

Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group

“Improving Mining Regulations in NSW ”



A community-based group looking to address Environmental issues affecting Singleton Shire residents

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We seek identification as to what is making our Children and Community Sick so they can be mitigated by OH&S Compliance Orders.

SSHEG Focus on Health

SSHEG is Not Anti Mining or Anti Power Stations

Department of Planning and Environment,
23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney NSW 2000

“Integrated Mining Policy - PEA is missing the THIMBLE”

SSHEG is struggling to see how the Set of four documents on exhibition under the Heading “*Improving Mining Regulations in NSW* “ will address the Hunter Valley Community **Health** Concerns ostensibly from Open Cut Mining.

In keeping with the introduction of the “*Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA)*”; SSHEG suggests that the Phase “**PEA and THIMBLE**” be incorporated to once and for all place **Health** in its rightful place in thinking processes of the NSW Government in all aspects when considering Land Exploration activities in Rural areas for Open Cut Mining Industries.

The **Health** Impact from **Mining** **Blots** **Lives** **Endlessly**
in the Hunter Valley in 2015; viz **“THIMBLE”**.

NSW Minerals Council Stakeholder Research in the Hunter Valley conducted in 2010 and Mining Dialogue 2011 etc adds further **Health** credence to the earlier 2009 SSHEG NSW Government Submission calling for Independent Health Study. The extract below, clearly establish Stakeholders Priorities regarding the role of Health Risk Assessments in the **PEA** stage of the Mining Exploration. (In **Attachment 1** SSHEG details and references Stakeholder Health issues relating to “*Cumulative Health Impact Studies and Health Risk Assessments*”).

Mining Dialogue Workshop July 2011		
Idea for action		Votes
Synoptic Plan: Urgent development of a new synoptic plan: strong community input - include land class - ensure plan is a living document.	Synoptic Plan	49 147
Water study for the Hunter Valley to understand aquifers and surface water.	W A T E R	28
Independent and transparent water assessment of mining projects (funding and training for more water experts who can work independently of mining companies?).		26
2005 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Stream/Aquifer Guideline ¹ – Implement the aquifer standards outlined in the Guideline (150m from edge of alluvium).		25 109
Health Risk Assessments to go into Director General requirements, looking particularly at long term health issues as well as short term, intense exposure. Assessment to be done at exploration stage.	HEALTH	24 112

“Stakeholder Workshop Report, Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue, 2011 Report” extract

Structurally, Stakeholders are calling for a combination **“PEA and THIMBLE”** approach at the Exploration Stage of Mining Projects.

SSHEG having waded through Volumes of EIS for various Mines in the Hunter Valley over the years, concede that a more standardised approach is worthwhile; however the *Devil is always in the Detail* and these four documents on exhibition will never resolve this issue unless a detailed Proforma (with does and don'ts) is included to capture the Detailing that is the *Bone of Contention*

between the Near Neighbour Residents and the Mining Companies.

A statistical review of Community Submissions on Hunter Valley Mining Projects by NSW Planning over the last 10 years would establish the degree of distortion in Project evaluations where “Averaging” is used to “*Circumvent and Hide*” the actual Minute to Minute Mining **Health** Impact on Near Neighbours.

After nearly a decade of Singleton Residents attending Mining Community Consultative Committee meetings, Direct contacts with, and written Submissions to NSW Government Departments and Authorities, the “*Mine Pollution impact on Resident’s Health-Diseases Message*” is continually being pushed aside.

Perhaps the “**PEA and THIMBLE**” Acronyms may prompt Government Authorities to reestablish **Health** to the position of prominence that it once held prior to the establishment of the EPA in NSW.

In so doing, much of the imbalance in Rural Hunter Valley Farming Communities created by overzealous Open Cut Mining can be unimpassionedly addressed.

Special Reference should be made to *Attachment 1* which details and summarises SSHEG documents and collaboration with Authorities and Stakeholders since 2009.

Thanking you in anticipation of your acknowledgement

Dr Neville Hodgkinson PhD

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Attachment 1 SSHEG Document May 2015 “*Review of Hunter Valley Mining Dialogue 2011 to 2014*”