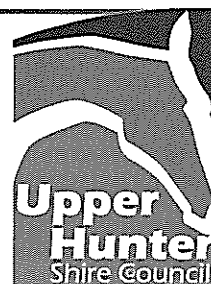


Contact Name: Ben Oliver  
Contact No: (02) 6540 1139  
Our Reference: OUT-998/13

The  
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AWARD  
~ 2010 Winner ~



25 January, 2013

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

Dear Mr Mooney,

**Re: Submission to the Anglo American Drayton Coal Project**

The Upper Hunter Shire appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposal by Anglo American for the Drayton South Open Cut Coal Mine proposal and we thank the Department of Planning and Infrastructure for extending the submission period to allow our comments to be considered.

While the Drayton mining lease area is located wholly within the boundaries of an adjoining local government area, the Council feels compelled to make a submission and highlight the cumulative impacts of coal mining which extend at a regional scale and far beyond the boundaries of this and other mining operations within the Muswellbrook Shire.

The Upper Hunter is in the unique position of having no operating coal mines, but having large population centres such as Aberdeen, located as close to operating or proposed mine sites as the townships of Muswellbrook and Denman. The evidence is clear that the Upper Hunter experiences the same adverse environmental impacts and the social and economic challenges resulting from the rapid expansion of mining that are common to Muswellbrook.

Despite these similarities, the council has no ability to negotiate with mining operators and reach consensus on how to address these impacts, simply because the mines are located within a neighbouring shire. It is a source of frustration for the council that we do not have a legitimate "seat at the table" to raise community concerns about the broader impacts of mining which are experienced at a regional level or to negotiate reasonable offsets in the Upper Hunter Shire to community infrastructure, where the direct and cumulative impact of developments such as this are known. The Council strongly believes that this is an inequitable and unsustainable situation that needs to be addressed by the NSW Government in the assessment and approval of large scale mining activities.

The Council accepts that mining is an important economic driver for the region, but this should not come at the expense of other already established agricultural activities and rural industries which depend on fertile soils, clean water and pristine vistas. The Upper Hunter Council was successful in arguing that open cut coal mining was incompatible with many established rural industries, particularly the Equine Industry which was noted in the rejection of the Bickham Coal Mine proposal. We believe that many of the fundamental planning principles from that case are relevant to the current proposal by Anglo American for the Drayton South proposal.

**A Quality Rural Lifestyle - in a vibrant, caring and sustainable community**

**All correspondence to:**  
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The Council has previously made detailed submissions to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and NSW Government on the regional impacts of coal and coal seam gas mining. In these submissions we have highlighted the regional importance of the Equine and Viticulture Industries in the Upper Hunter, the wealth and social cohesion derived from agricultural production, the potential for expansion of emerging tourism opportunities and the need to protect the natural ecology and biodiversity of the area. The Council accepts the reality of continued mining in the Hunter but not at the expense of a strong and diverse agricultural sector or at the long term disadvantage of other emerging opportunities which will provide a more sustainable future. The adverse impacts of mining are well known and irrefutable and occur at a regional level. The benefits of mining are concentrated locally or exported from the area where the resource was derived, without a proper reallocation of resources. The council is repeating its request that the adverse impacts of mining be carefully considered and minimised to the largest extent possible and the benefits of mining be shared more equitably.

We thank you for consideration of this submission.

Yours sincerely

  
for: Daryl Dutton  
GENERAL MANAGER