

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

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

Dear Sir or Madam

The original application by Wyong Areas Joint Coal Venture in 2010 was rejected by the previous NSW Government in March 2011 on the ground of unsustainability (ESD Principles) and the Government's application of the Precautionary Principle. The new application is essentially a reworking of the previous application and so the grounds for refusal are unchanged. The current NSW Government's "Aquifer Interference Policy" as intended should nullify the application at hand.

The Wyong Water Catchment was protected under a proclaimed NSW Statute in 1950 (Gazette No. 153 of the LGA 1919, 1950). This statute still stands. About 300,000 people in the Wyong and Gosford Local Government Area rely upon this major water catchment for their potable water. The recently completed Mardi to Mangrove pipeline also relies upon the sustainability of the water catchment district to transfer water from this system to the Mangrove Dam for water banking, with the aim of alleviating shortages in times of drought. The catchment is vital to the Central Coast.

In 1999 groundwater consultants ERM Mitchell McCotter found that transient pathways for water to travel downwards to the coal strata were evident and so bulk water would not be impeded on its downward path. Despite this Kores claims that there will be no effect upon the water supply due to "impervious layers" between the surface and the mine. They ignore effect of the finding of transient pathways. Professor Phillip Pells, Senior Lecturer at the University of NSW and a consultant to a number of large mining companies in the area of Mine Water Management, dismisses Kores' claims.

Kores claims there will be no effect on the water supply, yet in the Wallarah 2 EIS, Kores does admit to a loss of water rated at 2ml per day per square meter of the mine surface area. Over the whole mine area this translates to approximately 8 megalitres per day or 3000 megalitres each year once mining is complete. Kores have stated the water loss in a manner that deliberately obscures the effect while telling "the truth". This does not encourage faith in the protection of the Central Coast's natural potable water supply.

The Peer Review by Professor Bruce Hepplewhite (page 258, Appendix H) questions many of the terms used and assumptions made during the geological modelling upon which subsidence and water loss are based. Approval based on flawed modelling would be a gross injustice to the people of Wyong. The inability to properly assess the geology of the area and to draw from it assumptions that stand up to peer review leaves one with no confidence in Kores or Wallarah 2 to safely and sustainably carry out their mining operations.

There are approximately 46 panels to be mined, including in the Hue Hue Subsidence Area where 150 houses (Appendix H Map on page 240), mostly of modern brick design, exist on subdivided acres and will be subjected to subsidence up to one metre. Many may well suffer further subsidence due to the existence of Awaba Tuff strata below the mine on which the remaining pillars are supported. There is much discussion within the application referring to the uncertain nature and the

caution needed regarding the soft-bedded Awaba Tuff, and need for a scenario of adaptive management as mining begins to proceed. This type of experimental mining should only be carried out in a remote location of no environmental significance, NOT under modern homes within the expanding outer suburbs of Wyong. The Department of Infrastructure and Planning should be alarmed by this and immediately inform the owners of the properties in the Hue Hue Subsidence District.

A total of 245 houses (Appendix H, page 130) will be impacted by subsidence from a conservative one meter to 1.6 meters 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 hinterland of the valleys are to be subsided 2.6 metres; Little Jilliby Jilliby Creek at the southern end is predicted to fall 2 metres. Professor Pell writes in his own report on the impact of subsidence on the creeks and water ways in the mining area. Creeks will have areas where part of the bed has tilted in an opposite direction to the surrounding bed, interrupting the flow of water and causing ponding. There will also be cracks causing draining. He predicts that the damage and resultant water loss will exceed local rainfall, causing the affected waterways to be dry for about 200 days in each year.

The main artery into the Jilliby/Dooralong Valley, Jilliby Road, is predicted to subside 1.75 metres in places. It needs to be remembered that these valleys flood on a regular basis, leaving residents isolated from all directions. The main access into the valleys needs to be protected and maintained, with particular reference to the access of rescue vehicles. Further to this, it should be remembered that it is the Mine Subsidence Board that will be left with the ensuing mess, not the mining company. This unnecessary burden on the people of New South Wales and particularly on the residents in the Hue Hue Subsidence District can easily be avoided by refusing approval.

The EIS repeatedly downplays the impact of the subsidence it predicts, on properties, roads and waterways, displaying Kores' and Wallarah 2's contempt for the area and the people.

Dust and noise from stockpiling and rail movements will impact on the established suburbs of Blue Haven, Wyee and all along the rail corridor from Morisset through Cardiff and southern suburbs to the port of Newcastle. Kores fails to adequately address the ramifications of this. New suburbs being created in northern Wyong Shire will be impacted by the mining proposal. The stockpile and loader are placed in these developments and should not be considered based on known local high rates of asthma and bronchitis as voiced by the medical profession for decades. Further, Dr. Peter Lewis, Area Director Public Health, NSCC Public Health Unit, criticises the Wallarah 2 EIS for lack of quantification in modelling, poor presentation of data, and an absence of time series plots in the presentation of PM10 data. He also highlights the complete absence of assessment of increase in respiratory symptoms associated with increasing particulate pollution, and the almost non-existent acknowledgement of population growth in the affected areas. The EIS does admit that there will be an increase in deaths and hospitalisation due to the dust from the mining project, but if it fails to acknowledge population growth in the area, then this admission of harm can only be underestimated. Again, the EIS downplays the harm Wallarah 2 will cause, but even if only one person dies as a result of this mine, that is one too many. And how do you explain to the family of that person that the death is only “minimal” and “within the scope of the mining project”?

Kores has publicly stated that “the majority of the mine is under State Forest”. This is not true. About 20% is under State Forest, 25% under the Jilliby Conservation Area and the remainder under rural residential properties. However, even if it were true, State Forest belongs to the people of the State, not to a mining company. As to conservation, the area proposed to be mined contains habitat for nineteen species of avian migratory waders which are protected under not one but three

BINDING International agreements: CAMBA (with China), JAMBA (with Japan) and ROKAMBA (with South Korea). The proposal directly affects these agreements and should it proceed places us, Australia, in breach. Drainage channels caused by subsidence and natural drainage flow lines will lead to contamination of the Wyong River and the estuarine areas of Tuggerah Lakes, destroying aquatic organisms, thereby damaging the feeding habitat of these migratory waders. Discharge of any kind into the water systems, be it deliberate or caused by subsidence, is unacceptable. This includes Porters Creek Wetlands, which the EIS repeatedly, and erroneously, refers to as "Porters Creek Swamp". Porters Creek Wetlands is the most pristine wetlands on the Central Coast and next to residential areas. It is also an integral part of the Tuggerah Lakes system. Kores and Wallarah 2 seem incapable of correctly referring to the areas within their proposal. What faith can we possibly have that they will not damage what they cannot or will not correctly identify. Yet again they show their contempt for the community.

There are also within the proposed mining area flora species listed as threatened and local fauna species listed as endangered under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, a total of thirty three in all. The fate of these species and their habitat is not adequately addressed in the EIS.

There is no real assessment within the EIS of the damage to Earth of the burning of the coal to be mined. 97.1% of scientists agree that dangerous levels of climate change are being driven by human activity, with a large contribution from the burning of fossil fuels. There has been a further call to ensure that 80% of Australia's fossil fuels remain in the ground to play our part in avoiding catastrophic climate change. The damage to the earth's climate caused by the burning of coal from Wallarah 2 has not been evaluated or even adequately acknowledged within the EIS.

The Director-General's requirements are extensive and in most areas Kores has failed to adequately address these. The proposal should be rejected outright as the long term damage to the Central Coast's water, biodiversity, infrastructure, amenity and health is totally unacceptable.

Yours sincerely

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