

David Harris MP
Member for Wyong
Shadow Minister for the Central Coast

Tuesday 11th April 2017

Robyn Kruk AM
Chair
Wallarah 2 Coal Project – R041/17
Planning Assessment Commission Panel

Dear Ms Kruk AM

Please accept this letter as my submission to the Wallarah 2 Coal Project PAC– R041/17.

The concern shown by the local Wyong community is not restricted to any specific environmental movement; rather it is reflected by a wide range of residents and business people who have serious concerns about;

Possible effects on our critical water catchments
Possible effects of subsidence on property and natural environments
Possible health problems caused by noise and dust
Possible conflict with desired employment and population directions
Possible negative impacts, both Social and Economic, on employment and residential lands earmarked for future development

As the elected Member of Parliament in an electorate which could be impacted by potential mining development and associated activities, I feel a strong responsibility to make known the views and concerns of the community.

My submission to the Panel, is in no way meant to be an exhaustive document of all the issues. It is meant to be a summary of the issues presented to me by the community I represent.

You will receive many detailed submissions from groups, local government, individual residents and from the mining industry. I ask that you consider these submissions in the context of the growing nature of Wyong and the Central Coast. That you consider the pressures on our infrastructure and water supply and you weigh up the risks that potential mining projects could present this developing regional economy.

I know it will be argued strongly the benefits extractive industry brings to the State and local economy, but this needs to be put into perspective with the potential negative effects on families, health, environment, and tourism, with their collective consequence on the economy.

Economic modelling presented by the proponents has been strongly refuted in the submission of the Australia Institute which stated that the PAC had previously described the last economic assessment of the project as “not credible”.

There has also been serious doubt cast over economic modelling carried out by Gillespie Economics regarding several other projects. A previous Minister Pru Goward, even went as far as saying that in

the future her department would commission “separate expert economic analysis” for all future applications for major mining projects. That announcement followed a report by the state's independent planning body, which slammed Ms Goward’s department for uncritically accepting the proponent’s claims about the benefits of the proposed Wallarah 2 mine north of Wyong.

The NSW Governments independent economic analysis states that there may only be a net benefit to the State of \$33M which is very low and other land uses in the area including Darkinjung’s housing and industrial developments in the surrounding area could deliver the same or higher net benefits to NSW.

If a key argument for the mine to proceed is economic benefit, then this must be seriously questioned especially when potential impacts are considered.

In that respect, I ask that the Panel seriously consider the submission of Central Coast Council which commissioned a detailed report on the impacts of mining by Pells Sullivan Meynink Engineering Consultants (PSM). This report raised serious questions regarding the potential impacts through subsidence, impacts on water, dust impacts and visual impacts. These impacts have not been adequately addressed.

Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council have outlined considerable impacts on their adjoining land which would have serious economic consequences for their organisation and local Aboriginal economic development. These concerns are very real and I ask the Panel to strongly consider their submission.

The Australian Coal Alliance have also presented detailed reports on impacts of this project in a professional manner through scientific analysis at great financial cost. Their consultants raise important issues which the proponent leaves largely unanswered. Their submission together with Central Coast Environment Network outline serious concerns which summarise several very valid arguments for not approving this application.

In the NSW Parliament, I have moved Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill which would ban extractive industries in the prescribed Wyong Water Catchment to permanently protect the important water supply from subsidence. The PAC has the opportunity to employ the “precautionary principle” in this case to protect the long-term resilience of our local water supply that supports a growing region of more than 330 000 people.

There are very compelling doubts over the economic value of the project both directly and indirectly. There are also significant concerns raised about subsidence, water loss, dust and health impacts.

On behalf of the majority of my constituents I would ask that your panel does what the former Premier Barry O’Farrell promised to do at the 2011 NSW election – finally deny this application and help to protect this important Region moving forward.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Harris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Harris MP
Member for Wyong