

## **Submission to Russell Vale Underground Expansion Project**

As a resident with experience gained from living behind the mine, I have grave concerns about:

- (1) the credentials of the company;
- (2) a coal mine that is so close to residential; and
- (3) risks in expanding on a very old and potentially unstable operation.

### **Can Wollongong Coal be trusted to operate an expanded mine in Russell Vale?**

- As a resident, I can say that Wollongong Coal has shown little interest in complying with government laws regarding its care and maintenance obligations. This makes us very worried about the company's ability and intentions to safely operate a mine.
- This year they were ordered to remove a huge waste pile. We were excited to receive the letter from Wollongong Coal saying they would do this by July with many truck movements planned. But after only a day of lots of trucks, things quietened considerably and currently there is still a huge pile visible from Broker Street with no trucks. This pile is way too big to be considered "part of the landscape" or able to be covered up by some grass.
- The waste pile is the source of a lot of dust at our house and we rarely see the sprinklers operating when they should be, and I wonder whether they can with water restrictions. The solution is obvious which is to comply with the order and remove the pile.
- I also read that Wollongong Coal is basically broke and under investigation as to whether they are fit to hold a mining license. If this is true, how can they have the trust of government or faith of residents?

### **Why would a mine exist so close to a residential area in today's age?**

- I hear the argument about the mine being here before the houses, but honestly this does not make sense in terms of assessing its suitability against current day laws which have developed with good reason and knowledge about impact on the environment and people.
- I also hear the argument about jobs but people who are living in Russell Vale work and spend money in the area and sustain the local economy. The township is worth more as an attractive residential area today than it is as a working mine and I don't think you can have both because of the impact on residents of a mine which is so close.

### **Risks**

- I worry about the waste pile impact on my kids from cold dust. I don't really understand why the mine is responsible for monitoring and reporting instead of an independent regulator.
- However, my greatest concern is that under an expansion, our backyard becomes a graveyard and a sad memorial for families of miners who are buried alive, gassed or incinerated because of a dangerous combination of an unfit company and a very old mine.