

Independent Planning Commission NSW

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**Submission re Russell Vale Revised Underground Expansion Project
– Major Project 09-0013**

Thank you for the opportunity to express my view of this proposal.

I am appalled that the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has recommended that the project “is approvable”. DPIE should be protecting the rights of NSW citizens over the expansionist plans of a company that are likely to cause irreparable harm.

Wollongong Coal wants to extend the Russell Vale coal mine under the Illawarra Catchment. This is objectionable on many grounds and I’m sure many people will raise the issue that the project would add CO2 emissions to NSW’s greenhouse gas inventory at a time when NSW Government policy requires a *reduction* in GHGs of 35% by 2030.

That is the overarching issue but one that unfortunately too many politicians fail to take seriously.

What I will focus on in this objection is the real danger that this project poses to drinking water supply. The planned mining is within the Special Areas of the Greater Sydney Water Catchment, areas regarded as so sensitive and strategically important that public access is forbidden. How can mining here be contemplated!

In addition, the mining involves many risks because it is to occur beneath two previously mined seams and Wollongong Coal admits it may cause subsidence of the surface of almost 1 metre. It would be grossly negligent for such mining to be approved in the water catchment for Greater Sydney’s 5 million residents.

I also understand the mining approval would reactivate a lapsed approval for longwall mining. Such mining has previously resulted in well-documented damage to creeks. A resumption of this mining technique is likely to cause further damage to the Cataract Reservoir catchment.

There is no justification for any mining within Sydney’s water catchment. The risk is considerable. It is reckless for DPIE and the NSW government to jeopardise our water supply, especially when the trend is for hotter summers, more heatwaves and increasingly catastrophic fires.

This proposal is not in the public interest. I ask you to recommend that the Russell Vale mine be closed and that no further mining proposals be permitted at all in the Greater Sydney Water Catchment.

Elisabeth Dark