From: coalcommunities-bounces@lists.nsw.greens.org.au on behalf of Graham Brown
To: coalcommunities@lists.nsw.greens.org.au
Subject: [CoalCommunities] Graham Brown.
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The people of Jerrys Plains will also get the fallout from a mine that if approved might (yeah ha ha)be developed by a company associated with a former mining union executive. It is saying that in the mining process it will employ trainees but the question of equal pay for equal work may need to be ironed out judging by the pay rates of other mines with trainees.Otherwise it will just be a way of getting cheap production.

Life in the shadow of coal central
NICK O'MALLEY INVESTIGATIONS
March 19, 2010

THE massive expansion of the mining industry in the Upper Hunter Valley is making people sick, say concerned residents who have campaigned for a decade for the government to establish independent air-quality monitoring and to conduct a proper health study.

One resident, Di Gee, from Jerrys Plains, worries that the mines have caused the asthma her three youngest children suffer. Her two eldest children, born before the mines nearest her family's dairy farm expanded, do not have respiratory problems

Tuan Au, a local doctor, has been so frustrated by the government's inaction in the region that he has begun his own study, spending $5000 so far in testing the lung function of students from 10 schools, after he noticed his asthma patients seemed to improve while on holiday. He claims to have found preliminary evidence linking lower-lung function in children to proximity to the mines.

In November the environmental scientist John Drinin from the Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group sent a detailed submission to the government outlining its fears over the area's two power stations and 34 mines - facilities from which the government will this year earn an estimated $1.5 billion in royalties and fees.

The government did not even acknowledge receipt of the submission, nor of two follow-up letters sent on its behalf by a senior solicitor in the Environmental Defender's Office until Wednesday, the day the Herald series on mining in the region began.

"Presumably this is just a response to the stories that have been in the Herald," Dr Drinin said.

The sudden written response says senior health officials had already met to plan "for an assessment of health risks" from mining and power generation. A departmental official later explained this was not a health study but "a desktop analysis of existing data".

"That's the first we have heard of this," said Dr Drinin. "You'd think they would have told us."

Dr Drinin also dismissed the government's planned air quality monitoring network, noting that of the 14 monitoring stations only three would test for dangerously small dust particles (those known as PM2.5), 11 for larger particles (PM10) and none for any of the other 35 chemicals known to be in the haze over the region.

National Pollutant Inventory figures show the PM10 emissions reported by the mines increased from 37,000 tonnes in 2003 to 55,160 tonnes in 2008.

The amount of PM2.5 emissions reached 1500 tonnes.

Dr Drinin called on the government to scrap its monitoring plan, which is to be funded by polluters and administered by a "competent organisation that is yet to be determined", in favour of a fully independent body.

In 2008 alone, 113 tonnes of toxic metals and their compounds (including antimony, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, lead, manganese, mercury, nickel, selenium and zinc) were emitted into the air of the upper Hunter from mines and electricity generators, along with 132,700 tonnes of sulphur dioxide and 62,600 tonnes of oxides of nitrogen.

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