Dear Sir/Madam,

**Wallarah 2 Mine Proposal**

Thank you for your correspondence relating to the Review and Public Hearing proposed for the Wallarah 2 Coal Project.

Our organisation made a submission in June 2013 objecting to the Project. We detailed our concerns which included those recognised by the then Planning Minister Mr Tony Kelly when he said that “the Wallarah 2 coal mine proposal had been refused due to “unresolved concerns” regarding water, subsidence, ecological and heritage impacts” and that the proponent “failed to demonstrate the mine could proceed without "unacceptable environmental risk". (http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/nsw-govt-rejects-wallarah-2-coal-mine-20110304-1bheq.html). Those issues remain unresolved and simply, the mine poses too great a threat to justify permitting it to proceed.

The Mine was rejected just prior to the 2011 election, a time when several Liberal election candidates happily donned the “Water Not Coal” t-shirts. We believe the unacceptable environmental risk remains. Therefore the current proposal should also be rejected.

We reiterate our concern that approving the Mine will have the precise deleterious environmental impacts that were identified in the original assessment of the proposal. Therefore, having regard to those serious issues, we are asking your government to reject the proposal.

As set out in our earlier submission, the threat to our water catchment, groundwater, aquifers and stream alignment is too great to justify the Project. Yet there are many other examples of devastating impacts that have resulted from similar mining operations to that proposed. Comparable devastation is entirely foreseeable on the Central Coast. One such impact is subsidence and the risk to homes, dams, roads and infrastructure. These are catastrophic impacts which will impact on local people.

Others include the potential ecological and heritage impacts to biodiversity, (being both to fauna and flora species as well as their habitats including the water quality of Wallarah Creek itself). It may also adversely impact upon historical and Aboriginal cultural heritage sites.

Further issues of serious concern include public health, climate change and the denigration of Australia’s international environmental reputation. Careful consideration of these issues (including dust and noise, degradation of the planet through contributing to global warming, and the potential for international condemnation) should lead to the Project being rejected.
In conclusion, we do not believe that the proponent has provided any credible information to allay concerns about water quality, subsidence, ecological and heritage impacts, public health and climate change. In such circumstances we consider it would be entirely indefensible to approve the Wallarah 2 Coal Mine proposal.

It is against the public interest to approve the mine; it is contrary to principles of ESD, the precautionary principle, and both intergenerational and intra-generational equity. The people of the Central Coast are looking to you to ensure the preservation of their health, environment and water supply.

We would like to see the government exercise its authority in a manner that demonstrates respect for the environment and the residents of the central coast. We would like to see decisions made that will not burden the younger generations with the consequences of short-sighted, ill-conceived proposals. We would like to be able to rely on our elected representatives to make decisions of integrity.

We note that the Terms of Reference for the Commission includes recommending “any measures to avoid, minimise and/or manage the potential water and impacts of the proposal”. Clearly, rejecting the Project would be the most comprehensive measure to protect water. Rejection would also protect biodiversity and shield the coast from what will otherwise be a collision-course with multiple, long-term health and environmental issues.

Yours faithfully,

Louise Greenaway
Secretary