To the NSW Independent Planning Commission,

I strongly object to the proposal to the Russel Vale Underground Expansion project due to the social, environmental and health impacts of this project. I have lived in Wollongong my entire life and am immensely proud of my hometown and its people. I believe that this project threatens both the beautiful natural landscapes of Wollongong, as well as the health and wellbeing of its residents, including myself, my friends, family and neighbours.

The colliery is in extremely close proximity to residential areas, posing a potential health risk to residents of those neighbourhoods from coal processing. Furthermore, this triple seam mine poses a threat to our water and water catchment – one which serves all of the Greater Sydney region. There is already evidence of subsidence and water loss from previous mining endeavours – this alone should be reason enough to reject such a project proposal. There is simply no way to ensure that further damage will not occur if this project is allowed to proceed, and we must therefore employ the precautionary principle in this instance. As weather across Australia becomes ever more extreme and unpredictable, our water is precious. We cannot afford to put our water and health at risk for the sake of profit.

With the world waking up to the realities of climate change, the global move away from coal and towards more sustainable forms of energy and steal production is already evident. Therefore, I do not believe that this project will be economically viable in the long term. It is also important to consider the emissions that this mine will no doubt contribute to the ever-growing issue of climate change, and this should not be taken lightly. As a country of climatic extremes, we, as Australians, will be at the forefront of some of the worst impacts of the climate crisis in the form of extreme weather events such as storms, floods, and fires.

To risk the long-term health of Wollongong residents, the water security of millions of Australians, the climate, and the environment for the sake of short-term financial gain is, quite frankly, unconscionable. Once lost, we cannot recover these things. I ask, from the bottom of my heart, that this project be refused for the sake of all our futures.

Sincerely,

Isabella Todd

West Wollongong