

Sandra Norman

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The Commissioners
Planning Assessment Commission
pac@pac.nsw.gov.au

Re: Wallarah 2 Coal Project

Once again, I wish to lodge my formal objection to the Wallarah 2 Coal Project – a proposal for long wall coal mining in the Dooralong and Yarramalong Valleys. As well as this submission, I also attach my previous submission dated 31st August 2016.

This mine is not ecologically sound or sustainable – it is proposed for a proclaimed water catchment. In the proponent’s own EIS, they state that it will take 500 years for the water in this catchment to re-charge. An extraordinary figure which alone, should be enough to say no to this coal mine. No mining activity should be carried out in a water catchment – water is a precious and essential resource and should not be put at risk by loss or contamination.

There is no real future for coal – it is an energy source that is now outdated and contributing to our current global climate change. The world is moving away from thermal coal.

At the hearing on 5th April, 2017 a number of people talked of the employment opportunities from this coal mine. Employment is always held as a carrot to persuade both the community and the government that a project is beneficial to the local community. The reality is that this coal mine will not generate as many employment opportunities as suggested. The Wallarah 2 coal project will not be the ‘saviour’ for the unemployment problems of the Central Coast. There would be more employment opportunities created by companies investing in an area with a reliable, affordable and uncontaminated water supply in an environment not polluted with coal dust which has the potential to affect the health of employees with the subsequent loss of productive working days.

The project is not economically sound, as shown by figures produced by The Australia Institute. The figures as suggested by the proponent are questionable and not supported with any evidence.

The community expects to have a clean and reliable water supply which we currently have on the Central Coast. This proposed coal mine threatens to put this at risk – a risk too high to take. The community also expect to be able to breathe clean air – not air contaminated with small particulate matter from coal mining. Coal dust is a serious health hazard causing serious respiratory problems as well as being carcinogenic.

This mine has been granted conditional approval but we all know that conditions are frequently not adhered to and more often than not, remediation is not able to be carried out successfully. A number of the conditions state the Applicant must implement all reasonable and feasible measures or ‘implement best management practice’. This sounds very reassuring but the reality is that conditions are often not complied with and in reality these statements mean nothing. There are enough examples of this from other areas. Once our water has been lost, it cannot be restored. Once people suffer serious health problems, this also cannot be reversed. This mine will come with a huge social impact and the current residents, as well as the projected increase in population on the Central Coast, have a right to a clean environment and clean water.

This mine has far reaching consequences for the future generations. I urge you to consider the numerous reports you have been given by qualified experts – reports which clearly show the risks associated with this coal mine.

The commission has been set the task to consider all the submissions, report on its findings and subsequently make a recommendation to the Dept of Planning and Environment. For the sake of current and future generations, I urge you to reject this proposed coal mine. Once again, I suggest the precautionary principle be applied.

Yours faithfully

Sandra Norman