

NSW Planning and Assessment Commission

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Submission on the WALLARAH 2 COAL PROJECT (SSD 4974)

I wish to strongly object to the WALLARAH 2 COAL PROJECT for the following reasons. My home, and a number of others, is less than 1 kilometre from the proposed mine entrance where one of the mine exhaust fans is to be installed and operated 24 hours a day drawing from the mine a mixture of gases and particles which will invade our homes and land. Nearly all the homes west of the M1 rely on tank water and have On-site sewage systems. The air-borne particles from the mine which fall on my roof will wash into my drinking water and cause some contamination. I have solar panels which have generated 31MW of electricity, much of which has been exported to the grid. I also have a solar heated water unit which has saved a considerable amount of electricity. These units have performed efficiently and reliably but will be degraded by any particle fallout from the mine. There would also be the problem of particles blowing from coal which is brought out of the mine. This would start at the mine and continue as the coal is transported to the Blue Haven coal loader.

Dust (pm10 and pm2.5 particles) from coal movement and stockpile are not effectively addressed by the Department of Planning. The suburbs of Blue Haven, Wyee and surrounds and the effect on the movement of uncovered coal wagons on all communities along the main rail corridor to Newcastle are in real danger of major long term health problems. The miner's own EIS Consultant's report quotes clearly....

"..that short term exposure to PM is likely to be causally associated with mortality...hospitalisation and emergency department visits for cardiopulmonary diseases, increased respiratory symptoms, decreased lung function, and physiological changes or biomarkers for cardiac changes" (Pope and Dockery,2006) in (PAE Holmes report for Wallarah 2 April 2013.)

Dust suppression from water sprays on the stockpile is ineffective unless the water is mixed with foam so that dust particles adhere to the water. The cost over the long term period of the proposed mine would be prohibitive. The citrus-based foam concentrate is highly expensive and it is unlikely that Wallarah 2 would invest in this measure. All this danger to the residents is for coal which will not benefit them but will be taken overseas to be burned thus adding to the pollution and CO₂.

Another danger from this Proposal is the predicted land subsidence of up to 2.6 metres from the Longwall Mining. Such a drop in the land could destroy the Jilliby Creek, reduce the water supply to the Central Coast, destroy roads, pastures and homes and reduce some areas to stagnant pools. Even a small land movement will cause some damage to a home and its water and sewage systems.

Residents who live close to M1 Motorway upgrade between Tuggerah and the Link Road have had the rooms of their houses photographed at the expense of the RMS in case of damage due to the road works. There should be a requirement of the proponent of this mine to photograph the rooms and walls of all homes and structures above the proposed area to be mined and also those properties within 500 metres of that area. These same properties should also be surveyed. All this work would have to be completed before any mining was commenced.

Why this Project is still being considered defies common sense. There are so many obvious dangers; so many homes, families, properties and infrastructure that could be affected this seems to be disaster just waiting to be let loose. The land of the Darkinjung Community would be seriously degraded and devalued.

The State Government has shown its disinterest in helping our community in this matter which was obvious when David Harris, our local member, addressed parliament on this matter after receiving many thousands of signatures on petitions. No interest was shown and no action was taken despite the previous promise by Barrie O' Farrell to stop this mine if elected. It is disappointing when a government allows a foreign company to continue to put forward a project of doubtful economic value which could devastate the lives and properties of so many of the people it is elected to look after.

On the basis of the above, which is only the tip of the iceberg of the potential problems, the Planning and Assessment Commission must now reject this mine proposal by enacting the Precautionary Principle as embodied in State legal procedure.

Ronald Fowle

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