quinn now.

25

MR J. QUINN: Good afternoon. I'm Jeffrey Quinn. I'm a businessman and owner of a tutoring company operating in the north and west of Sydney. I am speaking today against the proposal and have some points in regard to the extension of the project. Firstly, I'd like to pay my respect to the Dharawal people and descendants of the Eora nations and their family groups. I'd also like to pay my respect to any workers who stand up for the future of the water cycle and the catchment in this area by withdrawing their labour and seeking to retrain to work in sustainable industries.

30  
35 Gentlemen on the panel, I ask that you, too, also consider your situation in regard to how we're going to leave this area after we die for many, many, many generations to come. That we are deciding now to remove coal from the seams underneath or near to the Sydney water catchment and other catchments and in the same - at the same time completely disregarding the risks that could happen to the water supply for our Sydney area and also the ongoing risks of pollution, the nonstop attack on the surface water and the swamp areas above the land that's being mined is really hard to believe. I question why we need or this company, South32, needs to take that ore out - that coal out. Why do we have to remove the coal? Is there a pressing need for that to happen? I say no and that the reason is purely for money, with a complete disregard of what can happen in the future.

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Now, we've seen cracks in bedrock and the loss of all surface water across the area that will never be fixed. The cracking will eventually cause connectivity between the

surface and it will eventually run into the mines, and it then runs into local creeks and we get polluted creeks full of heavy metals, where people who used to be able to swim and enjoy it do so with great risk to their kids and to the people who live in the area, but not just those people, the people who will be living there in 3000. It's not a case of just dig some coal out and forget about it for now and it will look after itself in the future.

I ask how many mines have been fixed, how many coalmines will longwall coalmines have been repaired. Is there an answer? No one can answer it, because it hasn't. None have. None have ever been repaired. So if we get a crack in the surface and lose the water – the surface water that's feeding the swamps, they will dry out, and then what can happen? Well, we saw last year what happened when the fire and the drought goes through. And so we're increasing fire risks to the area and all the risks of fires to the area.

The Illawarra Land Council is against this, and you can understand why the people who lived here before white people came to inhabit this area must be aghast. They see all of their land changing, but the waterway is changing. Historical sites, they could places where axes used to get sharpened. It's literally as hands-on as that. I'm not sure enough of the history of the people in that area and how many still live there, but it must be heartbreaking to see their water change and the countryside change from a lush area and swampy land, full of life to a desert eventually. If there's a water – if this project goes through, we risk our water not only to the Wollongong area, but also in times when Warragamba can't function, like last year when it was full of ash.

MR O'CONNOR: Jeffrey, you'll have to wrap up now. Your time has expired.

MR QUINN: Has it? I see. Okay. All right. So to conclude, please consider this really carefully. I believe it should not be allowed and that the people whose jobs are affected need to be looked after by the companies and the government. Thank you for listening.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you for your presentation. There's no questions, so we'll move on to our final speaker before a break.

MR BEASLEY: I think we have Melinda Menning back to answer the question she was asked by Commissioner Hann. Are you there, Ms Menning?

MS MENNING: Yes. Yes. I'm here. I actually didn't - - -

MR BEASLEY: Do you remember the question?

MS MENNING: Yes. I didn't - - -

MR HANN: I will put the question to you again, Ms Menning. I'm sorry.

MS MENNING: Yes. Thank you.

MR HANN: I think you dropped out or you hung up on us, but - - -

5 MS MENNING: No, I didn't. No, actually.

MR HANN: Thank you so much for - - -

MS MENNING: Yes.

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MR HANN: - - - making yourself available now.

MS MENNING: Yes.

15 MR HANN: Look, it related simply to – you made a comment in relation to the Maddens Plains area, which - - -

MS MENNING: I did. Yes.

20 MR HANN: - - - is being proposed, I believe, as an offset area, and I think you made a comment that it had already been mined – underground mining had taken place, I think, by Corrimal Coal, but I'm not sure. So I just wanted you to confirm your understanding - - -

25 MS MENNING: Yes.

MR HANN: - - - and help us.

MS MENNING: Okay. Yes. What I'd like to say is it's very difficult to get  
30 information on the offset. I do know that there is very little privately owned land at Maddens Plains, that the bulk of the upland swamps in the Maddens Plains area are either national park, nature reserves associated with Dharawal, and there's area that's, I think, leased by a model airplane company. There is some privately owned  
35 land that's wedged between the highway and the freeway. Now, I have spoken to someone about where this land may be, and I was told that it could have been – and I don't know for sure and, like I said, it's very hard to get information – it could have been land that has been offset that was previously mined under by Corrimal Coal.

Now, I guess that would be bord-and-pillar mining. I don't know if it's on catchment  
40 land. I also am aware that land has been returned to national parks that was previously mined on the high areas of the catchment just slightly above and behind Maddens Plains, and I don't know if it's those areas either. So – but my understanding is that some of the best quality remaining coastal upland swamps are actually also under threat because they are being undermined by Metropolitan in the  
45 Woronora catchment. So I'm just concerned that we're running out of coastal upland swamps for them to offset, and I'm wondering if these – the land that they are

offsetting actually does contain intact coastal upland swamps. That's my question for South32, really.

MR HANN: Thank you very much.

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MR O'CONNOR: Thank you very much for that.

MS MENNING: I'm sorry if I can't answer any better than that, and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

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MR O'CONNOR: No. We appreciate you coming back to talk to us.

MS MENNING: Thank you.

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MR O'CONNOR: We'll take a break now, and we will return at 3.45 pm. Thank you.

**ADJOURNED**

**[3.13 pm]**

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**RESUMED**

**[3.44 pm]**

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MR O'CONNOR: Thank you for re-joining us. We'll now have our next speaker.

MR BEASLEY: The next speaker is Joanne Bradley. Ms Bradley.

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MS J. BRADLEY: Hi. I oppose this mining proposal for a few reasons. The Federal Australian Government has previously made the assumption that mining in our water catchment is acceptable. On the other hand, the New South Wales Government acknowledged to the general public in 2012 that mining should be prevented from occurring in sensitive areas. South32 are proposing to extend coalmining operations under pristine bushland that forms part of the Upper Nepean water catchment. This area has been protected from environmental damage since the late 1800s when it was set aside as a special area to protect water quality for the growing population of Sydney. Along with the water are a range of endangered plants, animals and ecological communities that are also protected by state and federal legislation.

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Undermining will cause subsidence and cracking of the land that will decrease the water that is held ..... the land, and it will drop the water table below. This proposed dewatering of the environment will have undeniable adverse impacts. Many animals, plants and culturally significant Aboriginal sites will be affected permanently by changes to the surface of the landscape. The remediation practices, such as using resin for repairing fractured rocks, can only provide a comparatively short-term solution when ancient geological structures underneath them are permanently

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damaged. The surface sandstone is 180 million years old. Temporary remediation by putting resin in fractures is not a good enough fallback measure when the surface dries out and subsides.

5 Until the recent trade developments with China, 90 per cent of the coalmine from  
under our water catchment went overseas. Demand is now lower, and the  
Metropolitan Mine has announced plans for eight weeks of idling beginning January  
the 4<sup>th</sup>. While I agree that developing countries such as India need construction steel  
and reliable electricity, I assert that their needs must be met some other way,  
10 certainly not at the risk of our water security. Nothing should come at the risk of our  
water security.

This proposal is inconsistent with the restrictions on nearby Russell Vale Mine. It's  
inconsistent with the protection of the Dharawal National Park, and it's inconsistent  
15 with the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act of 1999,  
specifically the principle of avoiding damage to habitats of federally listed  
endangered species. Russell Vale Mine has been limited to using bord-and-pillar  
techniques to avoid subsidence, just like this proposal is planning to allow. The  
Dharawal National Park was gazetted in 2012 to truly protect the sensitive area from  
20 mining damage.

In the words of our own government agencies, human influences such as  
underground mining or excessive water extraction can damage these upland swamps.  
Subsidence following underground mining can result in fracturing of the sandstone  
25 underlying creeks, diverting water flows underground. That is why in 2012, the New  
South Wales Government gazetted Dharawal National Park to prevent mining in this  
naturally and culturally significant area. The New South Wales Government  
explains to the Australian public why mining in the catchment is so damaging and  
should be prevented.

30 Water New South Wales raises a red flag about ..... this proposal. Among the six  
main principles Water New South Wales considers "essential to protecting the  
drinking water supply", listed are protection of the ecological integrity of special  
areas and provision of sound and robust evidence regarding environmental impacts.  
35 But this proposal is not avoiding or even minimising subsidence effects. The  
longwall panels are full width and length. The extraction is set to the maximum  
extent on the justification that it is not economically viable to do otherwise.

Why isn't South32 restricted to bord-and-pillar like Russell Vale? It's confusing to  
40 have three very different standards in three very close and similarly significant  
special areas. It's confusing to various government authorities completely at odds  
with the Planning Department on this proposal. Local jobs are important, but the  
jobs supported by mines are not more important than the water security of  
generations of Australians to come. Another reason that mining in the catchment  
45 should cease immediately is that the ecological research science has been  
compromised ..... emphasis on an independent third party able to freely research the  
ecological communities in special areas. I will just check my connection.

The Department of Primary Industry and Environment has a list of local animals and plants vulnerable to extinction that depend on the surface water remaining in place. It includes – and this is only some of them – the coastal upland swamp threatened ecological community, the giant dragonfly, Littlejohn’s Tree Frog, the giant  
5 burrowing frog, the red crowned toadlet and the bearded bush pea. Water isn’t the only way species will be impacted. Species that live in caves and rocky ridges are also threatened, for example, cave-dwelling micro bats and the broad-headed snake. I will talk more about the lack of proper science in a minute.

10 Upland swamps exist on geological basin formations that are able to hold water. These basins provide a mosaic of water sources inside a generally dry sandstone landscape. Each swamp is an oasis full of plants and sediments that holds and slowly releases purified water into the downstream environment. Some swamps are perched high on the hillsides, while others are low on the valley floors. Some are fed by  
15 underground water. Some are occasionally dry and others are generally wet throughout drought. While they host a range of plants and animals confined within the swamp area, they also provide water to the surrounding ecosystems.

Frogs are particularly dependent on water provided by upland swamps, but frogs are  
20 more widely distributed in the environment. Frogs gather a stable water source to breed, and their tadpoles may spend many months growing to full size before growing legs and dispersing to feed on the land. The upland swamps extend the period in which water is available between dry times. Cracking of the landscape is demonstrated to drain swamps, but it also likely affects water surface across all land  
25 types.

The Independent Advisory Panel for Underground Mining has advised that mining subsidence will lower the water table across the landscape. No proper baseline surveys have been conducted. By writing plans for surface subsidence of up to 2.15  
30 metres into the biodiversity management plan, this mine has skipped the first two required stages for protecting endangered species. No one can guarantee that an offset elsewhere will properly compensate for this habitat destruction and prevent an overall reduction of numbers in that species. Unless a baseline was properly established and not just estimated, as has been done for the giant burrowing frog and  
35 the red crowned toadlet, the Department of Primary Industries and Environment cannot guarantee no net loss to the abundance of these frogs.

Two federally listed endangered species of frogs predicted to live in areas of planned subsidence are the Littlejohn’s tree frog and the giant burrowing frog. However, the  
40 proponent – and this is where the science gets really dodgy, in my opinion – the proponent is using baseline water fluctuation measurements using piezometers as a proxy for species survey. By measuring groundwater in some swamps, the proponent is hoping to demonstrate negligible changes from natural variation and thereby assume no change in frog populations. But giant burrowing frogs and state  
45 listed vulnerable red crowned toadlets don’t necessarily live and breed inside swamps.

So the land around the swamps is just as important to monitor and protect as the swamp, presuming the preservation of these frogs do matter. If the land around the swamps is smashed up, the red crowned toadlets won't make it to maturity. They depend on water that is not currently measured, and that water remains in their territory. Monitoring the swamps is not enough. The drainage lines on the land surrounding the swamps need to be preserved.

Why would the DPIE accept water measurements as a proxy for a species survey? When asked about the thoroughness of the ..... an independent expert working in the field explained it to me like this. The consultants are hired by the proponent. Consultants know that if they do not deliver something the proponent likes and especially if they get a reputation, they're not keeping their clients happy. The client will get someone else. And there is always someone else willing to keep the client happy. Conversely, biodiversity doesn't pay consultants.

All of this is rationalised in various ways, for example, it is would be ..... if some other company did the job. But the bottom line is the consultants are in the business of helping their clients do what their clients want to do. In my opinion, this direct relationship between the mine and the consultant company is not setting up the consultants to freely and easily conduct unbiased work. I do note that the consultants have to be agreed to by the DPIE, but that doesn't ensure impartiality. The DPIE recommended guidelines for approving field surveys are not within the spirit of the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conversation Act of 1999 and the relevant state threatened species legislation, which is to actually protect the threatened species habitat.

Regarding offsets, which is the plan for this mine, there is a large and growing body of literature on offsetting, and the conclusions are pretty much unanimous and unidirectional. It's a bit of a con to say that offsetting is better than nothing. The alternative to offsetting is not nothing. It is adhering to the letter and to the spirit of the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conversation Act of 1999 and the relevant state threatened species legislation, and that is actually protecting the threatened species habitat.

The biodiversity research science has not been done thoroughly enough on-site or on the offset sites to justify destroying this habitat and reducing the numbers of rare and vulnerable species living there. The surveying of rare and cryptic frogs was done during drought in the summer of 2018 over four days. The ideal time to survey frogs is not during drought. The survey needs to be done again and much more thoroughly. Accepting an estimate of numbers is not good enough when deciding to destroy the habitats of endangered species. The special areas are not legally accessible to other ecologists, zoologists and herpetologists who would like to conduct their own extensive research there. There is no transparency. The research is not independent, and no abundant studies have been done.

Please consider suggesting changes to the current system so that the DPIE biosecurity officers chooses who to engage completely independently of the mine

and of the Planning Department branch. The mine should not be in control of this arrangement, but they should cover some of the costs. If I were to buy a home but the building inspection were only allowed to be organised by the seller, I would not feel confident enough with that process. Please look at the bigger picture here. The  
5 idea of mining in the water catchment just doesn't pass the pub test.

The general public now believe that the fines for trespassing in the catchment are in place mostly to protect the mining companies from regulation. I understand there are legal processes for the general public to make complaints against the mine, and so  
10 many times serious complaints have been made by residents living nearby. How can we raise the alarm on behalf of the endangered frogs and other creatures if the only people allowed into our water catchment are the ones who put it at risk? The ideal solution, according to the New South Wales Government in 2012, would be to cease all mining in the catchment immediately. But I understand that as we ..... subsidence,  
15 so with an application comes permission, and with that permission comes a licence, and with that licence comes acceptable losses, and those acceptable losses comes – with those acceptable losses comes permanent damage to our water catchment and loss of habitats.

So ..... I ask you to do whatever you can within your power to prevent this planned habitat destruction from going ahead, to open these special areas up to concerned citizens and scientists, to advocate for all consultant work to be unbiased and free of obligations to the proponent, to get extensive abundance of flora and fauna surveys done on the mining site and the offset sites, to please protect all independent third  
20 party researchers from vexatious litigation, to change the DPIE guidelines for acceptable surveys to match the spirit of the Endangered Species Act, and I ask you to work hard to make this whole situation more transparent and honest. Thank you.  
25

MR O'CONNOR: Thanks, Joanna, for your presentation. Any questions of  
30 Joanna?

MR HANN: Not from me.

MR O'CONNOR: No. Thanks very much.  
35

MS BRADLEY: The next speaker is Peter Green. Mr Green.

MR GREEN: Hello. Can you hear me?

40 MR BEASLEY: Yes. Go ahead, sir.

MR GREEN: All right. I'd like to acknowledge I'm on Dharawal Country here in Mount Kembla. My family and I are the Pit Top's – Dendrobium Pit Top's closest neighbours. I have got two children at the local primary school, and my partner and I  
45 both work as nurses in the local community. As such, we've had a good insight over the last years of the way South32 conduct their business and their environmental

monitoring. We're opposed to the extension, and I won't go over the reasons that others have spoken of.

5 Obviously, there's inherent risks in the water catchment and to the environment and to the climate, but what I want to talk about is the impacts on the local community here at Mount Kembla. My family and I love their history of coalmining in the community here and in the Illawarra, but we realise it's not the future. Similarly, we want our children working locally and their grandchildren working locally and their children, but we realise it's not going to be in the coalmine next door. Our property has been identified in the recommended consent as having the greatest noise impacts of any property. Our property is currently under the current consent having the greatest noise impacts of any property that is monitored. I was a little bit disappointed to see in the notes from the IPC site visit that the pit top wasn't, in fact, visited, and although I can understand the importance of visiting the water catchment, for people such as myself living right here next to it, hearing it every day and feeling the impacts, I was a little bit disappointed to see in the notes that apparently it wasn't visited.

20 So as I said, my family in the recommended consent is going to be the most impacted, and I want to tell you why that's of a concern to me. We purchased this property a number of years ago, having thought what we had done was due diligence and reviewed the noise monitoring results that are made publicly available. They all show compliance, and we felt confident in moving in. Once we had moved in, unfortunately, we realised South32 were not monitoring their quarterly noise monitoring that was required by their consent in the right spot. They were doing it out of the boot of vehicles – of their cars – of their staff's cars out on Cordeaux Road, not at the most affected point on the property.

30 After bringing this up with themselves and the department, they eventually moved it to a more appropriate site, and since then, for five consecutive quarters of noise monitoring, they have been noncompliant or exceeded the criteria in the current consent. Only one quarter since they moved it have they been able to run their operations within the consent. Their own results show this. Previous to this, they were monitoring in the wrong spot for a lengthy period of time, I would suggest possibly forever, that no monitoring had ever been done in the right place. When I asked them why they weren't monitoring in the right place, they said that some of their staff hadn't told the staff where they were supposed to be monitoring.

40 Now, just think about that for a moment. So here we are, talking about this mining company, the serious environmental impacts in the water catchment, plus all the other impacts on people such as myself, communities, and it's – their monitoring has failed because someone didn't tell the other person what to do. I think this is an indictment on self-monitoring, and I don't think for this reason and others we can trust South32 to be in charge of their own environmental monitoring.

45 What should be a simple matter of where to stand to monitor noise wasn't done, and there's a huge pole there that identifies where it's supposed to be done. And it

wasn't done for years until I brought it up, and then once it did start getting done, they couldn't keep it under the noise criteria. There's a pattern of persistent and regular exceedances of the noise criteria at this residence. Though I note South32 stated to you on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November that extensive noise mitigation measures are currently in place and that these would continue with any extension, the current noise mitigation measures are completely ineffective.

The noise management plan is routinely ignored. Its key management strategies are a night-time vehicle curfew that's voluntary and routinely disregarded to the point that their shifts start during that curfew, so all the vehicles that have to take the staff underground go underground from the pit top next to my house during their vehicle curfew. It makes no sense at all. So their own noise management plan is, you know, designed to fail because of their shift times, amongst other things.

Similarly, they've got – they state one of their things in their noise management plan is low frequency vehicle alarms, but they're only on a small percentage of vehicles that enter or operate on the site, and similarly they've got a traffic management plan that they, you know, identify as using to stop noise, and it's routinely ignored. I mean, the business dictates that it is necessary to avoid the conditions of the consent or their own noise management policies or traffic management policies, then they do so. I have brought these issues up with them time and time again. I notice this on a daily basis almost, things that shouldn't be done getting done, and when I point them out to them, they always have an excuse. There's always a reason. It's always business critical at the expense of people such as myself and other residents.

In the environmental impact statement that South32 put forward, it identified no new opportunities for noise reductions, just relying on its existing ineffective noise management policy from the year 2000. So in 20 years, they haven't come up with any idea as to how to mine in a more effective manner. Suggestions by myself to explore such ideas as acoustic barriers and other things have all been ignored. None of the measures in the current noise management plan have ensured compliance, as can be seen from South32's own data, and there have been no consequences for the repeated noise exceedances.

In the recommended consent, the condition – the consent conditions, the noise limits are increased for affected properties such as my own. You know, it begs the question how can we not have improved practices and better environmental outcomes 20 years after starting mining? We're going with the same limits and the same measures. South32 would have us believe they're a best practice miner, but they're offering no suggestions how they can be better after 20 years of doing this.

I also note in the recommended consent that the right to voluntary land acquisition that appears in the current consent has been removed. The effect on my family of the constant noise exceedances have been considerable. South32 have been one decibel away from having to acquire my property if I asked them to under the current consent, but in the new consent, that right does not exist. I find this unbelievable considering we're looking at five – a history of not testing in the right spot, five

consecutive quarters of exceeding and being noncompliant, and now suddenly in the new consent we're removing the ability to have your property voluntarily acquired if they reach a specific point.

5 I ask you, members, to keep specific land acquisition criteria in the new consent if  
you decide to approve this development and revert to lower noise limits. South32  
would have us believe, as I said, they're offering best practice. Well, let them prove  
that by mining in a better fashion than 20 years ago. As regards mitigation, South32  
10 have only ever offered the bare minimum legally required and are not interested in  
going beyond that to improve the amenity of people like myself. They're not  
interested in talk about anything but the bare minimum that they legally have to do,  
and they will only talk about those things once you have gone over a certain limit.  
Before that, they don't want to know. And unfortunately, this seems to be a theme in  
the resources sector these days, not doing what's right and wrong, but doing the bare  
15 minimum legally required.

MR O'CONNOR: Could you please wrap up now. Thanks, Peter.

MR GREEN: All right. Well, I wanted to talk about dust and pollution as well and  
20 traffic. I thought I had 10 minutes. I've already gone for 10 minutes, have I?

MR O'CONNOR: Yes.

MR GREEN: All right. Well, I'll just show – I'll show you an example of the dust  
25 and particulate pollution that comes over onto my property in about a week. I would  
like – my property, even though we're the closest to the mine, does not have any  
monitoring here. If you approve this, I would like you to have dust and particulate  
pollution monitored at the closest properties. Similarly, I would like you to look into  
South32s desire to build a 100 slot car park in the bush over the road. They want to  
30 turn this part of the escarpment into a car park instead of looking at a different idea,  
like maybe bussing their staff from an existing industrial site of which there are  
many 10 minutes away. It seems unbelievable to me that we're looking at destroying  
another huge part of the Illawarra escarpment to build a 100 space car park in this  
day and age when they could be looking at less vehicle impacts on the local  
35 community by parking down the road and bussing some people up.

So in summation, I reject the proposal. I ask you to reject it. However, if you do  
decide to approve it, I would like you seriously to look at the noise criteria, the  
voluntary land acquisition and the dust monitoring and some of their suggestions as  
40 for the construction they're planning at the pit top, which, you know, seems  
completely unnecessary and they should be looking at more environmentally friendly  
alternatives in this day and age than building new car parks in the Illawarra  
escarpment. Thank you.

45 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Peter. I just have a question around the current  
clause you referred to with the compulsory acquisition in their current consent that  
doesn't – won't exist in the new consent. Have you made any inquiries why - - -

MR GREEN: Yes.

MR O'CONNOR: - - - that was the case?

5 MR GREEN: Yes, I have. I've called the – I went via the local DPIE, and they put  
me onto – I couldn't tell you who it was in a – further up the scale, and they said that  
they didn't feel that it was required any longer because they are looking at a – and  
I'm paraphrasing here – a broader picture, not at specific properties, but at the greater  
10 picture. And what they said to me was I could speak to the IPC about it when I said I  
don't understand that and I told them all the reasons I have here. I've also gone to  
South32 and asked them why it doesn't exist, and they claim that the voluntary land  
acquisition and mitigation policy will cover that. Well, unfortunately, I don't believe  
them. I think it should be spelled out specifically in the consent with specific criteria  
15 over which that clause comes into play. It is in the current consent, and I cannot  
understand why it would not be in the next consent, especially considering the  
exceedances and noncompliances.

MR O'CONNOR: Yes. Certainly. I understand your point. Thank you. Any  
further questions?

20

MR BEASLEY: No.

MR O'CONNOR: No. Thank you very much for your time. That brings us to the  
conclusion of day 2 of this public hearing. Thank you to everyone who has  
25 presented today for your thoughtful presentations. A transcript of today's  
proceedings will be made available on the IPC website in the next few days. Just a  
reminder that the commission will accept written submissions on the Dendrobium  
Mine Extension Project up until 5 pm on Tuesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2020. It's  
particularly helpful to us if you can comment in your submissions on the assessment  
30 report prepared by the department and the proposed draft conditions. You can  
submit your comments using the Have your say portal on our website or alternatively  
email or post them to us. We'll be back tomorrow morning at 10 am for day 3, the  
final day of these proceedings. Thanks again for your company today from the  
commission. Enjoy your evening. Goodbye.

35

**MATTER ADJOURNED at 4.13 pm UNTIL FRIDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2020**