Date: 28/03/2014

Time: 11.45 am

To: The NSW Planning Assessment Commission

Attention: Paula Poon

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Submission for the Review of the Wallarah 2 Coal Project (SSD4974)

Wyong Shire Local Government Area

From: Sonia Adams
27/03/2014

Submission to the Planning Assessment Commission by Sonia Adams (SSD4974) Concerning the Wallarah 2 Coal Project

Dear Members of the Commission,

Please consider the following environmental impacts of this project that proposes to long wall mine under a designated water catchment area that is currently supporting a significant population and one that is growing rapidly.

The following is quotations from the NSW Planning and Infrastructure Department, Central Coast Region...

"Central Coast Regional Strategy"

"The NSW Central Coast is well known for its outstanding environment and coastal lifestyle..."

"Currently over 300,000 people live on the Central Coast and it continues to grow at one of the fastest rates in NSW."

The region’s population is expected to grow by around 100,000 over this period (by the year 2031)."

There are listed 5 major strategies being targeted. Number 3 is...

"Existing agricultural areas will continue to be strongly protected from inappropriate development".

Water loss

The Jilliby Valley also known as the Dooralong Valley is a fertile alluvial valley comprising many tributaries which feed into 3 significant water catchment creeks, namely Jilliby Jilliby Creek, Little Jilliby Jilliby Creek and Myrtle Creek, all of which feed into the Wyong River just north of the recently completed Mardi/Mangrove water pipeline. This water catchment area contributes significantly (more than 50%), to the volume of potable water for the Central Coast.

The Central Coast is growing in population rapidly. Therefore it is reasonable to say that demands on the water supply will increase. There is also, within the valley, a significant number of pursuits that could not exist without the reliable water supply enjoyed at present. Indeed it is the valley’s reliable water supply along with its rich farm land and stunning natural beauty that is its attraction.

The Wallarah 2 Coal Project’s own Environmental Impact Statement estimates that there will be minimal water loss due to their long wall mining at a rate of approximately 74,000 litres a day. During actual rain events the amount lost would presumably increase significantly.

The Jilliby Valley has recorded as recently as during the last 2 years (2012 and 2013) several months of no rain. It is a real concern then that the amount of water loss expected, due to mining activities, as quoted by the Wallarah 2 Coal
Project is considered to be acceptable. Australians live in the driest continent on earth and Global Warming due to human activities is now fact not just theory. This mine proposes to operate in an even increasing populated area where the preservation of its water catchment is paramount. Therefore any loss of water is unacceptable.

Subsidence

According to Wallarah 2 Coal Project’s EIS there will be subsidence directly due to their long wall mining tunnels throughout the Jilliby Valley. Subsidence depths, according to their EIS will range from 0.5 metres to 2.8 metres. This project considers the subsidence levels stated to be minimal and therefore acceptable.

The Jilliby Valley is an established valley with a growing population and supports a growing number of rural related industries, such as Thoroughbred spelling and pre-training, turf farming, plant nurseries, beef cattle and goat farming to name a few. It is fact that subsidence of any amount will directly impact on the viability of these pursuits to continue, which in turn, will directly impact on related industries that support them. Any level of subsidence is unacceptable.

Wallarah 2 Coal Project proposes to create jobs. However, the potentially devastating environmental impact of subsidence, no matter how minimal as stated in the EIS, will mean significant losses to existing jobs and the decimation of livelihoods (some spanning generations) within the valley.

Coal Dust

The proposed Wallarah 2 Coal Mine states that there will be minimal loss of life, at a rate of 1 in 100,000 human deaths annually, directly attributed to coal dust inhalation. The proposed rail network to transport the coal is located in very close proximity to new housing currently being developed.

Coal dust also affects animals. The Dooralong Valley, because of its ideal location between Sydney and Newcastle, is the home to many high value racing thoroughbreds who currently preside here while spelling and/or pre-training.

A minimal loss of life is acceptable according to the Wallarah 2 Coal Project EIS. Their statistics do not distinguish whether this minimal loss of life is the proposed statistics for healthy humans and there is no proposed statistics for animals. The question beyond the one death in 100,000 is... what is the annual number of potential deaths of people who suffer from asthma or other related breathing ailments? Any loss of life, be it human or animal, directly caused by a known substance such as coal dust, is unacceptable.

I look forward to your impartial and informed decision to protect the current citizens, future generations and environment of the Central Coast from inappropriate mining development.

Yours sincerely,

Sonia Adams