

Submission from Alexandra Green

As a young South Australian, I have always been proud of my state and my home.

Most of my peers and friends have moved to the eastern states in the last few years, lured by the prospect of more interesting jobs and more vibrant cities. Still, I've stayed here, living in the South Eastern suburbs with the Adelaide Hills right on my doorstep – what could be better?

Most of my weekends are spent out and about, exploring the latest food and wine destinations and the beautiful regions in my backyard. A favourite is the Adelaide Hills, with its picturesque small towns, world-class wineries and beautiful fresh produce available at local cellar doors and restaurants. You'll often find me at Bird in Hand with a group of friends, enjoying a wine and some nibbles and taking in the heavenly landscape. It's exactly the kind of uniquely South Australian experience that keeps me here.

Picture now, then, that same experience with a mine literally right next door. The constant noise and movement of a 24/7 mining site. Trucks rattling back and forth (74 vehicle trips per day!), dust, underground blasting.

I can appreciate that Terramin has taken some steps to minimise its impact during its five-year stint. That does not mean its impact should be disregarded.

For example, regardless of EPA standards, there will still be an increase in noise volume and constancy. There's a very good chance this will be enough to deter tourists such as myself from the wineries surrounding the mine site. Why would we stay, when there are so many other locations without this constant noise interruption?

Similarly, why spend the afternoon in an area where heavy trucks are passing back and forth? Where there's an increase in dust?

And that's to say nothing of the potential long-term impacts of the mine, long after the mining company have packed up and left the region for their next project. What will become of these South Australian brands and businesses if their water supply is somehow damaged or changed? Again, I appreciate that Terramin has done some testing on the potential water impact, but no amount of testing can undo damage done if something goes wrong.

I am not opposed to mining, and I understand the benefits it generates for the South Australian economy. However, it seems to me particularly short-sighted to drop a mine right in the middle of a productive, iconic South Australian region, one that holds up our global reputation for award winning wine and unparalleled tourism experiences.

I also understand the need to create jobs in a state with the worst unemployment rate in the country. While this project will create some 140 jobs over five years, for me this argument falls flat on two levels. Firstly, over the five-year lifespan of the mine, jobs sustained by the existing businesses in the area will have reached 885 FTE jobs. Should these businesses be unable to coexist with the mine (because their patronage has declined, or their water supply damaged, for example) these long-term, sustainable jobs would then be threatened for the sake of one short-term project.

Secondly, this argument ignores another problem facing our state – our continually aging population. While this mine would create a handful of short-term jobs, should our focus not be on the long-term – on creating a more vibrant place for families and young people to live with sustainable jobs for young people – many of whom work in the tourism and hospitality industries?

Overall, I am of the opinion that this particular mine project is short-sighted, and to approve it would be to disregard the existing use of the area and the South Australians who love it and enjoy it.

Let's champion the local businesses and farmers who have quite literally grown our global reputation for top quality food, wine and experiences and support sustainable employment and ongoing tourism.