

Submission on Resource Consent applications to Environment Canterbury: CRC184166, CRC200500, CRC201366, CRC201367, CRC201368 and CRC203016

and to Selwyn District Council: RC185622

Applicant: Bathurst Coal Limited

Submitter: Fay and Paul McOscar

Introduction

We have been landowners in Glentunnel since 1982 and moved here permanently in 2006. At that time, the coalmine operating locally behind Glentunnel was a small, family owned operation, based on underground mining. However, on reading the current Bathurst applications, it has been somewhat of a shock to discover the large scale of the mining operation. Increased noise and traffic movements in the area have been noticed on a daily basis but the scale of what has been happening was not known. When night lights and increased noise were first noted, investigations revealed that a resource consent had been processed **non-notified**, thus keeping the local residents "in the dark".

The Bathurst Applications

We are pleased that the Regional and District Councils have bundled the Bathurst applications and made them available for Public Notification and for a joint hearing which will enable close public scrutiny. However, the sheer volume and complexity of the material presented has been a challenge and it almost feels like this has been done deliberately to deter ordinary people from taking time to work their way through the material, and to form an opinion in order to make a worthwhile submission.

Canterbury Regional Council applications CRC184166, CRC200500, CRC201366, CRC201368, CRC203016

We **oppose** the granting of the activities for the following reasons:

The adverse effects on discharged water quality, on the adjacent wetlands, and on our local aquatic ecology are more than minor and what is stated.

Water quality effects

We are concerned about the discharges of acid mine drainage, the associated contaminants and sediment to surface waters particularly to the water tributaries of the Waianiwi which flows into the Waikirikiri/Selwyn River.

Discharges to the Tara Stream and Bush Gully stream will have a further major effect on water quality and habitat for aquatic species including the critically endangered Canterbury mudfish.

The effects of water pollution on the Bathurst site has the potential to extend well beyond the application area. The Waikirikiri River is one of the most degraded rivers in the country and water from here eventually flows into Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere and Wairewa/Lake Forsyth which are

also severely degraded. Current restoration work at Te Waihora is at risk if pollution continues at the same rate as present, or increases, further from up country.

There is a worrying list of breaches in relation to uncontrolled discharges at the mine site (appendix N. SDC Notification decision). The Company appears unable to adhere to the consent conditions related to discharges, we believe they will not be over duly concerned with additional discharges from increased operations?

Water quantity effects

Dr Meredith for ECan states: *As the mine footprint has enlarged it has destroyed or extinguished several seeps, springs and wetlands that are important buffers that continue to supply small volumes of water to small streams with receding hydrographs.* (Page 85 Appendix D ECan Notification Decision, Adrian Meredith).

It appears to us that the consents issued have not taken into account issues addressed by Dr Meredith as explained above.

Loss of wetlands

It is difficult to understand why Bathurst would be permitted to continue to further degrade these wetlands. Water quality effects (above) contribute to this degradation. Wetlands have become a National Priority for protection and it is no longer acceptable or appropriate to remove natural wetlands.

Our concern is that Bathurst will be responsible again for further similar uncontrolled sediment run off and breaches of their discharge consents as shown regarding the past 14 infringement notices.

Flooding

Since 2000 the area has had 3 major rainstorms that has caused major local flooding, isolating local communities and road closures which included flooding of the Waianiwaniwa Valley floor. We have a concern that the proposed expansion of this open cast mine will act as a water catchment with Bathurst being unable to stem any water outpouring from the mine site thereby damaging the adjacent wetlands and the Waianiwaniwa stream. Some time ago we were advised by a senior staff member that flooding control on the mine site was difficult.

Selwyn District Council (SDC) application RC185622

We **oppose** the granting of RC185622.

Bathurst Coal Limited was granted a consent from 2013, by SDC to extract a maximum volume of 20,00 tonnes of coal per annum. The Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) states that *the current production is 170,00 tonnes per annum.*

This fact shows a serious neglect and obvious inability by both ECan and the Selwyn District Council to monitor and audit the consent issued.

Doctor Meredith has stated the following, *The current monitoring regime has evolved as the mine site has developed. I consider the monitoring required prior to CRC170541(2017) to be minimal for a significant mining operation. This may have been because of the poor understanding of the likely extent of mine development/expansion, and/or CRC having little mine effects experience from the limited mineral or coal mining undertaken in Canterbury.* (Page 82 Appendix D. ECan Notification Decision, Adrian Meredith).

We object and oppose Bathurst's applications as they have openly ignored existing consent conditions and we have little confidence that this will change or that robust monitoring will occur.

Adverse effects of increased traffic movements, noise, dust and lighting

All these activities have increased over time and have had an impact on local properties. We have noticed a black sludge when cleaning drainage gutters in our Homebush Road property. We believe that this is windblown coal dust from the mine workings and will in future collect samples for testing to verify our point.

The proposed total of 730 vehicle movements that includes heavy truck/trailer vehicles will likely create greater road degradation and damage. Already the Selwyn District Council is struggling with costs to maintain roads in the area. Covid-19 has presented the Councils with a financial headache and how to meet proposed unwanted rate increases which will make it more difficult to meet increased road maintenance costs.

Additional concerns

We are strongly opposed to coal combustion residuals being returned to the mining site as we understand that the material has a high content of sulphuric acid, which could eventually leech into the adjacent wetlands, the Tara Stream area and aquifers below.

Worldwide coal is increasingly being phased out of use because of its detrimental polluting effects on the community. ECan should not be encouraging any increase in the production of coal use and should be encouraging the phasing out of coal use and that such mining operations cease by 2025.

It is important that the Commissioners note that Bathurst Coal do not have a good record of compliance with consents which should play an important part in considering these new consents.

We find it difficult to believe that Bathurst have been operating since 2013 without consents for several of their activities and are now seeking retrospective consents 7 years later. As we have stated we do not have any confidence in them to self-monitor as it appears to be a "catch us if you can" scenario.

A Question to be asked of Bathurst

Several years ago, through contact with a senior mine employee, we were advised that Bush Gully's coal was of a poor quality. Bathurst were shipping coal from its Takitimu Southland mine, to Rolleston where Bush Gully coal was washed and mixed with the better Takitimu coal for on sales. We noted a recent news item where a Bathurst executive stated Bush Gully coal was of a low sulphur variety. We request that the Commissioners ascertain if this is still Bathurst's practice.

Conclusion

Due to the above stated reasons in conclusion we totally object, to the consents being granted and that they be declined along with a proposal being adopted, to terminate all consents and close this mine by 2025.

Signed:

Fay and Paul McOscar

Postal Address:

We do not wish to be heard in support of our submission.

We are not a trade competitor for the purpose of section 308B of the Resource Management Act 1991