I object to the Wollongong Coal Ltd’s Russell Vale Revised Underground Expansion Project (Major Project 09-0013).The Illawarra needs to transition away from coal mining which damages public health. The proposed expansion is not in the public interest. I ask that you reject this application from Wollongong Coal and recommend a process to close the mine at Russell Vale permanently. The NSW Government needs to act to stop the expansion of fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The expansion will:

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1. **Damage Greater Sydney Water Catchment**

The mining will take place in the Special Areas of the Greater Sydney Water Catchment – areas that forbid public access because of their sensitivity and strategic importance.

1. **Increase bushfire risk**
The draining of ground and surface water caused by the mining will make the Cataract Reservoir catchment area, one of the few areas of unburnt bushland in NSW, drier and more flammable.  This increases the bushfire risk, not only around Cataract Reservoir, but also along the heavily treed Illawarra Escarpment.

***Coal trucks will increase traffic hazards and pollution***

My father was a coal truck driver and I know how dangerous coal trucks are for truck drivers, their family and the community.

The coal would be trucked along Bellambi Lane, past people’s homes onto the Northern Distributor to Port Kembla Coal Terminal. The mine proposes to produce up to 1 million tonnes of coal plus 0.2 million tonnes of fill material per annum.  The maximum truck frequency leaving the site will be 17 loaded trucks per hour. The Northern Distributor is already at capacity in peak hour with regular traffic jams. The coal trucks will also cause coal dust pollution along the trucking route. The colliery is a major source of particulate pollution.  Coal particulate pollution increases human morbidity and mortality from respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

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