

I object to the Russell Vale Revised Underground Expansion Project.

As a resident of Wollongong, living a block away from Russell Vale mine, I have observed first-hand for many years the impact of Russell Vale mine on the local community.

Witnessing serial non-compliance with approval conditions by the proponent and the absolute regulatory failure of the state government to monitor and enforce compliance, has been shocking. If this is what we can see down here at the pit top, what is happening in the Schedule 1 Special Areas where the mining is taking place?

These three facts are very clear to me:

1. The densely populated suburb of Russell Vale is not an appropriate place for an expanding colliery.
2. The Schedule 1 Special Areas of the Greater Sydney Water Catchment are not an appropriate place for a coal mine.
3. Wollongong Coal Ltd (WCL) is not an appropriate proponent to carry out mining operations in the strategically important Special Areas and the sensitive Russell Vale pit top site.

The promised economic benefits of the project are unlikely to be realised for at least three reasons:

- The company will probably never make a profit and pay company tax
- The company will continue to pursue low cost working conditions, using outsourcing and insecure working arrangements. It is likely that the anticipated job numbers are overestimated; this is what has occurred in previous applications. Any jobs created will not be the secure jobs that the Illawarra needs at this time.
- The project has a low yield and it can be questioned if it was even designed to make money from coal, or simply to postpone rehabilitation costs.

The costs are being externalised for the community, the environment, the climate and future generations to pay.

The reputation and past compliance of the proponent are relevant in that they show that the purported benefits of the project are unlikely to be delivered.

Even the good Council of coal lovin' Wollongong has given the thumbs down to this one. WCL has lost its social license. In conclusion, I honestly think that if the IPC approves this expansion, it will approve anything.

I urge the IPC to refuse this proposal and recommend that the Russell Vale mine be closed and remediated.