

I would like to express my deepest apprehension and distress at the proposed reopening of the Russell Vale colliery.

My wife and I have lived in Hicks St Russell Vale for the past 9 years. Bellambi Gully Creek borders our home. In fact it runs through our property for approximately 40 metres.

In the 9 years we have lived in the area we have experienced enormous improvements in both the livability of the suburb and particularly the environment.

During the initial 4 years of our residence we were exposed to almost constant noise from the mine site and very noticeable dust pollution, the creek ran spasmodically. There was little apparent aquatic life. Following rain the creek rapidly rose and was heavily polluted with coal wash. Once a rain event finished it quickly returned to little more than a trickle.

In the past few years, despite the ongoing drought the creek has become a haven for eels, tortoise, reptiles and aquatic insects. Even during the worst of the drought the creek continued to flow clear and apparently free of pollutants. There has obviously been no noise and little dust pollution.

The impact of the reopening of this coal mine on local residents and the Wollongong community in general by this foreign owned company is unacceptable. The local residents will bear the brunt of various forms of pollution and receive little or no benefit. The mine, like other fossil fuel industries will further damage the atmosphere, exacerbate global warming and the effects of climate change on the environment and our lives.

The risk to the water supply for Wollongong, Sydney and surrounds is extremely concerning. Irreparable damage that will be caused by the coal mine will almost certainly impact on the escarpment and the water catchment.

Future generations of Australians should not be subjected to having to deal with the negative effects of destructive fossil fuel mining practices.