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Water not Coal

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

Dear Sir/Madam

The original application by Wyong Areas Joint Coal Venture in 2010 was rejected by the previous NSW Government in March 2011 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 Wyong Water Catchment was protected under a proclaimed NSW Statute in 1950 (Gazette No. 153 of the LGA 1919, 1950).
- Some 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-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.
- In 1999 groundwater consultants, ERM Mitchell McCotter, found that transient pathways for water to travel downwards to the coal strata was evident and so bulk water would not be impeded on its downward path.
- Kores claim that there will be no effect upon the water supply due to impervious layers between the surface and the mine seam. Professor Phillip Pells, Senior Lecturer at the University of NSW, dismisses these claims. Kores do admit to a loss of water rated at 2ml per day per square metre of the mine surface area. This extrapolates over the whole mine area to approximately 8 megalitres per day or 3000 megalitres each year once mining is complete. The professional uncertainties characterised within the Kores submission paint a very tentative picture for protection of the 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.
- Some 46 panels are 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 but may well suffer further subsidence due to the existence of Awaba Tuff strata below the mine on which the remaining pillars are supported.

Much discussion within the application refers to the uncertain nature and caution needed re the soft bedded Awaba Tuff leading to a scenario of adaptive management as mining begins to proceed. This type of experimental mining should only be carried out in an outback remote location and 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 unsuspecting 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 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 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; 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.
- 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. The proponent fails to adequately address these ramifications. New burgeoning suburbs being created in northern Wyong shire will be impacted by the mining proposal. It is placed amid these developments and should not be considered based on known high rates of asthma and bronchitis as voiced by the medical profession for decades.
- Nineteen species of avian migratory waders in the area are protected under the Federal EPBC Act with binding agreements with China (CAMBA), Japan (JAMBA) and South Korea itself (ROKAMBA). The proposal directly affects these agreements. There are also flora species listed as threatened under the Act and local fauna species listed as endangered under the Act with the proposed mining area.
- The Director-General's Requirements are extensive and in most areas Kores have failed to address these adequately. The proposal should be rejected outright as the long term damage to the coast's water, bio diversity, infrastructure, amenity and health is unacceptable. The addition of the result of burning this resource within the next ten years has not been evaluated upon damage to the earth's climate and will be wholly condemned as the trend to reject fossil fuels gains momentum.

Yours faithfully

