*Re: Russell Vale Underground expansion project.*

*The International Energy Agency has declared that solar power is the “new king of energy” and that power generated by solar is already cheaper than that by coal or gas. The IEA is saying that coal is in structural decline.*

I wish to express my strong opposition to the proposal to expand the Russell Vale mine which has not been viable in the recent past.

NSW has committed to zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Coal must be phased out quickly so it's necessary to stop any new mine construction or mine expansions. This mine is particularly gassy and will contribute disproportionately to carbon emissions. None of the coal it produces is used in the Port Kembla steelworks as it is all exported.

Wollongong Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has adopted a Climate Mitigation Plan. Approving more mining is not consistent with this plan.

The Proposed Russell Vale expansion project is in the Special Areas of the Greater Sydney Water Catchment – these are areas that forbid public access because of their sensitivity and strategic importance.

Why would it be acceptable to undermine a water catchment area?

The proposed expansion will drain both surface and ground water from the Cataract Reservoir catchment. This loss of water can only exacerbate the effects of increased drought events due to climate change and the consequent threat of bushfires and this in turn will impact adversely on the biodiversity of the area. As the area dries out, it loses the ability to sustain native plants, animals, birds, reptiles and insects in the area.

The proposed mine is located next to a residential area and transporting the coal puts an unacceptable load on local roads. Residents will be subject to further noise and air pollution leading to respiratory problems.

Please reject this outdated and harmful proposal. We are in the 21st Century and need to be looking into the future, not trying to rekindle an 18th Century industry.