From: [redacted]
To: pac pac
Subject: Submission on Warkworth Continuation Project
Date: Tuesday, 1 September 2015 8:04:06 AM

Dear PAC,

I spoke to you last time in person but cannot get to Singleton for this PAC.
My position has not changed: I beseech you to refuse consent to the Warkworth Continuation Project.

I am glad that the proposed repeal of clause 12AA of the State Environmental Planning Policy for Mining unties your hands and gives you the chance to correct the earlier unfortunate recommended approval of the Project.

Now, if economics are no longer legally and shamefully the "principle consideration", then the weighing of impacts against benefits is tipped back to where the courts saw it. The mine should be refused development consent because the health, social and environmental adverse impacts are too serious to allow them to occur.

Life in Bulga is already hard to bear with the existing mine impacts; this expansion will make life there intolerable. We have already lost villages in the Hunter to the coalmine blitz; the people lost their health and community and their chosen lives and loved places.
Warkworth, Ravensworth, Rixs Creek (where my grandmother was born) – now their names only signify coalmines, not villages.

I was an Upper Hunter resident for 36 years until 2014; I have watched with horror the rising scale of the imbalance that the government has allowed to occur between Singleton and Muswellbrook and surounds.
Both my parents grew up in Muswellbrook; my daughter and family lived in Singleton until the pollution and concern for their children's health drove them out a few years ago. I followed last year.

The cover of my book, 'Rich Land, Wasteland', used the Ravensworth mine as the 'wasteland' image – where once was a village, full of life, of people. The abandoned modern school building is a constant reminder of what so recently was there.
When I read the Bulga Milbrodale Progress Association's 'History of Bulga' to launch it for them last year, I was saddened that so many of the original homesteads noted as still standing are now on mine land – uninhabited, unloved, unseen, unappreciated.

Camberwell is on its last legs, with only a few homes still inhabited by villagers; the rest mine-owned and leased out. If the Ashton S-E mine goes ahead, that will be the end of it.
Wendy Bowman lost her historic family home, 'Granbalang', at Rixs Creek, to a coalmine. Now she fights to save her next home, 'Rosedale', to Ashton/Yancoal.

The Bulga community has fought valiantly to stop this extinction by stealth that occurred elsewhere in the Valley. They have a rich history and a lively and ongoing community; they deserve to continue into the future – long after the coal is gone.

This mine will, according to the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage "increase the risk of extinction of the Warkworth Sands Woodland" – an endangered ecological community unique to the Hunter Valley. It was never meant to be mined – NEVER. Approvals that allowed this to be circumvented are a distortion of the aim of no net loss of biodiversity. Offsets are a sham.

The local Wonnarua people have suffered enough desecration of and dislocation from their sacred places.

It is time that we as a society genuinely adopted the triple bottom line principle: people, planet and profit. Profit alone is not enough for a society to thrive.
NSW lost its way badly when our government blatantly enshrined Profit as pre-eminent in law. To benefit Rio, to beat Bulga.
Now they are back to decency, on paper at least.

'Jobs' ought not to be at any cost.

There is always another way; Hunter jobs should be being created now in industries with a future.
Rio would sack hundreds the day after an approval of this Project if it suited them, much as happened after the Mt Arthur expansion approval.
Coal jobs are not secure jobs.

It is up to you to draw the line at the court-acknowledged damage to our people and planet by this Project. The profit benefit was shown to be overstated in any case.

Now that the proper balance between economic, environmental and social concerns is restored, what the courts found stands: that the economic benefits are outweighed by the mine's environmental and social impacts.
Hence development consent should be refused.

Please give Bulga back its future.

Thank you
Sharyn Munro

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