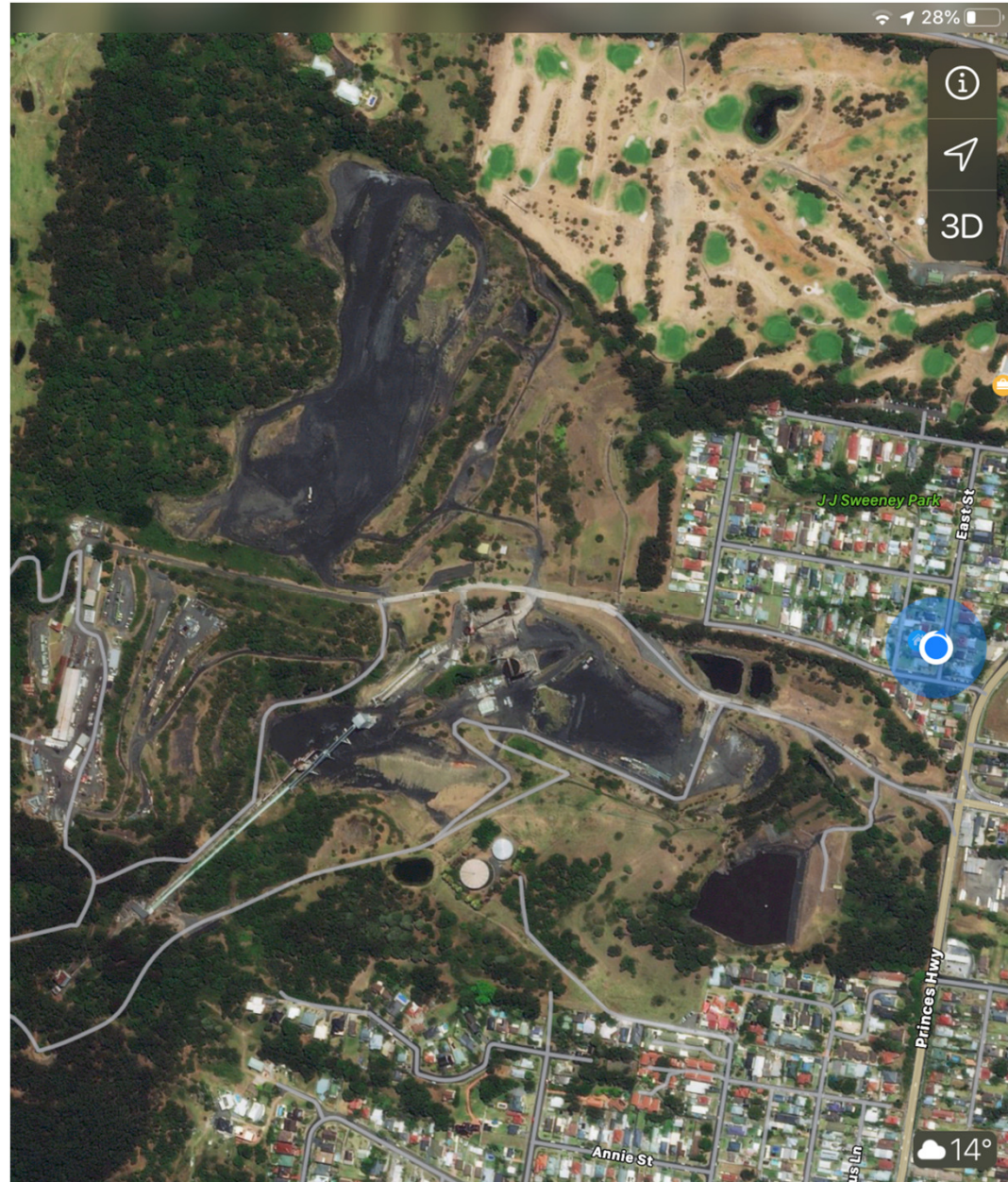


Illawarra Residents for Responsible Mining inc



Dr Alison
Edwards



Who are we?



- Illawarra Residents for Responsible Mining is a community group that formed in 2011 to oppose the expansion of the Gujarat NRE No. 1 Colliery in Russell Vale (now named Wollongong Coal Ltd's Russell Vale Colliery) in NSW, Australia. We advocate for responsibility in mining, mining which puts the health and well-being of ordinary people and of the environment ahead of corporate mining interests. Sustainability is a core value.

Who are we 2?



- Our membership is inclusive of residents. In particular, we welcome all who can bring information regarding impacts of the mine on the community. We work to educate each other regarding the functioning of the mine and the wider impacts of the mine and we welcome all contributions from those who have observed its operation and especially those who have cleaned the coal dust from their homes daily over decades.

Why Oppose the Russell Vale Mine?



- It is located in the special areas of the Sydney water catchments – we are not permitted to enter this area because of the value placed on protecting the water resources. A number of speakers have addressed you on the water protection issues – we support and commend them in their opposition to the proposal
- It is located in what is now an urban environment with the pit top surrounded by the suburb of Russell Vale to the north and east and Corrimal to the south. Individual residents have outlined their reasons for opposition to further approvals at his mine.
- A detailed written submission will also be made we are members of the community dealing with complex issues at the cost of vast amounts of our time to respond to these repeated and unacceptable proposals

But the mine was there first!



- The order in which developments have occurred does not give rise to priority, even if that were the case, the proponent is not the original owner and their application should be assessed according to current requirements and standards.
- Under current management the mine is a poor corporate citizen with repeated failures to meet conditions of mining, pay bonds, act within development consents or comply with critical conditions. Indeed IRRM has sought to have determination whether the proponent is a “fit and proper person” to undertake developments of this nature – why are we told these valid concerns are not a matter for consideration ahead of approval?

“Coals to Newcastle – or Wollongong”? Either way the proposal is a nonsense



- The reason why taking coals to Newcastle -or Wollongong is a nonsense is because the relative weights of iron ore to coal in metallurgical use is 10 coal per one iron ore. It is economically foolish to ship the necessary quantity of coal. Steel should be made close to where the coal is located.
- This proposal does not meet any rational sustainability criteria with the shipped coal consuming fossil fuels in transit and in the main, we (the community via the CCC) are given to understand that it is mostly used in power production
- We are on the cusp of sustainable steel making (hydrogen produced sustainably as the reductant) and the excuse that the high quality coal is required to make steel will become invalid into the future.

Planning process issues



- The community long ago lost patience with the interminable applications to expand this mine. The preliminary works approval contained conditions on the proponent which have not been met to date – yet the coal has been taken and damages associated with it done.
- The expansion project was commenced by stealth via repeated modifications to the preliminary works with ill-advised longwall layouts proposed to undermine two previously mined seams and approaching the Cataract Dam. The current proposal is less damaging but not risk free. It will inevitably be followed by further proposals of greater unacceptability as they will approach closer to the dam
- IPC members have indicated in previous hearings that further modifications would not be considered only for them to proceed in this piecemeal manner. It must be stopped
- The application under consideration may be less bad than previously but is not acceptable in the catchment or in a residential area. It must be disallowed on both grounds

Economics



- The numbers of jobs delivered in the preliminary works and various modifications to the UEP have always fallen well short of the number promised by the proponent.
- The multiplier must be treated with caution as many businesses and individuals have waited lengthy periods for contracted payments for goods and services delivered and across the operation by this proponent it has not been demonstrated to have delivered the benefits asserted in the applications
- The proponent is structured to ensure that no taxes are paid in Australia. This brings no benefit to the region or country

The slag heap saga



- WCC allowed WCL to use council land for an “emplacement area” eventually we found out that this was an enormous unapproved stockpile of coal – not the agreed material at less than ten percent coal.
- The fire suppression which was supposed to exist before “emplacement” commenced was only installed shortly before the stockpile was removed and long after this extreme hazard was parked in our suburb bringing huge fire risk and incredible dust burden
- Residents should not have to dodge such planning bullets
- This matter dates back to the Council which was sacked for failures and corruption in planning matters and has been difficult to manage because the proponent can simply walk away rather than comply with regulator or council demands – regardless of how valid they might be

The Bellambi Gully fiasco



- 1998 events: “A smaller proportion of respondents was angry at coalmines. This reflected the experience of residents in the suburbs of Keiraville and Bellambi who had tonnes of coalwash and sludge in their homes.”
from a later report into the impact of the storm and the range of impacts on households
- This gave rise to the as yet unmet condition of approval that Bellambi Gully/Creek be realigned in the preliminary works phase for completion in 2012

What do they really want?



- Members of the CCC have been assured that there will not be a washery built, but it is in the plans
- Upgraded infrastructure and processing is asserted, but open stockpiles remain the mode of loading on unsealed roads
- Long drops from conveyor to stockpile exacerbate both dust and noise
- This proponent has repeatedly promised state-of-the-art when challenged on location but rarely builds anything as promised – indeed it is unlikely that anything by way of actual investment will be made. This is a pattern of behaviours across the operation of the mine by this proponent

This is the middle of the wedge



- The thin end was the preliminary works and the interminable modifications
- It is located in a central part of Wollongong which extends far to both the north and south of the location - it is effectively in the middle of the city
- If approved, we will face another argument a few years down the track when the proponent will seek to intrude further into the special areas and closer to Cataract Dam
- It is time this was stopped and it is in the power of the IPC to heed the objections

Wollongong Coal??



- The company has been delisted from the ASX
- The company is held at arms length by an Indian company via a holding company in Mauritius
- The name of the owner is Jindal steel and power – we (the mine CCC) are told the coal mined in Russell Vale is sent to India for use in steel making but ultimately it has been reported to us that it has been used to fuel power stations

When will it end?



- It is long past time that this mine should cease production – most especially for export. The passage of time has rendered the location inappropriate for this use
- The assessment of the proposal relies on language indicating that this proposal is less bad than the previous one to justify recommending approval the risk of irreparable damage to the escarpment by hydraulic connection from the cataract dam to the mine cannot be predicted nor mitigated
- We must demand higher standards in our planning.
- This mine was unsustainable in economic and environmental terms before this proponent bought it
- The proponent proposes to manage water issues on the site for ten years beyond the end of mining despite the effects continuing well into the 22nd century.

IRRM objects to any approval of this application



- Just because this is less bad than the previous proposal and perhaps scrapes over some bureaucratic line as “acceptable” does not make it acceptable to the community and it certainly does not make it sustainable.
- There is no social license for the operation of this mine