

My name is Leslie Krey and I am a resident of Bulga.

I am here today to protest against the extension of open cut mining to the Warkworth mine and the expansion of this mine to within 2.6k of the Bulga community. This would have a devastating effect on the lifestyle and health of the Bulga Village. We would become a statistic the same as Warkworth, Ravensworth and now Camberwell. We do not want to become a statistic, Bulga is worth saving and the only way this can happen is to either stop the expansion or go underground. Rio Tinto will keep expanding until nothing of Bulga remains. This proposed extension is Stage 1 and further extensions are already on the board. It is time for us to say enough is enough the community concerns should be listened to not just acknowledged and ignored by these International Companies and our own government who will leave the legacy of the Upper Hunter Valley being one big quarry. Future generations will say "How did you let it happen" But then it will be too late...

I quote from the Total Environment Centre produced in October 2011 headed NSW FOSSIL OR BALANCED FUTURE?

"There is certain arrogance in the mining culture emboldened by years of privilege".

The future environmental, agricultural and rural fundamentals of major NSW regions are under severe attack. Land use and energy policy are being written by exploration permits and case by case mine development decisions. Balance needs to be restored otherwise the social licence to operate won't exist for the mining interest. Nor will government decisions be accorded community and political credibility and respect.'

There is community outcry over serious health impacts from mine dust in towns like Singleton and Muswellbrook. Try living in Bulga and imagine the impact if the expansion is allowed to proceed. I have read the reports submitted by the EA where they profess that Bulga will not be affected by the dust. This is nonsense because even one of their own maps show at the moment the dust level is above the recommended maximum dust level. I refer you to the May 2010 deposition dust produced by the mines consultant. This refers to the present activities and not future expansions. I

am not a scientist but logic would surely mean that the dust can only get worse the closer the mines get to Bulga.

I have had personal experiences with the problems of dust. My daughter and grandchild lived with us for 15 months. They left the valley as they were both experiencing respiratory problems. At 15mths my grandchild was on a puffer. I know this is not an isolated case as Dr. Au from Singleton has been highlighting the problems many residents in Singleton have, with respiratory, asthma etc.

Dust is not the only problem concerning health. What about the mental affect - how is this measured ?? The stress of continual noise, dust and lights. I believe this is very understated. The worry of what the future holds must have a profound effect on the community

In the DA it states that the lights are not a problem as Bulga is a mining town and are used to the lights. What an insult. We are NOT a mining town we are a rural community who have been slowly overtaken by the mines. Up until a few months ago the lights were not a problem, this is a new occurrence. This is even with Saddle Back Ridge in place. The Ridge must be retained.

Noise has also become a problem as the mine moves ever closer. Even the Australian Governments Dept. of resources , energy and Tourism state "Low frequency noise can be particularly annoying and can result in complaints many kilometres away from the source" I have only lived in Bulga for 3 years but in that time I have felt most unwell and I feel there is pressure in my ears that was not present before .I have consulted with specialists but they cannot conclude what is causing this. Obviously I cannot lay the blame at the mine but it is concerning and more research in the effect of low frequency noise should be carried out before new mines or expansions near rural towns are approved.

We are not an Industrial area as Rio Tinto would lead you to believe. We have a Tavern, Petrol Station, a church, community hall a Rural Fire Service and the houses we live in. We have no industry!!! But yes we do have orchards, vineyards and Olive groves

Then there is the problem of property values. A study published by DOP

1 2003 Environmental Impact statement which says "Saddle Back Ridge will continue to provide considerable visual screening to the majority of Bulga throughout the mine extension and again on pg. 251 which says plan mining and mitigation include the southern portion of Saddle Back Ridge throughout the `18 year extension. Saddle Back ridge is the highest point on the mining lease and will provide considerable visual shielding for the village of Bulga. On page 3 of the executive summary it states the elevated ridge (Saddle Ridge) conserve aboriginal archaeological resources, retain habitat value, provide visual screening and act as buffer to assist in the amelioration of noise and dust impacts to surrounding residence.

As you are now aware, in the new DA, all of these references have been treated with contempt. What has changed.

OH YES, THE PRICE OF COAL. In all fairness, the Ridge and its surrounding areas must be retained. This was promised to us. The integrity of the mines and minsters office is at stake.

The time has come for you to say no to these big International mining Companies -Please listen to the community. After all it is us that this mine expansion affects. We are the community and the increase of coal and profits do not profit us, only the shareholders who do not give a thought about the effects the devastation of Open Cut have on our environment and health.

I would like to conclude with an appeal to the PAC. Many members of the Bulga community are confused and do not really know what to do about the expansion of the mine. All they know is that they are already impacted by the noise and dust. They are worried and frustrated but do not have the confidence to get up and speak to a committee. If they did, I am sure the numbers of speakers here today would have doubled. Do the right thing by the community; show them that the PAC will consider all of their concerns. Show us that we all count and support the community by rejecting this application. We want to remain living in Bulga, we are not here for compensation or to be bought out by the mines. Save our rural communities.

Thank you for your time.