

BLUE HAVEN.  
N.S.W. 2262  
9th April, 2017

Planning Assessment Commissioners, Kruk, Johnson and Hutton  
Re: Wallarah 2 Coal Project

Dear Commissioners,

I was not in a position to speak at Wednesday's meeting so I am making this written submission for your consideration.

#### **Water**

- There is no water-tight guarantee that the water supply in the Wyong Valleys will not be damaged.
- A Northern Precinct Meeting was told that BHP sold the mining rights because reports to BHP indicated mining **would** damage the aquifer in the area.
- Water is piped to Mangrove Mountain Dam, from the Wyong resource, to support water supply in the Gosford area which, like Wyong, is a growing residential area. Gosford local water catchment cannot meet local demand, hence the expensive pipeline
- The Hunter region relies on one dam, Grahamstown Dam (known to have evaporation problems) for its' water supply and with residential development expanding through the Newcastle and Hunter region, is unlikely to be able to provide supplementary water to the Central Coast in the future.
- It is unlikely that damage to either surface water or the aquifer could be adequately compensated or replaced.

#### **Bushfire Risk**

- The area is prone to bushfire risk and in the event of a fire the deposits of coal dust, spilt coal and the coal to be loaded will undoubtedly contribute to the flammable materials and so to the intensity of a fire, which would be detrimental to surrounding properties and land.
- There is the possibility that the coal may catch fire and be the source of a bushfire.

#### **Noise Pollution**

- Before the westerly development in Blue Haven it was rare to hear passing trains and that depended upon wind direction. Therefore increasing noise is of concern as this area is usually quiet.
- Noise coming from the mining operation may contribute to stress levels and sleep difficulties of residents, particularly when it is continuous.

#### **Light**

- Areas of Blue Haven and Wyee are not overly bright at night and I know of at least one amateur astronomer who, at times shares his knowledge with others. Light pollution would remove this opportunity to share the wonders of the galaxy and contribute to peoples knowledge and appreciation of our universe.
- Studies from the Antarctic and Arctic communities have demonstrated that continual periods of light, as with continual periods of darkness, affect people's behaviour.

- Light pollution from the loading operation will be on going and not just for limited periods. A health risk to the local population plus the surrounding flora and fauna that remain.

### **Hue Hue Road**

- Hue Hue Road is increasingly used by local traffic because of congestion on the Pacific Highway in the northern part of the Wyong area.
- It is also a diversion road when closures to the Pacific Motorway (M1/F3) occur and one of the diversions in the event of the Pacific Highway being closed. Both have been closed due to accidents or bushfires at various times and such closures have been lengthy.
- The possible loss of this road due to subsidence issues, which could be exacerbated due to the increased traffic load, would have an adverse and significant effect on this northern region besides travellers to and from the north and south of our area.

### **Co-existence of Mining and Residential / Commercial Areas.**

- The example sighted at the public hearing on Wednesday referred to the Newcastle and Hunter region. Mining in these areas began many years ago using different methods. This is now hampering the re-development in the central Newcastle area due to the expense of stabilizing old under-ground workings. There have been spectacular incidences of "sink-holes" appearing on both private and public land in recent years.
- Wallarah 2 acknowledges there will be subsidence from long wall mining, which we can expect to be exacerbated by second extraction process.
- Comparisons between the two areas therefore appears to be miss leading.

### **Health Risks.**

- The health risks from coal dust and the fine particle emissions have been established through work in the Hunter and Newcastle areas and in other areas.
- Coal is deemed to be a prime source of particle pollution and the emission of carbon dioxide.
- The coal industry relies on diesel and this is an acknowledged carcinogen.
- Ventilation shafts are a cause of concern as emissions from the shafts will be disbursed over the local areas, dependent upon wind direction and strength.
- The incidence of coronary and respiratory disease is found to be above average in areas subject to emissions from coal mining operations and transportation of coal.
- The detrimental effect of non-stop noise and light pollution on physical and mental health.

### **Economic Benefits.**

- The stated and proposed economic benefits to the region and state are estimates at best and are questioned by others who have done independent assessments or have the expertise to examine the claimed benefits knowledgably.
- The mine is scheduled to have a limited working life, between twenty eight (28) and under fifty (50) years. The proposed employment for the working mine is stated as three hundred (300) positions, with an expected flow on to associated local business. There is no guarantee and it is unlikely that all prospective workers will reside in the local area.
- No consideration has been given to:

- The possible loss of job opportunities due to pollution problems e.g.
  - Loss of spawning grounds leading to decrease in fish stock and the loss of local fishing industry.
  - Loss of tourism and associated income derived from holiday rentals and through retail sales and services.
- The escalation in health costs.
- To the mental, emotional and general health of local residents.
- The effect of loss of value in local properties, (selling over the past year at well over four hundred thousand (\$400,000) to over five hundred thousand (\$500,000) dollars) on:
  - Families:
    - Increased stress
    - Increased health problems
    - Unable to move because of mortgage debt incurred by selling at a lower price
    - Increase in family breakdowns
  - Lending institutions unable to recover full repayment of monies lent due to decrease in assets value because of the reduction in value of the property
  - Local economy

### **Community Consultation**

- Community consultation by Wallarah 2 Coal consisted of one off meetings by appointment at the Tuggerah site. A meeting of one or two people being confronted by two to three Wallarah 2 Coal employees was intimidating.
- The lack of a public meeting denied one the opportunity to draw on the knowledge and experience of other possible attendees.
- I therefore strongly reject the claim that community or public consultation, robust or otherwise, was carried out.

### **Changing Climate / Weather**

According to meteorologists, due to changing climate conditions, we can expect extreme weather events to increase in intensity and frequency. The local area has over recent times been subject to damaging winds (a category 2 cyclone in April 2015) and sudden extremely heavy rains causing flash flooding and with prior or continuing rain flooding. As recently as 30th. March this area received 88.5mm. of rain in under two hours causing flash flooding in this area. Homes in this area sustained damage from the Newcastle earthquake, magnitude 5.6, on 29th. December 1989. There appears to be no provision to:

- Prevent overflow of water from any water holding area, admittedly a difficult undertaking when rainfalls around 100mm. occur over very short time periods.
- Prevent or limit pollution from coal being subject to such rain events.
- Prevent spread of coal dust pollution during strong wind events.
- Address problems that could arise in the event of another earthquake.
  - The effect of an earthquake on areas subjected to mining operations and surrounding areas has not been addressed.

### **Other Matters**

I note with concern that many of the speakers at Wednesday's meeting who supported the approval of the Wallarah 2 Coal Mine proposal, had been employed in some way by

Wallahah 2 and/or anticipated receiving future benefit through employment with the Wallarah 2 group. One speaker supported the application on the grounds of Wallarah 2 being a "good corporate citizen" because the association he represented received financial support through donations from the company. The notion of Wallarah 2 being a "good corporate citizen" through donations to local sporting groups and charities was an aspect that seemed to be emphasised by other "pro mine" speakers. There are other local business enterprises that engage in giving monetary support to local sporting groups and charities without endangering the well being of both people and environment. The notion that being a "good corporate citizen" can mitigate the damage the company's activities would reap upon the local people, environment and water supply is untenable.

The village of Blue Haven and surrounding areas are existing areas of habitation. These residential areas are not encroaching upon an existing coal mining operation rather the proposal is to establish a mining operation adjacent to existing housing. With known health risks, the possibility of interference with ground water supplies to a growing area, environmental contamination and questionable financial benefit to the state and community how can any right minded person condone the approval of this application? Our note money was once headed COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. Where commonwealth came from common weal or common good. The removal of that heading seems to herald an age where the good of the common people or even people is ignored in favour of benefiting commercial enterprises. I sincerely beg that you once again put the interests of our local people and community ahead of dubious financial benefits and recommend this application be rejected thereby proving it is not "a done deal" as indicated by one speaker.

Attached please find my previous submission to the Department of Planning and Environment as the concerns raised then remain current.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.

M. K. Baxter

COPY.

Driftwood Lodge  
195 Birdwood Drive  
BLUE HAVEN NSW 2262

27<sup>th</sup> August 2016

The Director  
Planning Services  
Department of Planning and Environment  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir

Re: Wallarah 2 Project SSD 4974 Amended Development Application

I hereby register my strong objection to the Amended Development Application for the Wallarah 2 Project.

It is totally against my will that this application receives approval. There are numerous concerns raised by the proposal to mine under the Wyong Valleys and the positioning of the coal loading facility within a short distance of the existing village of Blue Haven and the site of another housing development.

Concerns include but are not limited to the following:

**Water:**

The NSW State Government has spent significant monies on the construction of a pipeline to enable water to be pumped from the Wyong water catchment to Mangrove Dam, to support the government driven expansion of population on the Central Coast.

The proposed long wall mining is not only below the level of the water table but will ensure subsidence in the mined area, therefore the possible loss of water from the surface system that exists cannot be ignored. Greg Hunt, Federal Minister for Innovation, Industry and Science, recently said that "we can never take risks with water." An approval of this amended application would be taking a significant risk.

The risk of contamination to the water supply from mining activity, through the mining and subsequent treatment of coal during transport to the coal loader, storage and loading which will undoubtedly result in leaching of contaminants into both the potable water and the Tuggerah Lakes System is unacceptable.

**Environment of the Tuggerah Lakes System:**

There exists the possibility of contamination of water and waste materials into the local water ways of Spring and Wallarah Creeks, which feed into Budgewoi Lake and thus into the Tuggerah Lakes system as a whole.

This would endanger both the local fishing industry and tourism industry.

***The Tuggerah Lakes System is:***

A nursery ground for marine creatures and supports commercial fishing,

A popular recreational and tourist area that has been regarded as the jewel in the crown of the previous Wyong Shire area.

**Air Pollution:**

The adverse health effects of dust, including fine particulate matter has been documented and acknowledged by health authorities. The siting of a coal loading facility unacceptably close to an existing population, including two primary schools and one high school, constitutes an acceptable health risk to people in the area. Residents with existing health issues, particularly respiratory and or cardiac problems could also be placed at risk of stress and possible mental health issues as well as having existing conditions exacerbated. Winds would undoubtedly extend the affected areas during a year.

**Subsidence:**

This is recognised to cause damage to a number of properties and this will undoubtedly cause stress to those whose properties are so affected. Past local experience, with people seeking compensation for damage, has resulted in ongoing health problems for those so affected. The admission of subsidence creates an unacceptable risk to properties and residents health.

**Light and Noise Pollution:**

The operation of a coal loading facility with 250 metres of an existing population would subject residents to excessive noise and light pollution and would undoubtedly result again in health issues.

**Global Environment:**

A recent international agreement was reached, to act to limit the increase global temperature to under 2 degrees Celsius. A study by a United Kingdom Energy Research sector estimated that between eighty and eighty eight percent (80-88%) of the existing worlds coal reserves need to remain unmined if this target is to be met. For Australia the estimate of ninety three percent (93%) needs to remain in the ground. Therefore, surely the seven percent (7%) that is it recommended could be mined, should come from existing mining operations. Such action would undoubtedly be a more cost effective solution <sup>than</sup> ~~that~~ expending monies on opening new areas,

especially with the possible harm that may and in some instances ~~would~~ result from mining activities as proposed in the Wallarah 2 Project.

In view of the recent action of the NSW State Government <sup>in</sup> buying back the licence for a proposed coal mine under the Liverpool Plains area, it is inconceivable that a licence be granted to the Wallarah 2 Project.

Yours sincerely



M K Baxter