

Good Afternoon. My name is Margaret Armstrong. I would like to speak in simple language. I will not be giving scientific references but you should know that I will be stating facts that have already been well documented.

I grew up in [redacted] which is just down the hill from the mine in question. In those days it was known as South Bulli. Since then the mine has had a few name changes, reflecting its ownership. Now the owners cynically call themselves Wollongong Coal Limited. Are they ashamed to use their own name?

Both my grandfathers and a dear uncle were coal miners at Corrimal Colliery. So I do have a certain empathy with miners and I understand their anxiety about job security. However, the mining done today is very different to that done by my family members. Then mining involved props and pit ponies. Now long wall mining involves huge machines that go in and rip the coal out allowing the land above to subside. Long wall mining is increasing in size and in its destructiveness. I would suggest that many jobs have been lost to these machines not by the cessation of mining.

I live at [redacted] now. The Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly Council Areas get their drinking water solely from the Cataract and Cordeaux Reservoirs. Your latest report says that the proposed mining extensions could impact on the Cataract River, Cataract Creek and Bellambi Creek which are integral parts of the water catchment.

I have seen methane bubbling up in the Cataract and Nepean Rivers caused by coal and coal seam gas mining. I know that the Georges River has been similarly damaged. I have seen ^{photographic} evidence of the damage to the upland swamps caused by mining at Dendrobium mine and of damage to the Waratah Rivulet which feeds into the Woronora Dam caused by mining at Helensburgh. I belong to an environmental group called "Friends of Thirlmere Lakes". These Lakes are very special, unique in Australia and have World Heritage Listing. The water in the lakes is currently at a very low level. Long Wall Mining at the nearby Tahmoor Colliery has almost certainly contributed to these low levels.

The thought that this Commission is even considering allowing long wall mining in the special areas of our precious water catchments seems like madness and ~~unreasonable~~ ^{unreasonable} to me. When we know that damage is caused by long wall mining, when we know that damage from these proposed extensions is possible and probable, when we know there is no way of remediating this damage, how can you possibly allow these proposed extensions to go ahead?

I urge you to consider our environment and our drinking water supply and to preserve them for future generations. I wish you all the strength to make the right decisions. Please, please, please do not approve these extensions.

Margaret Armstrong

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