

Shane Davey
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Submission in support of the Rix's Creek Mining Project

Dear Commissioners,

This submission is in support of the Rix's Creek Continuation of Mining Project and more particularly in support of open creative thinking for the possibilities associated with final voids at the end of mining.

Too often some of those objecting to current mine proposals such as Rix's Creek before you now, are basing their perceptions, arguments and ideas of what the future will look like on outdated thinking and practices from times long past. That perspective is outdated. Legacy issues in this day and age are of the highest priority and this especially so for the Bloomfield Group as I understand it. While asking the right and the difficult questions is an important part of the process, taking an exclusively negative perspective excludes the potential for truly beneficial outcomes.

In the modern age of mining it is a fact that the best possible practice around rehabilitation and eventual mine closure is an integral priority.

Whilst final void planning is given a great deal of attention at the time of Consent Applications it cannot be expected to be a finite science when looking 10, 20, 30 years out into the future. The fact is that any final plan or outcome will most likely be significantly improved due to constant evolution and improvements into the future.

This request is for the Department and the Commissioners to consider the potential positive opportunities that the final voids and in particular Rix's Creek, could afford the Upper Hunter region.

Some of those opportunities could include significant tracts of land that could be offered with lakes that could be incorporated into tourism parks and amenities, Industrial parks with communal employee recreation areas, Hydro pumping ponds for electricity generation.

Attached to this submission is a link to a video outlining a large-scale tourism idea specifically developed for consideration on a Hunter mine site. It is meant to stimulate potential positive thinking around just how great the outcome could be with the right approach. The video depicts a large-scale sculpture park that would include cycle ways, water features and significant additional infrastructure for public use and economic potential. Any number of mines including Rix's Creek could be the perfect location.

It's time to reverse the negative thinking about final voids and to look at the exceptional opportunities that could enable progressive outcomes for the Singleton, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Councils and their communities. Forward thinking views could encompass: tourism, recreational areas, intensive agricultural, hospitality, lifestyle, concert venues, school sporting facilities - all with economic, employment and community benefits. Around the world this kind of approach is already proving to be wildly successful and it is only a matter of time until progressive thinking delivers a similar project or projects in partnership mining companies.

Some examples:

- <http://www.gibbsfarm.org.nz/>
- <http://www.scottishsculpturepark.com/sculptors.php>
- <https://www.edenproject.com/>

It's important to note that coal-mining companies are exactly that: Coal Miners, they are not entrepreneurs or tourism operators. They can however, be surprisingly more open minded than they are given credit for. It would not be a huge argument to say that the best final outcome for all in this day and age is just good business, not to mention a great outcome for the considerable investments continually being made in these areas by mining companies.

With additional private enterprise and government partners, great possibilities exist. With proposals such as these, mining companies role can be to responsibly plan and shape the final void and surrounding rehabilitated land to enable those who have the entrepreneurial skills to then take the land use forward with creative thinking for future generations.

To finish, I would ask the Commissioners to favourably look at what the possibilities for Rix's Creek really are and to work collaboratively with The Bloomfield Group to allow, what will be in my view, the best possible future for all stakeholders.

Regards,

Shane William Davey