Writing to oppose the high risk project of Russell Vale mine expansion which seeks to remove coal from under Sydney's Greater Water Catchment Area, up to the shores of the historic Cataract Reservoir. I am aware that this mine is owned by Wollongong Coal, a company that has an extremely poor environmental and financial record. I am also a close resident of this area and my children attend after school care in Russell Vale very close by and I am very concerned about particulate pollution. I also surf regular at Bellambie which is a direct run-off through the beautiful Bellambie Creek and Lagoon.

You have no mandate to approve this project and the NSW Planning Office will be liable for any health effects on myself or my family. Maybe the residents of the Northern Illawarra will mount a class action against the Government and Wollongong Coal has this be considered?

Below is the reason why this shouldn’t supported;

* Creates more greenhouse gas emissions at a time when we need to reduce our emissions to meet Paris agreement and address climate change. Russell Vale is an extremely gassy mine, releasing high amounts of potent methane compared to the volume of coal that will be produced. It would cost the government $24 million dollars to offset the greenhouse gas emissions that this project will generate over 5 years of operation.
* Poses a risk to Sydney's Greater Water Catchment Area. A third seam of coal will be removed from under two previously mined seams. Triple seam mining is nearly unprecedented and impacts are difficult to predict but this project poses direct risks to the Cataract reservoir.
* Wollongong Coal has a record of non-compliance with previous approvals for this mine, including greatly exceeding the quantity of coal it was allowed to stockpile on site, thereby exacerbating particulate pollution and turning local Belambi creek black with run-off during heavy rains.
* Wollongong Coal has not generated a taxable income since 2013 and this is not likely to change in the near future.
* The coal from Russell Vale is all exported and is therefore not critical for Illawarra steelworks.
* The location of this mine is not suitable as it is closer to a built up, residential area than any other coal mine in Australia. Stockpiles of coal are within a few hundred metres of schools houses and thereby threatening the health of students and resident