I am writing to state my opposition to the Revised Russell Vale Underground Expansion Project (MP09\_0013) for the following reasons:

1. Australia made a commitment in Paris 5 years ago to reduce our emissions. The real science tells us that to achieve this we need to move away from fossil fuels, which clearly means not to continue developing coal, gas and oil reserves.
2. Jobs are a key factor in the local support for this project, yet clearly the company is not able to guarantee anything considering its past history – accidents, lay-offs and inability to pay taxes. A smarter option is to provide the miners with a transition strategy. That’s what a good government should do – providing for a long-term, more secure future for them. Not something that continues the myth within a declining industry. I note that the Chinese market just evaporated – which one next?
3. And then there’s the environmental cost – this will be huge if you consider our water, flora and fauna. Looking at our water and the attendant issues:

a). This project will drain both surface and ground water from the Cataract Reservoir catchment.

b). This dewatering, exacerbated by drought and climate change, will impact the biodiversity in the area. As the area dries out, it loses the ability to sustain native plants, animals, birds, reptiles and insects in the area.

c). Which in turn will make this area - one of the few that has such unburnt bushland in NSW - drier and more flammable.  This increases the bushfire risk, not only around Cataract Reservoir, but also along the heavily treed Illawarra Escarpment.

There are many reasons why this project should be refused. Personally I believe that any project that has a chance of endangering an areas water should always be refused. We live from this precious resource – not from coal, not from gas, not from oil etc…… Water is every environments’ life-blood and it should be treated as such.

It is just so illogical that the  Special Areas of Greater Sydney Water Catchment are not protected - they must be! They nourish a major city on a water-scarce continent.

Please reject this proposal.

Thank you

Richard Madigan