As a long time resident of Russell Vale I Strongly object to the expansion of this mine. The proximity of the location of the mine to residential areas is unprecedented. The colliery site is closer to dense residential areas, including my own house than any mine in Australia. We have long suffered the impacts of this mine including noise pollution and coal dust particles falling all over our houses and being breathed in by us and our children. In this day and age and knowing what we know about the impact such things have on health, it a completely unsuitable location for a colliery. Also Wollongong coal plan to build a plant and process the coal on site. Being in a dense suburban area, this site is simply not suitable for a processing plant. In the past, This company has been unable or unwilling to meet environmental guidelines and conditions of approval. There has been sludge and large spillages in local creeks and lagoons. I have no confidence in this company being able to operate the processing plant according to safe and suitable standard and no confidence in their care for our precious environment and ecosystems.

It had also been reported that there will be 34 truck movement per hour, or 1 truck every 1min and 45 seconds. . That is leaving the site and driving past people’s houses to the lights at Bellambi lane and turning onto the northern distributor, that already has regular traffic jams during peak hour. They will also add to pollution leaving coal dust in their wake.

I have 4 small children living in Russell vale. Attending the local school, located only several hundred metres from coal stockpiles. It is well documented that cola dust pollution increases the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular disease and increases mortality and morbidity. As a government you have a responsibility to put the health and lives of the people living here before profit and environmental destruction. This site is not suitable for a colliery full stop, let alone the expansion of one. The development proposal proposes two new stockpiles, bringing the total number to three. This gives residents a bigger surface area of stockpiled coal and will increase the coal dust pollution problem that we already have. Pollution will also be caused from the loading of coal onto trucks with a tractor, which will further add to particulate and noise pollution. Wollongong Coal were supposed to build a truck loading facility as a requirement of their previous approval but failed to do so and it was never enforced.

This site is also adjacent to and mining will take place in special areas of our water catchment. These are areas that we can’t step foot in as they are so sensitive and strategically important and yet it might be possible that they can mine in and under them, posing a giant risk to our water catchment areas and water supply. In times when water is so precious, it just seems ludicrous. It will also lead to a degradation of special ecosystems. The dewatering of the area in times of drought and climate change will impact biodiversity of the area. This is a very special area. I’m sure you haven’t taken a walk through the escarpment. It is special and effort should be made to keep it that way. Government could promote the escarpment as a tourist area, mountain bikers, hikers and runners all love to use it. IT should be kept wild.

The environment must be protected immediately by not destroying it for mine sites but also in the long run by not investing in coal power. We should be focussing on green energy to reduce emissions. Russell Vale is a gassy mine, which means that a lot of methane would be released into the atmosphere during mining. If approved this mine would be in the top 100 emitters of emissions in Australia for very little coal.

Furthermore most of this coal will be sold to Wollongong Coal’s mother company in India, therefore, not even likely to receive the best price for it and not being used locally. Wollongong Coal is approximately $1 Billion in debt. IT cannot be expected or trusted to properly resource mining in this most sensitive and strategically important water catchment. It has been under investigation for 4 years by the NSW govt, but has never concluded or released finding.

This company has not proven that it can operate mines safely, effectively or profitably. There have been many safety risks and insecure employment among workers in it’s past.

This application to expand the mine is not in public interest. I sincerely ask that you reject this application from Wollongong Coal, for my family, my neighbours, for this area that I love and the planet.