

I was born and raised in Bulli and am very passionate about my local community and environment. In the last 2 years, after graduating high school, I have devoted a lot of my spare time towards actions and initiatives which aim to protect and nurture our environment for generations to come.

Based on these principles, as well as concern for the health of my community, I am very opposed to the Russell Vale Colliery Expansion Proposal. I will touch briefly on the environmental impacts of the proposal, but mainly speak on the consequences of coal particulate pollution to our community.

1.

The Russell Vale Colliery Expansion would continue the mining of metallurgical coal beneath the Special Areas of the Greater Sydney Water Catchment, areas that forbid public access because of their sensitivity and strategic importance. If I were to try to enter these special areas, say for a bush walk, I could be fined up to \$44,000 as an individual according to WaterNSW. The fact that these areas are being so strictly protected even to bushwalkers, makes it an appalling juxtaposition that this proposal could go ahead. The expansion could lead to the continual dewatering of this area, with the dry conditions being intensified by drought and climate change. The special area will lose the ability to sustain native plants and animals. There will also be increased bushfire risk, not only around Cataract Reservoir, but also along the Illawarra Escarpment, which is barely 100m from some suburbs in our community.

2.

The Russell Vale mine is the closest mine to any built up residential area in Australia. As part of the proposal, Coal would be trucked from Russell Vale along Bellambi Lane and then the Northern Distributor to Port Kembla Coal Terminal. There would be up to 32 truck movements per hour. The coal trucks will cause coal dust or particulate pollution along the trucking route, as well as particulate pollution from the three coal stockpiles back at the colliery, exacerbated by the windy conditions in the northern suburbs. It is well documented that coal particulate pollution increases human morbidity and mortality from respiratory and cardiovascular disease, and especially impacts the most vulnerable in our community.

Both Aspect South Coast School and Russell Vale Pre School are within a couple 100 metre of the entrance to the colliery, and would be subject to the pollution from the coal stock-piles. The

following schools are around 100m from the Northern Distributor on the coal truck route and could also be subject to particulate pollution from these trucks.

- Towradgi public school
- Keira High School
- Wollongong High School of Performing Arts
- Para meadows School
- Gwynneville public school
- Wollongong West public school
- Mount St Thomas public school
- The Illawarra Grammar School

The children that currently attend these schools, and will attend these schools in the next couple years, are likely to be subjected to health risks due to particulate pollution which will be a direct result of this proposal going ahead. Just in this point alone, there is no denying that this project is detrimental to our community.

This proposal has very limited short-term outcomes which will add to the catastrophic impacts of climate change around the world and severely impact the health and environment of our local area. As a young person, I am acutely conscious of the actions that the government is taking that may put my future on a downhill slope, where last summer becomes the new normal and where I am questioning whether it is ethical to have children. I thank you for your concentration today, and please ask that you reconsider this project, as if approved, it will become a stepping stone to a future that we cannot survive.

Thank you.