Director, Mining Projects
Development Assessment Systems & Approvals
Dept. Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Objection to proposed Wallarah 2 Coal Project - Application No. SSD – 4974

Dear Sir/Madam

As the former State Member for Wyong, I had representations from a large number of local residents voicing their concerns about proposed mining in the Wyong Valleys and the associated coal loading facility to be located near Tooheys Road.

I raised issues on behalf of the local community in both the media and in the NSW Parliament. I made submissions (written and verbal) to both the Strategic Inquiry into Potential Coal Mining Impacts in the Wyong LGA and the Wallarah 2 Coal Project Planning Assessment Commission.

I stated in my previous submissions on the Wallarah 2 Coal Project that, the concern shown by the local community is not restricted to any specific environmental movement; rather it is reflected by a wide range of residents and business people who have serious concerns about;

- Possible effects on our critical water catchments
- Possible effects of subsidence on property and natural environments
- Possible health problems caused by noise and dust
- Possible conflict with desired employment and population directions
- Possible negative impacts, both Social and Economic, on employment and residential lands earmarked for future development

I believe these concerns remain with the new Environmental Impact Statement and that the company Wyong Areas Coal Joint Ventures (WACJV) has failed to convincingly address many issues of concern raised in their previous application.

My main concern though is in regards to water security.

I believe that an independent longitudinal study of water characteristics in the catchment should be undertaken. This was not carried out previously, although an assessment of data and a Peer Review was conducted.

I regards to those studies I draw your attention specifically to the following analysis;

Wyong Water Study and the *Wyong Water Study: International Peer Review* which was commissioned in 2010. The PAC report states that they were disappointed that the brief for the study did not call for a more comprehensive assessment of the groundwater situation, including independent modelling. This is a major deficiency in the data in my opinion.

In their *Wyong Water Study* report, SKM stated that:

In the context of groundwater levels, "*Additional groundwater monitoring within the coal seam needs to be obtained prior to any inseam development of the proposed mine… In terms of the ability of the available data to provide a control for changes due to natural variability, this information is required once the impacting activity occurs. Therefore, if regular monitoring of the*

current network of available groundwater bores is re-established prior to any inseam development, then this control information would be considered adequate… Regular groundwater level monitoring of these bores for a minimum of 2 years prior to any inseam development (to establish patterns of fluctuation across different climatic events) to the proposed impact, is essential to identify impacts subsequent to the mining activity."

In the context of groundwater quality*, "If regular groundwater quality monitoring of the current and proposed bore network is re-established prior to any inseam development, then this groundwater quality control information would be considered adequate… The primary data insufficiency relates to the information available to identify the impacts of the proposed change. It is recommended that regular groundwater quality monitoring of the current monitoring network (and the proposed coal seam formation bores recommended in Section 10.2) is required. Regular groundwater quality monitoring of these bores for a minimum of 2 years prior to any inseam development, is essential for the impacts on groundwater quality to be observed."*

In their *Wyong Water Study: International Peer Review o*f SKM's report, Aqualinc recommended that: *"All groundwater level, groundwater chemistry, stream flow, stream chemistry and climate sites that are used to determine baseline conditions should have at least two years of relevant data prior to the commencement of mining activity that is likely to affect surface water or groundwater flows or quality."*

NSW Office of Water reviewed SKM's Wyong Water Study and Aqualinc's review, and stated that: *"The assertion made within the SKM study and Aqualinc peer review that two years of baseline data is adequate to capture groundwater fluctuations and provide statistically significant correlation is questionable… In terms of assessing sensitivity of surface-ground water connectivity and groundwater base flow contributions to Jilliby Jilliby Creek and tributaries, and maintaining flow into the Wyong River, this should have been examined more closely."*

The Commission accepted that, "ideally", two years of groundwater monitoring should be available before the commencement of "inseam mine development".

The previous Government rejected the application for Wallarah 2 on grounds of unsustainability (ESD principles) and the Government's application of the Precautionary Principle. Nothing in the new application changes that concept as essentially it is a reworking of the previous application. The current NSW Government's "Aquifer Interference Policy" as intended should nullify the application at hand.

The current application again raises serious issues in regards to subsidence including;

- A total of 245 houses (Appendix H, Page 130) will be impacted by subsidence from a conservative one metre to 1.6 metres throughout the mine area. A total of 755 Rural Building Structures will be impacted (Appendix H, leading up to 179) and 420 Farm Dams suffering subsidence to some degree (Appendix H, leading up to 187). As can be seen the projected damage inside the mining lease area would be catastrophic. The hinterlands of the valleys are to be subsided 2.6 metres; Little Jilliby Jilliby Creek at the southern end is predicted to fall 2 metres; the main artery into the Jilliby/Dooralong Valley, Jilliby Road is destined to be subsided 1.75 metres in places, remembering that these valleys flood on a regular basis leaving residents isolated from all directions.

- The green riparian corridors in the Yarramalong and Dooralong valleys (including the Jilliby Conservation Area) could be subjected to environmental degradation, destroying the habitats, ecosystems, biodiversity and ecological integrity of these valleys. Some thirty-three (33) threatened species of NSW wildlife and nineteen (19) avifauna species of national environmental significance (protected under the Australian International Migratory Bird Treaty- CAMBA and JAMBA Agreements - with China and Japan, under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, would be threatened by the proposed longwall coal mine. The migratory waders feed in the Tuggerah Lakes Barrier Estuary and are dependent upon the fresh water discharge from Wyong River and Jilliby Jilliby Creek flowing into this estuary, which is also subjected to ocean tidal inflows.
  The interception of polluted coal seam waters, arising from subsidence in the valleys, would cause these estuarine areas to become heavily polluted and destroy aquatic organisms - a major food resource of the national and international migratory waders. This whole issue remains clouded in, and predicated upon, significant subsidence impact modelling to develop enhanced empirical models for the hydrogeological character of the overburden strata above the coal seams in both valleys.

You will receive many more detailed submissions with more technical information than I can provide. I do note that previously the NSW Office of Water, DECCW and NSW Health Submissions all raised considerable concerns that are still relevant to the new application for this mining project.

I ask that the application be rejected.

Yours Sincerely

David Harris MACE

Dip Teach, Dip Management, GradCert Educational Studies

Former Member for Wyong

Hamlyn Terrace Resident