

13 October 2020

## Russell Vale Colliery Underground Expansion Project

To the Independent Planning Commission Members:

I encourage the Independent Planning Commission to approve the proposed mining application by Wollongong Coal to expand the underground mining operations at Russell Vale Colliery.

The first workings mining method proposed by Wollongong Coal will result in minimal subsidence due to mining, which in turn means negligible impacts to the surface features such as swamps, creeks, dams, roads and other infrastructure. This is a significant reduction in the impact of mining compared to previously proposed longwalls which is an environmentally favourable outcome. Wollongong Coal's commitment to move away from longwalls when mining under the catchment shows an environmentally conscious attitude and will prove that mining under the drinking water catchment area can be achieved without significant negative subsidence impacts.

Wollongong Coal has also undertaken a number of environmental initiatives such as the installation of a solar power and battery backup system at the Russell Vale Shaft 4, taking the site off the grid with site monitoring, communications and security systems now being run solely on renewables. The company is also investigating options for more renewables in the form of solar power at its pit top, further increasing the sustainability of the operations.

Economically the project will be beneficial to the local economy, through the provision of much needed employment opportunities as well as cash injections when purchasing equipment and consumables from local suppliers. It will also make positive contributions to the national economy through royalty payments and taxes.

Finally the company is providing coking coal to the global market for the steel making industry which will be vital now and in the future when moving away from fossil fuels as a source of energy for power production. Steel is a critical component of the construction industry and a vital material used to build renewable energy infrastructure such as solar farms, wind turbines and hydro power generators, thus contributing to building a more sustainable future.

This proposed project represents a step in the right direction for the future of mining in the Illawarra, specifically relating to mining underneath the drinking water catchment. As a member of the local community and also an employee of the company I encourage the IPC to consider the positive aspects of this proposal and the benefit it will bring to the wider community.