



TWO RIVERS

HUNTER VALLEY

20th December 2012

The Director General
The Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing as a concerned landholder, business owner and resident of the Upper Hunter to object to the Drayton South open coal mine project.

Our company has been growing grapes in the Upper Hunter and making wine under the Two Rivers label since 1988. We have some 70 Ha of wine grapes planted, supplying premium fruit to the Two Rivers, Tulloch Rosemount and Lindeman's brands. We also have a significant investment in wine tourism through our Cellar Door and on site accommodation.

Over the past 25 years, Two Rivers have gained a reputation as a premium wine producer, with awards including gold medals and Trophy's at national wine shows and gold at the International Chardonnay Challenge. We have also been awarded the Hunter Viticulturist of the Year as well as being a previous winner of the overall Hunter Farmer of the Year. Our cellar door has won numerous hospitality awards and is a hub for wine tourism in the Upper Hunter.

The Hunter Valley Wine Industry is an important contributor to the diversity of our region. The vineyards and wineries of the Hunter Valley provide significant employment opportunities and the flow on effects of wine tourism create economic, social and cultural benefits to the region. The Upper Hunter makes a vital contribution to the Hunter Valley Wine Industry accounting for almost half of the grapes grown in the area.

My reasons for objecting to this proposal are as follows:

- 1. Impacts on the Wine Industry** - The proposed mine will directly impact one of the Upper Hunter's key vineyards, Hollydene (previously Arrowfield Wines) and knock on effect will damage the reputation of the Upper Hunter Wine Industry as a whole. The wine and tourism industries need a critical mass to survive and the removal of some of our more prominent vineyards impacts on the viability of the industry and the credibility of this area as a serious wine region. There are numerous tourism development proposals (including projects at Two Rivers, Hollydene and Cruikshanks) that are constrained by current levels of uncertainty created by existing and proposed mining developments. The proposed mine will have a serious impact on the future viability of our industry,

Two Rivers Wines
2 Yarrowa Road Denman NSW 2328 T. 02 6547 2556 F. 02 65 472546
Email. sales@tworivers.com.au www.tworiverswines.com.au

which has been already seriously impacted by the rapid expansion of the mining industry in recent years.

2. **Cumulative Impacts** - The Upper Hunter is already a very large coal producer with a high concentration of coal mines in the area. We do not believe that the cumulative impacts of mining in the Upper Hunter have been fully considered. This mine proposal will further impact on the areas dust and noise pollution, leading to further deterioration of the local environment. Large vehicular traffic and rail movements will also be dramatically increased. These impacts will also affect the health and wellbeing of the local communities. The agricultural impact assessment does not address the impacts on neighbouring farms or land uses within the area. This is a serious deficiency which needs to be corrected.
3. **Loss of Diversity** - This development will result in the significant loss of agricultural land and a reduction in the agricultural diversity of the area. Our region boasts some of the world's best thoroughbred studs, wineries and a vibrant agricultural sector which enjoys secure access to irrigation water and some of the most fertile land in the country. All of these industries contribute to the prosperity of our community and if the dominance of mining in this area is not brought into some sort of balance, we risk losing these industries to this area for ever.
4. **Critical Industry Clusters** - This proposed mine is within the Critical Industry Cluster area for the viticulture and thoroughbred industries as defined in the Upper Hunter Strategic Land Use Plan. If this mine is allowed to proceed it will undermine this document and make a mockery of the entire land use planning process.
5. **Socio Economic Impacts** – We are dismayed that the socio economic assessment does not take into account the impacts on thoroughbred and wine industries. Apart from being misleading this assessment is totally deficient by assuming no impact on alternative agricultural activities. It seriously overestimates the next economic benefits to the state from this project.

The company should be forced to resubmit its socio economic analysis to include sensible assumptions about the impact this project will have on other land uses and sustainable agricultural industries in the area.
6. **Air Quality impact** – As landholders and concerned citizens we are seriously concerned about the impact of dust from this mine to the overall health and air quality of our region. In this respect, we strongly request that a cumulative air quality and health impact assessment resulting from this project and other existing mining operations before a decision is taken regarding this project.
7. **Visual impact** - The Drayton South mine is located at the gateway to the Upper Hunter wine region and directly opposite an existing vineyard/winery operation (Hollydene Vineyard) where significant tourism investment is planned and being undertaken. As much as the mining industry would like to believe that mining and wine tourism can co-exist, that is certainly not the view of the wine tourism industry.
8. **Water Resources** - The Hunter River is the lifeblood of the Viticulture industry in the Upper Hunter. Any industry that threatens or pollutes and damages this supply of water will threaten the future viability and reputation of the industry. We are not confident that appropriate attention has been paid to this aspect in the environmental assessment.

As a winemaker, all of the above are serious issues for my company and my industry. Our reputation in the Upper Hunter rests on a “clean, green” image. This mine, so close to wine and thoroughbred operations, is the kind of project that should be rejected by the Government.

Should you have any queries or require further information, please contact me on the details below.

Yours faithfully,

Brett Keeping
General Manager
Two Rivers Wines