

URGENT

PROBLEMS with DURALIE EXTENSION

DURALIE COAL EXTENSION PROJECT on PUBLIC EXHIBITION from Monday 8th

February until Monday 15th March 2010 (extended until Monday 22nd March)

It is time to make a written submission regarding the **Duralie Extension Project 08_0203**. The **Environmental Assessment can be viewed at Great Lakes Council Forster & Stroud offices; Gloucester Council office & the Department of Planning website**. CD's are also available at these offices for your convenience.

❖ Duralie are seeking approval for an extension of the existing pit with two additional open cut pits (*Weismantel & Clareval*) to the northwest of the main pit area.

There are several problems & concerns regarding this proposal.

❖ Duralie Coal must change several of their Conditions of Consent to proceed with this project. These conditions were granted by the Minister for Planning and the mine is supposed to adhere to these conditions. ***We believe these conditions are too easily changed when it suits the mining company.***

First Flush Protocol

❖ First Flush Protocol is the irrigation runoff collection system for the collection of runoff from the irrigation areas that can contain salts &/or heavy metals & then divert it to the Mine Water Dam (*dirty water*).

❖ We believe that the already approved figures in the first flush protocol are far too high and that this will act as a discharge system for anything below 1,326 us/cm (*micro-siemens*) providing Mammy Johnson's River is below 400us/cm (*micro-siemens*) then the irrigation runoff would be directed to the lower Coalshaft Creek and into Mammy Johnsons River. ***They now plan to use these figures to discharge first flush irrigation wastewater directly from the irrigation sumps into Coalshaft Creek & Mammy Johnsons River. (AppA3.2.5)***

❖ Duralie coal is supposedly not requesting river discharge in this proposal but ***has the first flush protocol turned into a form of river discharge in disguise.***

Irrigation

❖ Irrigation may be expanded into new areas adjacent to the Duralie Coal mine in the future subject to separate approvals. (*Main Report- Section 2 Project Description 2.8.4*)

Will this include riverflats & floodplains or areas that drain directly into Mammy Johnsons River?

❖ Part of the proposed irrigation area is in the southern catchment, which is also in the Offset area that Duralie Coal has set aside for "A voluntary conservation agreement, which provides protection. The planned enhancement and conservation works are expected to have a positive affect on the in-stream ecology of Mammy Johnson's River and to early order streams within the proposed offset area". (*Section 6 - Table 6-1*)

This offset area should be out of bounds from any mining activities including the irrigation of mine waste water and be preserved for conservation purposes.

Dams

❖ Duralie Coal has been granted approval for 3 new dams above the original Mine Water Dam (*Dirty Water Dam*). Auxiliary Dams 1 & 2 have been constructed and Auxiliary Dam 3 has not been constructed yet. They are now seeking approval to increase the size of one of these dams referred to as Auxiliary Dam 2 from **3.3ha (8 acres) to 27ha (66 acres)**. (*Appendix A- A3.2.3*)

❖ Duralie plan to pump mine wastewater from the original Mine Water Dam (*Dirty Water Dam*) into both Auxiliary Dam 1 & 2, this will contaminate these dams with mine waste water from the Mine Water Dam (*Dirty Water Dam*) and also turn these dams into dirty water dams. (*Appendix A- A 3.1.1*)

❖ Duralie Coal has stated "There is negligible risk of spill occurring from any of these dams over the Project Life, to downstream receiving waters including Mammy Johnsons River". (*Appendix A- A5.2*)

What about after the Project Life, what happens then?

Final Voids (*Section 2 Project Description- 2.9*)

A "final void" is the remaining open cut/pit/hole that remains after the completion of mining. Duralie Coal's

What we will be left with in our catchments

(ML/mega litres, ha-hectares)

1. Original Dirty Water Dam -1,450 ML capacity
2. Auxiliary Dam 1- 500 ML capacity
3. Auxiliary Dam 2 - **27ha (66 acres)** 2,900 ML capacity
4. Auxiliary Dam 3 - 110 ML capacity (not constructed yet)
5. Weismantal Final Void - **10 ha (24 acres)** 90m deep
1,900 ML capacity
6. Clareval Final Void - **47ha (116 acres)** 190m deep

consultants have predicted that the final void will take 120 years to reach 80% full, it will stay at 80% for the next 240 years, it will be 8 metres below the spill level because of predictions that climate change will decrease rainfall and increase evaporation. The salinity level will increase from 2000 uS/cm (*micro-siemens*) to 5000 uS/cm over 310 years. (*Appendix A- A7.3*)

"They have also stated that No Spill is predicted in the long term from the final voids"

It is only natural these final voids will fill up.

❖ ***How can we trust the predictions & scenarios of these paid experts from Queensland who have already been proven wrong regarding the original dirty water dam?***

❖ ***Will the government guarantee the downstream communities & water users that these toxic final voids will not overtop into our river system?***

❖ ***Who will be responsible for all of these contaminated dams and toxic final voids after the project life?***

Roads (Section 2 Project Description- 2.10.2)

- ❖ Duralie Coal is not permitted to use Duralie Road for any traffic associated with mining activities. Now they not only want to use it, but they also plan to dig up 1km of it as well as digging up the whole of Cheerup Rd.

Transportation of Coal (Main Report Section 2 Project Description- 2.6)

- ❖ Duralie is not permitted rail more than 1.8 million tonnes of coal per year to the Stratford mine for washing before it is railed to Newcastle. They are not permitted to rail the coal outside the hours 7am and 10pm, they now want to rail 3 million tonnes per year and run additional trains between Duralie and Stratford between the hours of 7.00am and 2.00am. This is 19 hours when coal trains will be running between the mines in uncovered train wagons past many residential properties and the villages of Wards River & Craven.
- ❖ Increased noise, additional coal dust, possible contamination of household water tanks and the high sulphur content of this coal are added problems for the residents along the train route.

Duralie Potentially Acid Forming (PAF) Reject Material Stored at Stratford Mine (after washing & processing)

- ❖ Due to the high sulphur content of the Duralie Coal the potentially acid forming rejects from the Duralie Coal are stored in the Stratford main pit, after washing and processing. The Duralie rejects are supposed to be kept under water due to the acid producing potential of these rejects. Stratford Coal has been regularly questioned about there inadequate handling of the Duralie PAF reject material.
- ❖ Duralie Coal now want to increase the amount of coal that is being sent to Stratford for washing, when it is obvious that Stratford Coal already have a problem handling the Duralie PAF rejects.

We believe that Stratford Coal have been continually non compliant, over several years, by not placing the Duralie Potentially Acid Forming (PAF) reject material under water in accordance with the approval.

Potentially Acid Forming Material (PAF) Stored at Duralie Mine (Appendix I-Geochemistry Assessment page1-26)

- ❖ The Duralie PAF material must be handled in the appropriate manner. Due to larger amounts of the potentially acid forming material in the Clareval overburden, Duralie Coal is considering an alternative handling technique to ***“Dump it in the paddock & compact it with traffic”. I’m sure that will fix it. This is absolutely unbelievable. What expert was paid to come up with this technique?***

Air Pollution (Appendix D- D7)

- ❖ Duralie Coal is only required to monitor dust particles to a PM10 (*particulate matter*). This is much too high, to monitor the fine particles associated with mining. These fine particles are more dangerous to our health, as they pass through the nose and lungs potentially causing cancers, asthma or respiratory diseases.

The government has a Duty of Care to the community and we must demand that they require Duralie Coal to monitor particulate matter at PM 1 to 2.5 and anything higher is completely unacceptable.

Coalshaft Creek & Un-named Creek Coalshaft Creek has already been extensively diverted. With this proposal we will lose a large section of both these creeks. We believe they will just disappear.

Cumulative Impacts

Toxic Final Voids
Contaminated Dirty Water Dams
Potentially Acid Forming Rejects
Drilling & Digging Riverflats & Floodplains
Trenching through & Diverting Creeks
Boring Under Rivers (*gas*)
Dewatering Aquifers
Discharging into rivers directly or indirectly
Continued Irrigation of mine wastewater
Noise, Dust & Blasting
Removal of known threatened species habitat

Threatened Species The proposed pit extension will destroy the habitat and displace several threatened species including the Brush-tailed Phascogale, Squirrel Glider, Speckled Warbler, Grey-Crowned Babbler (eastern subspecies). 32 Threatened Species have been identified at the site including 14 vulnerable species. (Appendix E- E4.15)

Cumulative Impact We believe the cumulative impact from both coal mining/exploration practices and gas/exploration practices, as well as proposed gas extraction is to great a risk in the Karuah Catchment.

The Government must apply the Precautionary Principle when assessing this proposal.

We believe this is an environmental disaster in the making and this project should be rejected.

Submissions We urge you to write a submission objecting to the proposal or sign & send our pro-forma letters,

**Send Submissions to:
The Minister for Planning
Major Development Assessment
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001
Email: plan-comment@planning.nsw.gov.au**

which we are preparing. When writing a submission quote: **Duralie Extension Project 08_0203** & send your submissions a few days early to make sure it gets there before or by 5.00pm on the due date.

Submissions due date extended until Monday 22nd March

If you are not happy about our valley & catchments being taken over by coal mining companies, exploration drilling & digging on

riverflats, gas drilling & extraction, the continued destruction of our river systems, increased trains, noise, coal dust, blasting etc join us at the **Rally at Duralie 6th March at 10.00am** (*meet at Duralie Rd, south of Wards River*) and a Public Meeting at Wards River Hall Ward St, Wards River on the 11th March at 7.00pm.

Public Meeting

Thursday 11th March

7.00pm at Wards River Hall

Barrington Gloucester Stroud Preservation

Alliance & Johnsons Creek Conservation Committee

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