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Submission against ADA for Wallarah 2 Coal Project (SSD-4974)

This is a submission against the Amended Development Application for the Wallarah 2 coal project.

The amended application does nothing to reduce the risks posed by the Project to public health and drinking water supplies in the Wyong shire.

Public health agencies have raised serious concerns about the impacts of the project on the densely populated areas of Wyong shire. Even small increases in particulate pollution have real impacts on local health and mortality, and the Project can be expected to adversely affect both of those.

The project is also opposed by water agencies including the Central Coast Water Corporation. It puts at risk the safe drinking water supply of 150,000 residents of Wyong Shire, and even its proponents acknowledge that some 2.5 million litres of water every day would be absorbed by the proposed mine void, for hundreds of years into the future. That's water that would otherwise be available to the catchment. One of the main tributaries of the catchment, Jilliby Jilliby Creek, is projected to suffer subsidence of 1.5m due to the project. This is the proponent's own estimate, of course, and experience suggests therefore that the damage will be far worse.

None of these serious risks from the project are remotely justified by its benefits. It is arguable whether any benefits at all would flow from the project, considering the terminal decline that the global thermal coal industry is in the throes of. Even the ultimate owners of the Project, the Korean Government, have announced plans to get out of international coal projects.

The pressures faced by the thermal coal industry are largely a result of global commitment to reduce greenhouse pollution, as well as the growing cost effectiveness of renewable energy. Both of these factors will only strengthen in the future.

Put simply, this is a project that carries enormous risk, and very dubious benefits, if any at all. It should be rejected.