

Appendix B: Enquiry into the effects of Mining on the Murray Darling Basin  
Dr Pauline Roberts  
17<sup>th</sup> September, 2009

Mr A. Blomfield  
Rado Ranch P/L  
"Colorado"  
QUIRINDI NSW 2343



Office of the  
Director-General

25 January, 1996

Dear Mr Blomfield

Enclosed is the Notice of Determination in respect of your development application registered No. QI/95/1 lodged in accordance with State Environmental Planning Policy No. 46.

The application has been refused. The principal reasons for this include the potential impact that the clearing may have on increasing salinity and the conservation value of this remnant vegetation.

All particulars are set out in the attached notice. I have also included the full assessment, rather than a summary of the reasons for refusal, to assist you in gaining a full appreciation of the determination.

May I suggest you contact your local Landcare Group and/or Catchment Management Committee to discuss the implications of the salinity issues. To this end you may wish to discuss the matter with Mr Tim Watts, District Soil Conservationist, Quirindi, Phone (067) 461 344.

Mr Watts can also help if you have any further enquiries regarding the determination.

Yours sincerely

  
Peter Millington  
ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL

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## ATTACHMENT 1: REASONS FOR REFUSAL

The consent authority considers that the combination of the following relevant issues warrants that consent be refused, as the area under application:

- if cleared, is likely to significantly contribute to salinisation of soil and water, and to the deterioration in quality of groundwater. The area is a recognised recharge area. During the site inspection, saline discharge areas were noted on the footslopes below the area under application. Salinity surveys undertaken on the plains below the site have indicated salinity levels at 1m depth ranging from 5.39 to 11.55 dS/m (decisiemens/metre). Saline soils are defined as those having an electrical conductivity of greater than 4 dS/m. Available evidence concludes that no further clearing should occur, and planting and regeneration should be promoted. The effects of salinity on agricultural production are well documented. \*
- contains remnant vegetation within a region that has been extensively cleared.
- contains habitat for at least two threatened fauna species: Koala and Regent Honeyeater.
- is dominated by *Eucalyptus albens* vegetation communities which are poorly conserved and are considered to be vulnerable communities.
- contains remnants potentially available for disjunct populations of a number of species.
- contains remnant vegetation that is locally significant for wildlife habitat.
- may be important for migratory species such as the silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*) given, in particular the extent of regional vegetation clearance.
- currently has a low boundary to area ratio and the proposal will significantly increase this ratio. As the extent of remnant vegetation in the region is very limited any further fragmentation of the small remaining remnants will have a significant impact on the remaining locally occurring biodiversity.



One of the most critical factors that must be considered in determining this application is the affect of clearing on groundwater and salinisation. The area under application is a recognised recharge area. There is significant evidence that shows that continued clearing of these areas will lead to further salinity problems. This evidence is discussed previously under Clause 7.1.k. The issue of groundwater recharge and salinity should be clearly addressed before further consideration is given to clearing the area under application.

No details of economic costs or benefits of the proposal were provided by the applicant. In terms of economic benefit to the applicant it is difficult to determine the net benefit the applicant will derive from the proposed development. It is also difficult to assess the economic consequences to the locality and the State should clearing result in an increase in salinisation lower down the catchment.

On balance it is recommended that development consent not be granted. This is based on the assessed need for the long term protection and management of the remnant native vegetation within the area under application. This has particular relevance to its function as a recharge area and its link with increased salinity potential should clearing be undertaken.

**Section 90 of the EP&A Act. (1) In determining a development application, a consent authority shall take into consideration such of the following matters as are of relevance to the development the subject of that development application:**

**(a) the provisions of:**

**(i) any environmental planning instrument;**

The land under application lies within Quirindi Shire Local Environment Plan (1991) and is zoned 1(a) Rural (assessment by research of records at Department of Urban Affairs and Planning). The primary purpose of this zone is to encourage the use of land for agriculture and uses compatible with agriculture. The proposed development is compatible with this zoning.

**(ii) any draft environmental planning instrument that is or has been placed on exhibition pursuant to section 47(b) or 66(1)(b);**

There are no known current draft environmental planning instruments which affect the area under application (assessed by search of records at Department of Urban Affairs and Planning).

**(iii) any draft State environmental planning policy which has been submitted to the Minister in accordance with section 37 and details of which have been notified to the consent authority;**

There is no known draft SEPP that affects the land under application.