

The expansion of Russell Vale Colliery will not benefit people in Wollongong, and it will not benefit the people of NSW.

For a long time in Wollongong we have put up with health problems and the destruction of ecosystems and cultural heritage caused by coal mining. We put up with it because we knew that many people depended on their jobs in the mines to put food on the table, and because we have used coal for energy and for steelmaking.

But now, coal-fired power stations are closing, and we know that renewables are the cheapest form of new energy. We know that, globally, the steel industry is transitioning to low carbon and zero carbon steel. We also know that the global coal price is dropping and that miners are losing their jobs or getting reduced wages and conditions because of the global trends in the coal market. And we know that jobs growth isn't going to be in the coal industry, there is plenty of good evidence that jobs growth will be in renewables. For most people, this mine expansion gives them nothing but respiratory illness, heart disease and cancers. More traffic. A damaged water catchment. Increased risk of devastating bushfires in the catchment and on the escarpment. More greenhouse gas emissions.

The harm this expansion will cause far outweighs the benefits. We don't need to dig up coal from Russel Vale Colliery. We need long term jobs in industries that have a future. This mine expansion will not benefit the people of New South Wales.

I'm concerned about increased greenhouse gas emissions, about the impact on our water catchment, and the risk of subsidence that could impact on roads and on people's houses and other buildings. I'm concerned about air pollution and the pollution of waterways. I'm concerned about increased traffic.

I listened to people like Kaye Osborne, Nic Clyde and Dr Ian Wright who spoke at the IPC hearings and outlined the many risks associated with this mine expansion. I've read the transcript of the meeting between the resources regulator and the IPC Commissioners in which the risks of subsidence were discussed. I've listened to friends and neighbours who have put up with the past lack of compliance, poor safety and industrial relations record of Wollongong Coal. I object to the expansion of RussellVale Colliery. It offers people in the Illawarra very little – a small number of jobs with no real future – in exchange for terrible damage and risk.