From: [redacted]
To: pac pac; Clay Preshaw
Subject: Oppose Warkworth mine extension
Date: Tuesday, 8 September 2015 9:00:13 AM

Dear Commissioners,

I am strongly opposed to the application to extend the Warkworth mine into Saddle-back ridge and the Warkworth Sands Woodlands; for a number of reasons.

1. Much of the area to mined in the proposed plan was set aside "in perpetuity" as an offset for the last extension. To now request to mine that land shows a complete lack of integrity, not something that should be tolerated in a company we are trusting with vast tracts of our land and water resources.

Where does the original land that was destroyed for the original mine now stand; it has no offset, and the people of the Hunter Valley and NSW have lost an asset which is likely to be, and I guess Rio are hoping is, forgotten for-ever.

2. The loss of 15% of the endangered Warkworth Sands woodland, habitat of the critically endangered swift parrot. Such a sensitive area cannot be easily offset. By reducing the size of habitat often results in the whole area becoming unviable. This is not a risk that can be taken.

3. Environmental impact on the town and residents of Bulga with the mine coming so close and the ridge no longer as protection is clearly unacceptable. This is reinforced by the fact that 2 court cases found in its favour, and this PAC previously advocated relocating the town.

4. Economic considerations:

What are the parameters for economic consideration.
Over how many years do look at the economic value of the land lost, the 20 years of the mine, or the 50, 100, 200 years that the land will be either unproductive or much less productive for.

Rehabilitation of the land to what standard. How much successful rehab has there been? compared with how many old mines left stranded. How many deserted by companies going broke, often subsidiaries of a larger company, annexed and wound up, so they don't have to pay substantial rehab costs.
Very often an extension is applied for so that rehab can be deferred, so the money doesn't have to be spent until after the completion of the extension. The cost of this possibility must be factored in. The cost of lost productivity of the land not rehabilitated, or the years of lost productivity while it awaits rehabilitation.

I think one mine should be fully rehabilitated before an extension to that mine is approved.

And to suggest that a huge hole should be left in the ground because it is not economic to fill it in, is just not an option. If you can't afford to rehabilitate the land properly you can't afford to dig it. It's just part of the project.

Economic impacts on other industries, farming, wine, horse breeding, dairy, tourism. These are all adversely affected by the mine. And these are industries that will continue to build into the future. Not only the loss of immediate land but all surrounding land affected due to dust, noise, and traffic etc.

What is the economic impact, of land clearing, losing the endangered woodlands, the town of Bulga relocating, then the price of coal dropping further, or export markets unable to be found, and the mine closing. These are very real possibilities in today's market. If the coal doesn't get sold there's no royalty to the government, but a huge loss to the local environment and other local industries.

I think it is ironic that mining areas are the ones who complain most about unemployment. It almost seems that having mining stifles the development of other related industries. The Hunter has the potential for a large variety of industries, making the local economy resilient and not reliant on one factor, so it does not sink into depression when commodity prices fall.

5. Climate change is already having an effect on Australia and our farming areas. With increased adverse weather events, floods, droughts, a warming climate.
This has a huge economic and social cost, both locally and nationally (and internationally), and should not be dismissed lightly; the cost of flood /wild weather clean-up, drought relief, along with loss of productivity, are significant, and will only increase with the burning of the coal that is mined from the area.

6. Increased health costs arising from coal mining and transportation are also borne by the general community and tax-payers in general; apparently as high as $74 million for Singleton alone. Costs of such externalities must also be factored into the equation. NSW Health is under extreme stress, the mine application suggest the royalties help pay for hospitals, but it must also consider the extra stress it puts on them.

Thank-you for accepting my submission

Peggy Fisher
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