

## Rix's Creek Extension Hearing 29/7/2019:

1. My name is Neville Jukes. I was the Managing Director of PJ Welding Pty Limited for 45 years having recently retired for health reasons. I would prefer to "speak from the heart" as I am very passionate about The Bloomfield Group. However as I have to provide a copy of my speech notes to the hearing please bear with me as I will use those notes.
2. The Bloomfield Group fed my family for 45 years. During that time PJ Welding had some extremely lean periods and had to reduce the company to "bare bones". Several times PJ Welding has been on the verge of winding up, but The Bloomfield Group has always helped by finding enough work to keep the company afloat.
3. PJ Welding currently employs in excess of 20 people, one is my son. However some are more recent additions. When a local company went into receivership prior to Easter last year and some of their employees approached us to seek employment. In an effort to give them stability for their families, I approached the Bloomfield Group to see if they were able to help. Rix's Creek Mine supported these people by offering PJ Welding additional work. Without the help of Rix's Creek Mine there would have been another dozen people seeking unemployment benefits.
4. PJ Welding has employees with in excess of 35 years employment. Older workers have little chance of gaining alternative employment should they become unemployed, and it is the continuation of mining at Rix's Creek that will offer these people an opportunity to work till retirement.
5. PJ Welding employs several tradesmen who have spent their entire working life servicing the Bloomfield Group from their apprenticeship to middle age. They rely almost exclusively on Rix's Creek Mine to feed their families.
6. 2 of our Apprentices have achieved the Hunter Valley Apprentice of The Year award. The variety of work we receive from The Bloomfield Group, their focus on safety and an extensive environment awareness have had a significant impact on their training and the quality of tradesman they have become. All the supervisors, tradesmen, apprentices and labourers we have tutored over the many years are of the highest quality due to the support of The Bloomfield Group and the additional training they have supplied.

7. The Bloomfield group is a wonderful corporate citizen. They support our community in many ways. I know they significantly support the HUNTER MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, a subject near to my heart with both my wife & myself being Cancer survivors. They also support The Salvation Army, Father Chris Riley's Youth off the Streets, Steamfest. & many other local community groups. I remember at the managing director's funeral several years ago the minister revealed that The Bloomfield Group had made a very significant donation to repair Newcastle's Christ Church Cathedral after the 1989 earthquake but it was on the condition that nobody knew. This company helps many in the community anonymously because they seek no recognition.
8. Your decision will have far reaching impact on numerous families who rely on Rix's Creek Mine, in our case as far reaching as the central coast. If mining is not supported in this area towns like Singleton, Muswellbrook and other towns in the lower hunter will be impacted significantly with serious unemployment. I suspect some of these towns will struggle to survive such is their reliance on the mining industry.
9. In our particular case, P J Welding employees, partners and family's amount to a hundred people or more, but considering the Rix's Creek employees & other contractors **you have the immediate future of thousands of people in your hands.** Add to that the flow on effect to the local corner store, the paper shop, the Coles & Woolworths of this world and you have a serious human impact to consider.
10. A very important issue that needs to be taken into account is the fact that Rix's Creek is a privately owned Australian company. The profits and taxes remain in Australia. We are not dealing here with overseas commercial giants. We are dealing with people who live among us and work beside us. They have always displayed strong community ethics and ongoing consideration toward their neighbours.
11. We unreservedly support the continuation application and urge you to approve the mining lease extension to enable our children and grandchildren to be a part of the Rix's Creek Mining family.

Thank you.