

DARTBROOK

14 March 2022

"The Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders' Association is disappointed by the decision handed down by the Land and Environment Court, which enables the s34 Agreement reached between the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) and Australian Pacific Coal (APC) to allow underground mining until 2027.

This Agreement overturns the IPC's original refusal of a five-year extension to the Dartbrook underground coal mine. It will now allow one of the most historically dangerous mines in the state to be operated until 2027 by a company that has no expertise in mining, right beside the Hunter River and the township of Aberdeen. It is an approval of a project that was overwhelmingly rejected by the community, has serious environmental impacts, and provides little to no economic benefit. It has no social licence to operate.

On behalf of the Upper Hunter community and our industry we believe we have taken appropriate steps to seek to protect our industry, community and region from the impacts of this coal mining proposal.

Our industry and other agricultural industries are the long-range backbone of this region. They are sustainable industries, employing many thousands of people with a long-term future.

At a time when the state and the world are transitioning away from coal the signals sent by the Government, through continued approvals of coal mines adjacent to the prime agricultural land and essential waterways of the Upper Hunter, to industries and communities like ours are that we are expendable.

The Government has refused to act on calls for certainty by providing protection zones and buffers between these industries and environmentally and agriculturally sensitive land and land uses. It has not delivered certainty to the Upper Hunter community by imposing a SEPP prohibiting open cut mining on this site to deliver its by-election commitment. If the NSW Government is serious about supporting industries and communities like ours it is time it at least delivers that.

We will review the decision in detail and consider our options."

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BACKGROUND: The Hunter Valley's Thoroughbred Breeding industry contributes over \$5 billion annually to the national economy and \$2.6 billion annually to the NSW economy. It supports over 230,000 jobs throughout Australia. It is one of three international centres of thoroughbred breeding excellence in the world – alongside Newmarket in the UK and Kentucky in the USA. It is Australia's largest producer and exporter of premium thoroughbreds. It is an iconic part of Australia's sporting history and an industry worth protection.

