Thank you for receiving my submission regarding the Russell Vale Revised Underground Expansion Project.

I have been a resident of Coledale since 2003 and am writing as a citizen concerned for climate and social stability for future generations, as a local community member concerned for the local environment and water security and as an Australian taxpayer.

My main reasons for objecting to this expansion are as follows:

1. Climate scientists across globe have called ***for immediate and urgent*** mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions to avoid catastrophic effects of human-induced climate change. This project not only does *not* contribute but *actively dismantles* this objective by increasing GHG emissions in both process and product. We cannot afford to ignore this science.
2. The operational GHG emissions from this proposal (1.5 MtCO2) would amount to more than 1% of the NSW carbon budget (132Mt CO2) to achieve a minimum temperature increase of 1.5°C. We cannot afford to give away this portion of our carbon budget.
3. Damage to the greater Sydney water catchment: The project involves a mining process that has rarely been done: mining a seam beneath two previous mine seams or "multi-seam" mining. This means that accurate predictions of safety, stability and subsidence cannot be assured. Coupled with these safety issues are the likelihood of ecosystem degradation and loss of biodiversity due to further drainage of surface and groundwater. Coupled with increasing drought due to climate change this draining of water will make the catchment area drier and increase the likelihood of bushfire along the Illawarra escarpment. This seems an unacceptable risk for our LGA and the wider community.
4. Proximity to residential areas: this site is the closest to residential areas of any mine in Australia and it will greatly impact the health and well- being of these residents in terms of highly localised air pollution from truck exhaust, particulate matter from the on-site stockpiles and transport vehicles, as well as increased traffic congestion and road damage. Council needs to defend the amenity of its constituents
5. The escarpment is “an outstanding feature of the Illawarra Region. It has great cultural, heritage and environmental value” (Wollongong City website) All efforts should be made to preserve and protect it for local and tourist recreation. This project will affect the long-term future health of the natural environment, potentially leaking toxic wastewater and heavy metals into the soil and waterways decades into the future. For short term questionable gain, the long-term risks are too high to accept this project.
6. The projected 205 jobs over 5 years and 22 construction jobs over 2 years are unlikely to be primarily local jobs and projected figures often fall well short of the initial promises. I am strongly in favour of our State government providing financial and political support for more local jobs in green industries rather than harmful industries like the proposed mine. The metallurgical coal from the Russell Vale mine is not even used for steel in Australia and so seems of further questionable benefit to both our local area and the nation as a whole.

In conclusion, this mining application should not be approved. When the scale of this benefit is set against risks to drinking water security, local amenity, regional health, environmental stability, ecological diversity, healthful waterways and clean local air conditions these benefits are rendered insignificant, even in a time of economic crisis.

However, the primary reason you should reject this application is because Science tells us that we must actively and urgently quit coal and fossil fuels to avoid catastrophic climate change.