Dear sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed expansion of Wollongong Coal’s Russell Vale colliery. The chequered history of this site should not be allowed to continue.

The many years of negative impacts on local residents, due to airborne dust and polluted stormwater runoff must not be allowed to restart or continue. A mining operation in such an urbanised area is not appropriate.

The hidden from public view negative impacts of mining under the Sydney Water catchment has been made more apparent in recent times and there is growing nationwide recognition that extractive industries should not impact on the ancient culture of the Aboriginal peoples. The groundwater impacts of mining within the catchment can no longer be tolerated and any idea to mine closer to or under the storage reservoirs is madness.

Wollongong Coal’s corporate history and connection to community is very poor. Instead of good community engagement and a mindset to improve the amenity of the Illawarra Escarpment they have a mindset to lock people out. The closing of the very popular Lower Escarpment Fire Trail to people seeking valid exercise and enjoyment is not a good look for their corporate image. Surely a more positive approach to community engagement and working cooperatively with the community to achieve a win-win for the environment and local amenity would be better.

I ask that you do not approve this development.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.