**I object to Wollongong Coal’s Russell Vale Underground Expansion Project**

The following are my main concerns -

1. The loss of water and water quality from Reservoirs, rivers and swamps. Ground and surface water from Cataract Reservoir and its catchment will be further depleted. This is part of the Greater Sydney Catchment Area and provides water for Wollongong and 20-30% of Sydney. This water must be protected as droughts increase due to climate change.
2. The draining of ground and surface water will heat the earth and increase the risk and ferocity of bushfires. Even swamps dry out. During the 2019 bushfires a swamp near me burnt long after the main fire was extinguished. Nothing could put it out except constant rain for several days. Uncontrolled burns have devastating consequences for the biodiversity of an area.
3. People are locked out from the Illawarra Escarpment, supposedly to protecting Sydney's water catchment and yet mining is allowed. Locked gates
	1. conceal mining damage to the environment
	2. conceal damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites
	3. create a barrier between Indigenous people and their stories
	4. lock out local residents from this popular recreation and exercise area.
4. This project will increase greenhouse gas emissions when we should be decreasing them to help prevent climate change. This mine is known as a gassy mine so is more polluting than most.
5. This coal is 25% thermal, 50% metallurgical and 25% rock. Mining is unnecessary as it is not to be used for Port Kembla Steel but will be all exported.
6. This colliery is the closest to residential dwellings in Australia. Mining, stockpiles, a processing plant and 34 trucks per hour transporting coal to Port Kembla Coal Terminal will impact the amenity and health of residents with increased traffic, dust, noise and particulate pollution.
7. Wollongong Coal’s reputation for non-compliance is on record. Existing agreements have not been met and security deposits not paid. This company’s financial status is questionable as it has not paid company tax since 2013.
8. Wollongong Coal should fail the fit and proper test under the various mining acts.
9. The promises of M$6 in royalties per year and a peak of 205 jobs are not worth the risk to our water security and the health of workers and local residence.
10. People want safe jobs, jobs they can be proud of, not ones which have the potential to damage their health and the environment
11. This project does not provide intergenerational inequity. The loss of drinking water and the cost of treatment and management of the void filling up with water and overflowing will be borne by future generations.
12. Special Areas of Greater Sydney Water Catchment must be protected to the centre of the earth.
13. This mine is not in the public interest.

I ask that you reject this application from Wollongong Coal and request that a process is put in place to close the mine at Russell Vale permanently.

Katherine McKenzie