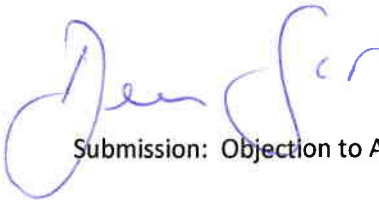


Friday, 21 December 2012

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Submission: **Objection to Anglo American Drayton South Mine Proposal**

I would like to make a submission of objection to the Anglo American mine proposal in the area defined as Drayton South or previously known as Saddlers Creek.

I write in the following capacity with a number of reasons for objection:

- As a private land holder who sees the creeping expanse of mining on prime agricultural land and in the heart of thoroughbred breeding setting precedents for other mines that will impact on my land – value, visual, water, loss of irreplaceable high value land, loss of employment opportunities and industry investment.
- As a participant in the Thoroughbred Industry, reliant on the world's two largest stud operators Coolmore and Darley whose operations are threatened by encroaching mining developments.
- In the capacity of someone who has friends and associates directly impacted by the proposed mine – although a singular mine it creates further detrimental cumulative impacts which have not been properly examined. In particular this mine proposal creates a dominating almost contiguous mining corridor operation across the prime agricultural region along the Hunter River plains of Jerrys Plains – Denman – Muswellbrook. This land is almost all now in the hands of miners – no balance, no certainty and loss of other viable industries competing for land on an unlevel playing field. A no go zone or at least a 10km buffer zone away from thoroughbred breeding operations for mining is required.
- As a community member who participates in a number of industry and council committees.

**My employment and the industry my family business rely on is threatened – I object to the current mine proposal**

I rely on the thoroughbred industry – for my employment and family business. If Saddlers Creek/Drayton South proceeds, my employment would be tenuous and my family business would be curtailed – there is no certainty to provide for investor confidence. The industry will brace itself/curtail its activities, which will have flow on effects to the wider industry and community should Saddlers Creek impact on the two world's largest studs.

There will be a loss of thoroughbred industry employment stability, business certainty, and willingness to invest for the future. In this respect, the economic, socio-economic analysis and the agricultural impact statements contained in the Drayton South Environmental Assessment (EA) are totally deficient. The Government should insist that the impact on the thoroughbred breeding industry as a whole should be taken into account. These elements of the Drayton South EA should be redone so that a more accurate analysis and assessment can be made of the costs and benefits of this proposal.

The mining industry is dominating and squeezing out viable sustainable industries in the Upper Hunter Valley. Cumulative impact assessments and proper socio-economic assessments of mining proposals was a key commitment made by this Government under this new process. This proposal, which is the first to be assessed under the Government's new processes, is seriously misleading. As a member of the industry and a concerned citizen, I would be appalled if this EA is allowed to proceed without any consideration of the socio-economic impact of this proposal on Australia's premier thoroughbred breeding industry. The Government should insist that this is corrected.

Thoroughbred breeders were hopeful that a no go zone would provide for balance, strategic direction and certainty for all industries – including mining. The Government should seriously consider implementing one or at least a sensible (in my view 10 km) buffer between mining operations and world-class thoroughbred breeding operations.

**Domination/removal of prime agricultural land at the expense of other industries - a no go zone for mining is required – I object to the current mine proposal**

It is hoped my associates and friends who are directly impacted by this mine and the cumulative pressure of the surrounding operations and speculative exploration are able to make a submission to you. However I am aware that many are fearful of making submissions/being on the record due to either the “commercial – in-confidence” nature of their businesses or because they are tied to confidentiality agreements either with the mines or as principle owners of the land. These landholder submissions would provide a more accurate reality of community hardship resulting from this continuous and contiguous mining expansion.

The encroachment of mining, including this particular mine negatively impacts prime agricultural land and squeezes out genuine investors of other industries. The amount of prime agricultural land is reduced – taken out of food and fibre, livestock and other productive production permanently – while the amount of land available to mining increases. This is not in the interests of the state or our future. Primary production is a viable, productive and sustainable land use. Serious consideration must be given to protecting this land before it is rendered unproductive and irrelevant for future operations. Equally serious consideration should be given to protecting established world class industries, and not to jeopardize their future viability. One mine in the wrong place in the Hunter Valley has the potential to wipe out an entire industry. Short term gains will not translate into long term benefits. Does this Government seriously consider the prospect of approving one mine and jeopardizing the future of an entire industry a worthwhile prospect?

The cumulative effects of this and other mines in the vicinity need to be properly assessed – from a community, air quality, water availability and quality, visual amenity, disinvestment in sustainable agriculture and the destruction of an entire industry and supporting industries. There is no certainty for other land holders in the immediate vicinity that if they see Saddlers Creek/Drayton South go ahead in its current form and proximity, will live in nervous anticipation of Spur Hill and Doyles Creek progressing.

To solve the inadequacies, the uncertainties that individuals and communities need to live with – a no go zone should be implemented starting with Anglo's Drayton South proposed mine – it should not be allowed to proceed in its current form and proximity to world class thoroughbred breeding operations.

**Squeezing out of genuine industry investors and private ownership of land – I object to the current mine proposal**

I am a private land holder who sees the ever creeping expanse of mining on prime agricultural land and in the heart of Thoroughbred breeding setting precedents for other mines that will impact on my land – value, visual, water, loss of irreplaceable high value land, loss of employment opportunities and industry investment.

I have already experienced first-hand the uncertainty in investing in land and business ventures due to proposed mining expansion. The rejection of this proposal and the institution of a no go zone would give investors and the community confidence. It would also signal that this Government is serious about protecting valuable land and world-class industries it has so publicly stated in its policy documents and in the media.

**The broader community, tourism and local community loses in the long term – a no go zone for mining is required – I object to the current mine proposal**

From a tourism perspective the upper Hunter Shires are losing the capacity to promote diversity of their region and security of land investment. The Hunter Valley's landscape is being negatively altered by the ever expansion of mining. This is an irreversible loss to the Valley, to the small towns such as Denman, the community at large, flow on affects to the upper hunter.

Muswellbrook, Jerrys Plains and Denman are the gateways to the Upper Hunter and to Australia's Horse Capital. Tourist flock to the Upper Hunter every year to enjoy the scenic pastoral landscape, to attend the Scone Stand Alone Race Days (some 10,000 attendees at this event in 2012), to attend other race events, Horse festivals, to visit (and hopefully invest in) the world-class thoroughbred breeding studs and to enjoy the wineries that are making international award winning wines.

Tourism in the Upper Hunter, if properly nurtured, has the potential to not only attract and promote business development and more sustainable investment and revenue in the region, but to ensure that the regional economies have a diversified base to prosper long into the future after mining has ceased.

The Hunter Valley is widely recognised (including by NSW Members of Parliament) as being at a tipping point. There is no balance and capacity as things currently stand with ever increasing mining operations to preserve a sustainable diversified economy and region for the future – a no go zone for mining is required.

If this proposed mine proceeds in its current form and proximity to world class thoroughbred breeding operations it will only provide certainty to one mine's operations, but will extend the living hell of uncertainty for the many individuals and businesses impacted by this mine alone, the cumulative impact to the community, and the likely expectation this will set a precedent for other mines to get the green light.

The current EA is deficient, the assessment process for this proposal and the proposed gateway process for future mines does nothing to provide certainty for the community or land holders, it only heightens the community angst and one sided consultation which only benefits the mines.

I object to the Saddlers Creek/Drayton South mining proposal.

Thank you for your consideration of the issues raised.

Regards



E Ridley-Fraser