

Riverbank
Lodge

Wyong Strategic Inquiry Panel Secretariat
C/- Dept of Planning
GPO Box 39
Sydney 2000

12 August 2007

Dear Panel Members

PROPOSED KORES COAL MINE

I refer to the notice published in the Central Coast Express Advocate on 11.7.7 announcing the establishment of this inquiry, giving its terms of reference, inviting submissions and notifying the public that hearings are to be held starting on 27.8.7.

The following is my written submission and notification of my wish to make an oral presentation to the panel when it sits at Wyong next month. This submission addresses the terms of reference by which the inquiry is limited, in order, as follows:

1.0 CENTRAL COAST WATER SUPPLY

'Whether coal mining under the catchment for the Mardi Dam, would compromise, in any significant way, the water supply of the Central Coast'

1.1 Aquifers

1.1.1 The Science

- (1) I have no expertise in hydrology, and that is as well because it appears that as with other professions, putting five hydrologists in a room will result in five disparate opinions being expressed.
- (2) In this case there appear to be a number of expert opinions, some reasoned and some apparently less so.

1.1.2 The Risks

- (1) While respecting that this is an area for the experts, I submit that it is also essential to bring risk analysis, in which I have some expertise, to bear.
- (2) I note that the Wallarah 2 website contains a risk management section at <http://www.wallarah.com.au/pdf/W2CP%20Preliminary%20Risk%20Assessment.pdf> in which it appears that the applicant's assessment of the risk to the potable water supply is 'moderate'. I take issue with that and would welcome a discussion of the assessment with Professor Galvin. To put it in context, the risk of subsidence is also assessed as moderate.

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- (3) Using the matrix employed by the applicant at page 3 of its assessment, my view is that any significant loss of potable ground water would be 'critical', and that if the mean expert opinion regarding its likelihood can be pegged as being 'possible', then the risk can only be regarded as 'extreme'.

1.2

Tanks

- (1) While I realise that this term of reference is probably aimed more at the ground water issues, it is worthwhile mentioning the issue of rainwater tanks.
- (2) We are all aware that both state and local government agencies are trying to encourage residents to install tanks for collecting and storing water to supply toilets, washing machines, car washing, garden watering etc. The catchment for these is the dwelling roof.
- (3) In fact, tanks are required in all new residential developments. The dwellings that are to be built in the new Warnervale town will all be required to have tanks, as will those in already subdivided land in Wallarah, Woongarah and Hamlyn Terrace. In addition, approximately 30% of the dwellings in Blue Haven, Woongarah and Hamlyn Terrace have been constructed under that rule, and many earlier dwellings have installed tanks.
- (4) Both state and local government agencies are relying heavily on rainwater tanks to augment the authority's supply and it is certain that they will be factored into future calculations when water needs are discussed.
- (5) Empirical evidence from similar situations where coal dumps and loaders are in use adjacent to residential areas (see <http://newstandardnews.net/content/index.cfm/items/3140/printmode/true>) indicates that the proximity of coal loaders, dumps and trains to residential areas means a far greater incidence of coal dust than strip mining produces.
- (6) The above evidence must be considered in discussion of all the terms of reference, however with regard to the water supply issue it is important because the dwelling roofs from Gorokan to San Remo to Wyee to Jilliby to Warnervale will always be covered in a film of coal dust that will end up in the rainwater tanks that represent an average investment of about \$2500 per dwelling for about 8000 houses that now have tanks or that are to be built with tanks within 5 kilometres of the dump. This seems to me to be a consideration worth discussing, not only because of the question of water quality but also because of the well documented fact that conventional pumps break down when coal dust is introduced. Pumps that are durable in the coal dust environment are significantly dearer than the pumps in general use in rainwater

tank systems and washing machines. Today's toilet cisterns are also more sophisticated than the old single-flush systems and will not tolerate significant deterioration of water quality, as is being found out on the central coast at the moment because of the poor water quality being experienced particularly on the Woy Woy peninsula.

- (7) So the terms of reference of your inquiry are not able to be discussed in isolation, but in terms of the water supply, I submit that insofar as rainwater tanks are included in the calculations that determine available water, the introduction of this mine as a factor brings a considerable negative factor to bear.

2.0 THE ENVIRONMENT

'Environmental impacts of any underground coal mining, with a particular emphasis on:

- surface and groundwater resources, especially on drinking water supply and flooding;*
- hazards and risks of subsidence impacts; and*
- the amenity of the community, including dust and noise impacts'*

2.1 Drinking Water Supply

- (1) As to the first dot point I refer the panel members to the previous section.

2.2 Subsidence Impacts

- (1) With regard to dot point 2 the question of subsidence in longwall mines is overwhelmingly documented. I cite <http://pennsylvania.sierraclub.org/PACchapter/Issues/Longwall%20Mining%20Costs.htm>

and

http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/longwall_mining

Native flora and fauna habitat, surface water loss and its concomitant effect on livestock as well as native and migratory species are demonstrable.

- (2) Subsidence will affect buildings within the angle of influence of the collapsing longwall shafts. Those families living within that area will suffer the consequences. I refer the panel to AS 2870 which deals with foundations and footings of residential buildings. Subsidence in our region means anything from 200 mm to over a metre. The movement ranges in AS 2870 are from 0 to 75 mm in highly reactive soil. The difference is extreme. AS 2870 would simply not allow

construction of a dwelling in areas that were known to be going to be affected by longwall mining subsidence.

2.3

Amenity

- (1) This again interfaces with issues already dealt with above.
- (2) There will be about twenty-five thousand residents in the suburbs adjacent to the surface facilities of which about half are children.
- (3) We have two power stations in the area, both of which pollute the air with exhaust gases and particulates.
- (4) We have the highest incidence of respiratory disorders in the commonwealth.
- (5) This is not just a question of washing that cannot be put on the line or windows that have to be closed because of black dust; this is our children's health, and our own.
- (6) As to noise, we in the Wyong area are glad to have the passenger railway service. We realise that along with that service go the goods trains that make more noise because they are longer and have engines that are more agricultural. There is usually one of these trains per night, and light sleepers are awakened for about three minutes because of it. But this was a feature of the area when we moved here and it is not a reason for complaint; furthermore the reason we hear it is that there is so little other noise here. What we rightly fear is that the coal loader, water pumps, conveyor motors and diesel trains with two or more locomotives will be working throughout the night because the coal trains cannot travel during the day.
- (7) When the NSW government sold off its Landcom land in Blue Haven it did not disclose to the buyers that a coal dump and loader facility would be sited over the hill within two kilometres, and it is to be hoped that when the Warnervale land is sold off the aspirational buyers will be informed that they will be poisoned, their region will be polluted and their potable water will be put at risk.

3.0

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

'Social and economic significance of any underground coal mining to the local community, the region and State'

3.1

Economic

- (1) The state stands to earn royalties of between \$6 and \$8 per tonne of coal over 28 years in phase 1 of the proposed mine.
- (2) In total, the state hopes to gross about \$1 billion over forty years in both phases.

- (3) In addition to the royalties there will be some income to the rail network, the port coal loaders in Newcastle and the workers employed in the mine (about two hundred according to the mining company, but this number is not supported by statistics currently available – perhaps the number includes seamen and employees in South Korea).
- (4) So much for the plus side of the ledger. Against that it is necessary to make a column of negative impacts.
- (5) In the event that the water supply is affected the state government will need to provide for water in this region that it has promoted as a dormitory for Sydney workers; where we are already on level 4 restrictions and were almost into level 5 when the one-in-thirty-year storm hit in June. Wyong Shire has been described as the fastest-growing region in Australia at various times over the last ten years – we need more water, not less. Will the government guarantee sufficient water for the central coast out of its royalties if the water supply fails?
- (6) Where coal mining is present, land prices plummet. Owner-occupiers leave and landlord-investors enter. We have already been through that syndrome in the north lakes region and are thankful that we are coming out the other side, because we can see the improvement in the demographic when low rents are supplanted by aspirational home-owners. The last thing we want is a return to a coal-dust blackened landscape – we owner-occupiers will leave and the area will be relegated to a cheap rental community again. I cannot believe the state government would allow that to happen, even from the standpoint of the value of the property in the area, which would reverse the current trend and end in local recession with owners owing the banks more than the value of their homes.
- (7) We know that the coal mining environment is unhealthy, particularly for our children. Studies show that repeatedly. I refer you to:
<http://adc.bmj.com/cgi/content/abstract/archdischild%3b70/4/305>
 The question is who will pay for the extra hospital beds? Has the treasurer allowed for that or are we being asked to live in a coal mine slum for forty years so that the state government can get hold of some money to bail it out of some immediate, unrelated problem?

3.2

Social

- (1) This topic is so closely linked to the economic problems outlined above that it is not possible to distinguish the two, because the problems of suburbs afflicted with heavy industry

and its associated stigma, pollution and skyline are social, behavioural, demographical and economic. In the old north lakes environment we had small cottages built for retirement or fishing shacks. These later became the property of landlords who rented them out to people who had little or no work. This was the situation in places like Blue Haven, San Remo, Budgewoi, Chain Valley Bay, Charmhaven, Gorokan etc.

- (2) As the Wyong Shire Council opened up land in these areas, people from other places, notably Sydney, bought land and built homes. The suburbs thus created are places to be proud of and the low-rent houses are disappearing.
- (3) Most of these people still work in Sydney and they go back and forth every day just so they can live here in their own home in their aspirational community. Their children go to school here and these families want to live here because they are proud of the homes they have built and the suburbs they live in. They love the drive home because the countryside with its Australian bush flavour gets better the closer they get to home. They love the native animals; the kangaroos, wallabies, possums, wombats. They love the native and migratory birds; the kookaburras, peewees, magpies, parrots, honey eaters, waders etc in the creeks; and wetlands that are the breeding grounds of our prawns and fish, and still have popular swimming holes just like our parents had in earlier days. They love the lakes where good flathead and bream can still be hooked, and where the eastern king prawns still run down to The Entrance in the summer. They love the pristine beaches that go for miles. They did not come here to have this industrial disaster forced on them by a foreign government with the complicity of a greedy and desperate state government.
- (4) These people are hungry for a better life, but not necessarily aware of how to pursue it in adversity. I fear that our aspirational owner-occupiers do not all have the acumen to stand apart when standards fall around them. Wyong is an example of what happens when the economic value and desirability of a suburb fall. This must not be allowed to happen to our lovely new suburbs because of the small income a coal mine will bring.
- (5) Health is also a socio-economic issue. Is the state government geared up to provide the extra beds and technology that an increase in breathing disorders will bring?

4.0

WHERE MINING SHOULD BE PERMITTED

'Areas where mining should not be permitted, or if permitted the conditions under which it may proceed, having regard to

the matters listed above and the NSW Government's strategic planning policies that apply to the area.'

- (1) The first point is that coal mining should not be permitted where residential development has been fostered by authorities, and by that I mean within a distance within which the residential area can be affected by deprivation of its water supply, by pollution of its air, waterways and land, by industrial noise and by visual pollution on its perimeter such as is bound to occur along the link Road.
- (2) Much has been made by the applicant of the fact that the area where the dump and loader are proposed is largely zoned as industrial land, as if that excuses any obnoxious moonscape they might desire to inflict on us.
- (3) The fact is that some years ago Montoro wanted to have a quarry between Tooheys Road and the railway, and the state government put pressure on Wyong Council to make it happen. The land was previously zoned rural and was home to fattening cattle along with the native species mentioned above. The council bowed to the pressure because of the sixty jobs that were promised. Is this *deja vu*?
- (4) We now have an industrially zoned piece of land that houses a few portal frame buildings that are hard to spot from the road and if they are seen they cannot be recognised as industrial buildings.
- (5) We are not happy about Boral Montoro being there because we know that in heavy rain the water in Spring Creek turns *terra cotta* colour from the tailings ponds, and we have tried unsuccessfully to prevent Boral from continuing to pollute the creek. Having said all the above, I hope the panel will agree that a few portal frames hidden by foliage are not objectionable, and applications for zone change are always dealt with on their own merits rather than with foresight as to what some foreign government might turn them into years down the track.
- (6) On the topic of Spring Creek, it was so named because one arm of its headwaters was fed by a spring. This is no longer the case since Wallarah 1 mine undermined it.
- (7) Further to that, the panel should be made aware that one arm of the headwaters of Spring Creek and the main headwaters of Wallarah Creek, which are the main arteries of the northern Tuggerah Lakes, will be directly under the coal dump, loader and rail loop. Even if this were the only consideration, it is remarkable that this proposal has come so far. The idea that the mine will produce clean water to augment the flows is laughable. Even if this could be believed, which it cannot, in order to produce clean water it is necessary to *hive off* the dirty water that is left. When the rain falls, where will that dirty water go? The answer is that no matter what they say it will

end up in our creeks and our lakes. We know that because it is happening now with Boral, an Australian company with some responsibility to be a good corporate citizen.

- (8) The Republic of Korea has no such view of itself. Since the end of the Japanese occupation the South Korean government has been poisoning its people and polluting its land. It has come under pressure from APEC and its own population in the last ten years to clean up its act, with the result that it has closed most of its mines on economic grounds and made a conscious effort to open mines in other countries where it does not carry the burden of the social, health and economic costs. They are here because it's cheaper for them to mine in our community than it is in their own country and elsewhere. They are prepared to cop the odd fine for polluting the water, because it's still cheaper to be here. And they will escape any consequences of other degradation which is not so easily measurable, such as stunting of trees and loss of threatened species, not to mention lowered property values. They will operate somewhere around the lowest standard of compliance they can get away with. Why shouldn't they? Our own companies do.
- (9) I do not believe that being cheaper and easier to walk over is good for a community's self respect, and I do not think that the perpetuation of their economic miracle is a good reason for us to let them mine here.

5.0

COMMUNITY ACTION

- (1) I should make you aware that a public meeting held at Blue haven on 17.7.7 resolved unanimously to form a residents' action group in the form of an unincorporated association opposing all aspects of the mining proposal.
- (2) It is not the valley people of the ACA, whose work we applaud, but it is the result of a ground swell of outrage, in the residential community of the Wyong Shire and beyond, that our state government can even countenance the idea of new coal mines in our beautiful region, let alone covering our suburbs with coal dust and cranking up the noise volume to the point where we think we're living in a tumble dryer.
- (3) The name of the association is:

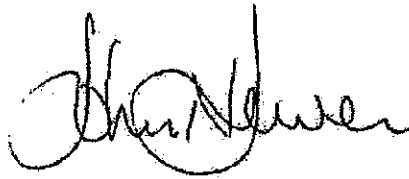
STOP KOREAN COAL MINING

and it is growing as fast as we can make people aware of what is proposed, so it will no longer be possible for this industrial disaster to come in under the radar.

- (4) It is our hope that the state government will do what we put them there to do and govern responsibly, but if they decide they can sell us out like sponge cakes we shall make a stand.
- (5) If this government cannot make ends meet without allowing a foreign power to come in and create an environmental, social and economic disaster in our lovely central coast, its ministers are not fit to govern a modern, complex state like New South Wales.
- (6) We residents think that the state ministers had better formulate '*strategic planning policies that apply to the area*' as contained in the wording of your terms of reference rather than '*strategic planning policies that are destined to bring social, economic and health morbidity to the area*'.

I have been instructed as chairman of STOP KOREAN COAL MINING to ask that our association be permitted to make an oral presentation. The delegation will be made up of myself, the secretary, the deputy chairman and the treasurer, all of whom have made a written submission. Please for the time being correspond with STOP KOREAN COAL MINING through me.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Lewer', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

John Lewer

Wyong Strategic Inquiry Panel Secretariat
c/- Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Individual
submission from
Sharon Salmis; one
of our members,
to state Gov.

9th August 2007

Dear Panel Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to coal mining in Wyong Shire and more specifically to the proposed Wallarah 2 Coal Project. Firstly I would like to comment on **community consultation and awareness**, or lack of it, which would be an issue with any mine project. When I bought my house I was not told that I could be living less than three kilometres from a coal mine even though it has been in the pipeline for at least 10 years and I bought my house eight years ago. I first found out about it when I saw an article in the newspaper about the Australian Coal Alliance people opposing the mine. When I first tried to bring the mine to the attention of other residents they had no idea what I was talking about. Clearly there has been a sad lack of consultation with the community and the reason is obvious, nobody wants to live near a mine and the company didn't want the public making a fuss. A representative from Kores did attend a local precinct committee meeting, but only because we asked them to attend and we only knew to ask because of the Australian Coal Alliance article. There was less than 20 people at the meeting so they were hardly consulting with the wider community. I understand that they haven't attended any other community meetings.

Kores held an information afternoon at their offices at Tuggerah. Very few people turned up and the ones that did turn up were protesting against the mine. The reason for the lack of interest was not that people don't care it is because the advertisement, which is attached, was not clear. "The team at Wallarah 2 Coal Project", in very small letters, "invites you to an information afternoon". Even now that many more people know about the proposed mine, they do not know it is called Wallarah 2 so how many people would have known from this invitation that it was something that could effect them? Not many. Kores have a website for people to find out information about the proposal but it is almost impossible to find it unless you know the name of the project which very few people know. If you do find the site, the information is very general and the maps so inadequate that you probably wont find what you are looking for. For instance the maps don't show the proximity of the above ground sites to urban areas which I consider vital information since I live in one of those urban areas.

Kores has an information phone line but, once again, you must know that there is a Wallarah 2 Coal Project in the first place and then have access to the website or pamphlet to find out what the phone number is. Apparently Kores has distributed newsletters but not in Blue Haven and nearby suburbs as far as I know and there are no community representatives from this area on the Coal Liason Committee. I propose that this oversight needs to be remedied, we have issues here that are different to those of the valley people which need to be looked into. Clearly there has been inadequate community consultation by Kores.

I have recently found out that Kores and Centennial Coal own other exploration licenses and could one day mine under our lakes. The process for getting these licenses must be very hush hush because nobody who lives here seems to know anything about it. We feel like mushrooms, kept in the dark and fed bull\$%!* and yet we will be living with the consequences.

The **Darkinjung Aboriginal Land Council** own the land where the rail loop is proposed to be situated. When I attended the information afternoon I asked Peter Smith of Kores whether they had permission from the Darkinjung to use the land and at that stage they didn't have permission. It seemed like they were just assuming that they would get permission for some reason. Other residents of Wyong Shire would be interested in hearing the Darkinjung position regarding the mine and use of their land. Surely somebody from the Darkinjung should also be on the Coal Liason Committee since it affects their land.

A major issue with this mine is **water supply**. The Central Coast water storage is currently around 20%. We have been in drought and on water restrictions for years. Longwall coal mining has a long history of destroying river systems and the underground streams which feed them. There is no way Kores can know what will happen with regards to subsidence until it happens and then it is too late. They can make an educated guess but it will still be a guess and I'm sure other mining companies made educated guesses before proceeding to ruin rivers and aquifers. As I am one of millions of organisms who live on the Central Coast who needs water to survive, I am opposed to mining under our catchment and risking our water supply. We can live without mine royalties but we can't live without water.

Many people visit Wyong Shire for holidays and weekends because it is a beautiful natural area. They will not want to visit an industrial area. If our rivers and lakes are ruined by mining beneath and coal dust runoff people will not want to come here. Spring and Wallarah creeks run through the mine site and are the only natural catchment flushing system for Budgewoi Lake. Any runoff into these creeks would be a crime as they are in excellent condition and the lake would be polluted also. I have been up to Newcastle to see for myself what a coal loader looks like and the surrounding area was filthy with black dust. I believe that the proposed mine has the potential to be devastating for the **tourism industry** in Wyong Shire.

Due to the continuing drought many residents have bought **water tanks** and are very concerned about coal dust on their roof ending up in their tank. We have been asked to conserve water and have been consistently under the weekly water usage target set by water restrictions. We do the right thing and what can we look forward to in return? Dirty tank water. Our washing will be washed in coal water and then hung out to dry in the coal dust laden breeze.

Our **health** is at risk from this mine. The Central Coast already has a high incidence of respiratory illness and coal dust can only make it worse. Our hospital system cannot cope with the current patient load so how will it cope with the increased load when we all start breathing in coal dust? I have attached recent newspaper articles on our local health system crisis. There is one school and two child care centres within three kilometres of the proposed mine site and there are many more situated close

enough to be affected by coal dust. It makes me sick to think that the government could put mine royalties before the health of so many children. We have a new oval to play on but it is only three kilometres from the mine site so we will be breathing coal dust while we play. The mine site is simply too close to suburbs.

According to Kores website they plan to mine 5 million tonnes of coal per year for 40 years, that's 200 million tonnes of coal which will release hundreds of millions of tonnes of **greenhouse gases**. Australia contributes only a small percentage of carbon emissions worldwide but this does not include emissions from coal which we have sold to other countries and they have burnt. The website mentions that they will offset greenhouse gas emissions produced by the project but fails to mention gases produced when the coal is burnt in Korea or how they will be offset. People seem to think that they can just plant some trees and they don't have to worry about emissions but I have been to community tree plantings where not one plant survived long term so this can be an unreliable way of offsetting emissions unless it is monitored and looked after long term. So, how does Kores plan to offset greenhouse gas emissions from the project and how will they ensure the long term success of any gas offsetting actions? Will they be offsetting the emissions from when the coal is burnt too?

When is Australia going to do something serious about global warming? We used to be world leaders in solar technology, now we are far behind. There is money to be made from alternative energy technology so why are we dragging our heels? Australia is the driest populated continent on earth and will likely be one of the worst affected by global warming. We have shown that we can cut down on our use of water and we can do the same with electricity with energy saving technologies, alternative energy technologies and more careful use of electricity around our homes. If we were clever we could be selling these technologies to Korea instead of coal and saving our one and only planet in the process. I don't accept the excuse that if we don't sell coal to Korea then someone else will, we could set an example to the world and put pressure on others who would sell it to them. The process has to start somewhere. I am not expecting that we stop all coal mining right now, just phase it out and certainly not open new mines. When I saw the "Inconvenient Truth" movie it was the first time I have ever been ashamed to be Australian when Al Gore stated that Australia and the USA are the only countries who haven't ratified the Kyoto Protocol and every time we open a new coal mine is another reason to be ashamed.

Noise is another big issue for myself and others in Blue Haven. Most of us can already hear goods trains from inside our homes with the door shut and the tv on. It is quite loud at night when all else is quiet. The new Warnervale town centre is even closer to the mine site than Blue Haven so it will be worse for them. When I asked Peter Smith of Kores whether the trains would run at night he said that they would have to fit in with the passenger train schedule which I assume to mean that they will be running late at night when there are no passenger trains. The coal loader would need to run at night to fill the trains. I have been up to Newcastle to see a coal loader and coal trains for myself and the coal loader was even louder than the trains so we would certainly hear it at our homes. Once again, the mine is too close to suburbs.

Through studying Wyong Shire Council Conservation Strategy technical papers and the National Parks and Wildlife Service wildlife atlas along with personal conversations with council staff and local experts I have learned that many

threatened species occur at Bushells Ridge where the above ground mine infrastructure and rail loop are proposed to be located. See table.

E = endangered, V = vulnerable, WSC = Wyong Shire Council documents and conversations with staff, NP = National Parks and Wildlife Service Wildlife Atlas, BB = Boris Branwhite (local expert on native orchids), NSWCS = New South Wales conservation status under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, NATCS = National conservation status under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999.

Scientific name	Common name	NSWCS	NATCS	Source
Flora				
<i>Genoplesium insignis</i>	Variable ridge orchid	E		BB, WSC
<i>Tetraloche juncea</i>	Black eyed Susan	V	V	WSC, NP
<i>Angophora inopina</i>	Charmhaven apple	V	V	WSC, NP
<i>Acacia Bynoeana</i>	Bynoes Wattle	E	V	WSC, NP
<i>Eucalyptus parramattensis</i> subspecies <i>parramattensis</i>	Parramatta redgum, Wyong population	E		WSC, BB
<i>Cryptostylis hunteriana</i>	Leafless tongue orchid	V	V	BB, WSC
Fauna				
<i>Crinia tinnula</i>	Wallum froglet	V		WSC, NP
<i>Myotis adversus</i>	Large footed myotis	V		WSC, NP
<i>Miniopterus australis</i>	Little bent wing bat	V		WSC, NP
<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i>	Black bittern	V		NP
<i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i>	Squirrel glider	V		WSC, NP
<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami</i>	Glossy black cockatoo	V	E	WSC, NP
<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i> <i>Oceanensis</i>	Eastern bent wing bat	V		NP
<i>Mormopterus norfolcensis</i>	Eastern freetail bat	V		NP
<i>Scoteanax rueppellii</i>	Greater broadnosed bat	V		NP
<i>Tytonovae hollandiae</i>	Masked owl	V		WSC, NP

Land clearing is listed as a key threatening process for all threatened species. The land at Bushells Ridge would have to be cleared for the mine to be built. All the abovementioned threatened species list retaining native vegetation as habitat and/or food source as necessary to recover the species. Disturbance and clearing of native vegetation also allows weed invasion, soil erosion and associated stormwater pollution.

The following are other instances, aside from the obvious habitat clearing and fragmentation, where this proposed mine would affect particular species. The Wallum froglet is threatened by reduction of water quality and modification to acidity in wetlands. The long footed Myotis is threatened by reduction of stream water quality affecting its food resources. Loss of ground cover for its mammal prey threatens the masked owl.

Fewer than 20 *Genoplesium insignis* have been recorded from three localities and it is likely to become extinct unless circumstances and factors threatening its survival,

such as land clearing and disturbance, cease to operate. Local native orchid expert Boris Branwhite suggested to me that a fire survey would be necessary to locate more *Genoplesium insignis* plants as they require short surrounding vegetation to flower, so there could be more plants on the site but they have not been discovered because conditions haven't allowed them to flower. The endangered *Acacia bynoeana* is susceptible to localised extinction due to the fragmented nature and small size of the populations. There is a total of about 130 plants in Wyong shire and about half of these occur at Bushells Ridge over a large expanse of ridgetop.

The *Tetratheca juncea* is threatened by habitat degradation due to stormwater runoff. The majority of the endangered *Eucalyptus parramattensis* subspecies *parramattensis* population occurs in the Porters creek and Wallarah creek catchments. As well as habitat loss and fragmentation it is threatened by habitat degradation resulting from altered hydrological and nutrient levels. It is important to prevent off site stormwater impacts from adjacent development and retain or restore natural drainage conditions.

It is highly likely that other threatened species occur here or feed here. For instance grey headed flying foxes feed on eucalypt trees in Blue Haven when they are flowering and would likely feed on the eucalypts at Bushells Ridge also as it is so close. Squirrel gliders are a food source for the powerful owl so it is likely that they also feed at Bushells Ridge. Wetland birds and frogs would be attracted to the 7g (high conservation status) wetland which occurs there. There are two orchids uncommon in Wyong Shire which also occur at Bushells Ridge, *Genoplesium ruppii* and *Caladenia catenatus*. *Caladenia catenatus* is under application with the NSW Scientific Committee for listing as an endangered species.

Conversations with Wyong Shire Council staff indicate that the Endangered Ecological Community Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coast Floodplain occurs along Wallarah Creek yet in Wyong Vegetation Profiles Report by Stephen Bell 2002 this is not mentioned. Clearly a comprehensive ground-truthed survey of flora and fauna needs to be completed before any decisions regarding land use are made. I would not trust any survey organised or paid for by Kores because environmental consultants who consistently find problems with developments soon find that they have little work and it is difficult for a person to see something when his paycheque relies on him not seeing it. I propose that any studies on any impacts from this mine should not be organised or paid for by anyone who stands to profit from the mine.

Creek health is a major concern for many residents of Blue Haven. Spring creek and Wallarah creek are currently in excellent health and consistently score low ratings of phosphates and nitrates in watertesting. Creeklines are wildlife corridors and should not be cleared or disturbed. The Rivers SOS Coalition recommends a one kilometre buffer zone around rivers, creeks and waterways. Both these creeks run through Bushells Ridge and then out into Budgewoi lake. They are the only natural catchment flushing system for the lake. Runoff into these creeks is likely to be polluted by coal dust if this mine goes ahead. There will also be massive coal dumps in the catchment of the creeks which will have to be constantly turned over and washed down to prevent combustion and reduce dust. What happens to this dirty water? Even if it is held in dams this will not safeguard the creeks when there is heavy rainfall or flooding. We recently suffered massive rainfall and storms. If this mine had been

here during those storms it would have caused massive environmental damage to the creeks, lake and bush as any storage dams would have been flooded and the pollution allowed to spread through the environment. This type of extreme weather will be more common thanks to climate change.

Clearly the Bushells Ridge area is of great **conservation** value as there are so many threatened species dependent on it for habitat or food resources. The Wyong Conservation Strategy suggests that a landscape approach to conservation, where large parcels of land are set aside for conservation, would benefit a number of threatened species. For example the conservation of *Angophora inopina* habitat would benefit *Cryptostylis hunteriana*, *Tetratheca juncea* and *Acacia Bynoeana* as well as the squirell glider. The Bushells ridge area is home to all these species and more. It should be conserved and cleared sections rehabilitated, and certainly not cleared for any reason. It could form an important part of an inter regional **wildlife corridor** linking the coast to the Watagan mountains.

I sincerely hope that the wishes of the people of the coast and the health of residents and the environment will be considered more important than mine royalties. The mine would bring in some cash for the government but I doubt Wyong Shire will benefit from it. In fact we will be worse off due to reduced tourism, costs associated with health problems due to coal dust and loss of businesses who will not wish to locate in the employment zone so close to the mine site and potential jobs associated with these businesses. It is estimated that 6000 people could be employed by businesses in the employment zone.

Regards,



Sharon Salmi
Concerned resident and landcare volunteer
Copy to Frank Sartor

The Stop Korean Coal Mining committee is a group of local residents trying to stop the building of a massive coal mine near Blue Haven. It is working with Wyong Council and another protest group known as Australian Coal Alliance. The mine site is owned by the Korean company Kores Coal.

We believe that the biggest risk posed by the mine is the health risk to young children from fine particles of coal dust entering the deep tissue in the lungs. This dust will be carried by the wind from both the mine loader and the trains transporting the coal. It will reach schools and homes both around the mine site and along the rail line to the coal loader at Newcastle

The mine processing plant and loading facilities will be less than 3 kilometres from most of the houses and the primary school at Blue Haven. The mine is dangerously close to tidal creeks which flow directly into Budgewoi Lake. The residents will suffer from

- Dust and associated health problems from the movement and transport of coal from the mine
- Noise and dust from trains carrying coal along the new rail loop for the mine to be built west of Blue haven
- A large drop in real estate values which will make it difficult even to sell up and move
- Pollution of the nearby lakes and tidal creeks by both coal dust and toxic chemicals generated by the mining
- Problems with the water supply caused by both subsidence and dust

We are trying to get as many people affected by the mine to protest to the New South Wales Government.

*Individual
Submission to the
State Gov. from
Ken Scales; one
of our members.*

Inquiry into Impacts of Coal Mining in Wyong LGA

INTRODUCTION

My name is Ken Scales and I live with my wife in the last part of Blue Haven subdivided and sold by Landcom which is closest to the proposed coal mine. During the purchase of my land I made inquiries about mining through the Mine Subsidence Board as advised by my Solicitor. I was told that mining south of the general line of Roper Road would not be an issue and Landcom assured me that this was a pristine area for living. No one mentioned that we would be getting the added bonus of a huge Coal Loader just up the road.

I prepared and submitted my original submission as an individual with no prior knowledge of this proposal. I found out about the proposed mine and enquiry after I attended a public meeting held in the Blue Haven Community Centre. I am just a surprised and angry local and I have since joined the SKCM group. I intend using my technical knowledge and experience to assist all the groups formed to oppose this mine particularly in the use of the vast multitude of Acts of Parliament and Statutory Regulations which govern the ownership and mining of coal in NSW. I am very skilled in the area of technical and legal research and I have learned more about the coal industry and the laws which affect it every day, as I prepared for this enquiry

I recently retired from the NSW public service after spending my last 25 years in management and senior technical roles. I finished my career in the Land and Property Information Section of the Department of Lands. During my last 5 years I worked in the Spatial Information Services and Information Management Units. My earlier years were spent in the Land Titles Office which was attached to various larger Departments. Most of my career involved ensuring compliance with statutory requirements. I also had considerable experience in formulating legislation and assisting in the preparation of court matters.

I completed three TAFE Certificates and over fifteen private courses which gave me certified skills in Town Planning, Surveying, Digital Mapping, Information Technology, Computer Aided Drafting, Risk Management and ISO Accreditation just to name a few.

I have acquired a very detailed knowledge of both railroads and mining over many years, through members of my family, who worked in the coal industry and through model railroading. I am also a member of a railroad museum. I have spent huge amounts of time studying how both railroads and mines work in the real world.

My real focus in all the matter I have submitted on Risk Management. During my career I was trained in Risk Management and as a manager it was a key part of all my business decisions.

I have submitted my final submission to clarify and highlight the more important matters I spoke about in my oral submission to the panel and my conclusions from the submissions I listened to at the hearing. I have set it out in accordance with the terms of reference.

Impact of coal mining under Mardi Dam catchment area on Central Coast Water Supply

a) Benefits to the water supply from mining are

- Money received from royalties would help pay for new Hunter Dam

- Money received from royalties could pay for desalination plants

b) Risks to the water supply are

- Reduction in storage capacity through subsidence causing water loss because of cracks in dam floor or its immediate upper catchment, similar to the problem with the Cataract Dam
- Reduction in ability of catchment area to trap water due to overall subsidence effects
- Reduction in volume of water available from underground water table due to subsidence
- Loss of water because of subsidence damage to water mains within area affected by mining
- Damage to the new pipeline between Mardi and Mangrove dams if subsidence exceeds design specifications allowed for in design of pipeline.

c) Critical issues to consider

- Hunter dam is a minimum of 10 years away, will be very expensive and will have great difficulty in satisfying an Environmental Impact Study. Current strategies seem to suggest water tanks and better recycling are a better solution and are more cost effective.
- Compensating for any major damage to the water supply caused by mining in an area already at Level 4 restrictions will have an *immediate impact on all NSW ratepayers just to restore the status quo*. It would probably require a very large grant from the NSW government to build large desalination plants in the shortest possible time. The cost of short term disaster relief would negate the economic benefits from royalties to the wider community
- Despite all the assurances presented that practices and procedures are now much better and the geology of the area is different to areas such as Cataract River, virtually all mining in the area has produced unpredicted results with cracking under waterways and lakes. Not all drunk drivers kill people when they drive a car. But experience proves that they often do and the risk is too high to allow them on the road. My experience in assessing risks indicates this is similar. If it has happened continuously in the past it will happen this time no matter how we do the paperwork, bonds and approvals. The consequences are severe, very costly and not reversible.

Environmental Impacts of underground coal mining

General Impacts on Drinking Water Supply

a) Benefits to the water supply from mining are

- Money received from royalties would help pay for new Hunter Dam
- Money received from royalties could pay for desalination plants
- Water pumped from the mine could be desalinated and used by nearby industry.

b) Risks to water supply

- Coal dust would have a negative effect on future installation of water tanks to existing dwellings. Public confidence in the overall strategy would be destroyed by perception from bad publicity, drastically reducing its effectiveness.
- Coal dust would reduce the opportunities for water recycling projects, particularly from storm runoff.

c) Critical issues to consider

- Extensive investigation has indicated that current strategies using water tanks and improved recycling, including stormwater, are a major component and one of the most cost effective solutions to improve the water supply. The only alternative currently available for this element of the overall water strategy is large scale desalination. This is very costly and can have negative effects on greenhouse gas emissions through high electricity use

Subsidence Impacts

a) Benefits from Subsidence

- Nil

b) Risks from Subsidence

- Damage to main water supply, water supply catchment and associated major infrastructure
- Damage to electrical transmission lines and supporting towers carrying power to Sydney
- Damage to existing properties not constructed to withstand subsidence.
- Damage to properties built to withstand certain levels of subsidence if these levels are exceeded
- Damage to existing roads, bridges, local power supply infrastructure and sewer pipes

c) Critical issues to consider

- The risk of damaging the electrical transmission lines and supporting towers carrying power to Sydney is probably medium to low. However subsidence is both vertical and horizontal together with strain. These towers are very close where they cross the centre of the area to be mined. They are critical to the Sydney supply and could cause the entire grid to shut down if there were a very large subsidence event. The results would be absolutely catastrophic involving transport, food, communications and involve loss of life through failures of medical equipment. The cost to NSW could be many billions of dollars. The risk of horse influenza was also low a few months ago and all the paperwork and systems were there to prevent it.

Economic Impacts

a) Economic benefits from mining

- Money received from royalties would help pay for a wide range of community services and infrastructure across NSW
- Around 250 direct jobs and 750 indirect jobs will be created
- Money received from exporting product improves balance of payments for the whole country

b) Negative Economic effects of mining

- The loss of real estate value could impact on the wider community if a class action were launched against the NSW government. Based on price differences in similar coal affected areas in Newcastle there are over 2200 homes in Blue Haven which would drop an average of \$50000 in value if the mine is built. A class action against the NSW government to recover this lost asset value would cost NSW 110 million dollars. If this were extended for the 25000 homes in the surrounding area that are less affected for a drop of \$30000 a class action would cost NSW 750 million dollars. This money would have to be found quickly while revenue from the coal royalties would be generated slowly.
- The cost of damage to infrastructure would have to be met by the wider community through the NSW government. This is a very large mine in a medium density population area and costs involving infrastructure damage would be astronomical compared to most other current mining areas like the Hunter and Illawarra regions. If we take the risk we are really putting big money on the table compared to previous projects we are using as a guide
- There will be jobs lost in local industries like Awnings, Swimming Pools, Built in Wardrobes, Kitchens, House Extensions, Landscaping, Paving and Concreting, just to name a few if real estate values drop.
- There will be jobs lost in the local building industry if real estate values drop
- Reduction in property values will deter future subdivision and major projects in the area destroying more future jobs
- Mining will deter new financially independent retirees moving into the area destroying more future jobs
- Mining will drive away industry from the new adjoining industrial area with a possible loss of 6000 jobs
- Coal trains considerably increase the cost of rail maintenance because of their weight. Wear on the rails and roadbed damage and subsidence are two of the major costs to railroads
- Coal trains are slow, cumbersome and more prone to breakdowns compared to the passenger and fast long distance freight trains using the line from Wyee to Newcastle. There are only two tracks from Wyee to Newcastle compared with four in the Hunter Valley where coal trains are separated from most of the other traffic.
- Damage to vegetation from changes in substructure and the underground water table will destroy most of the industry in the valleys which is based on agriculture. This will cost jobs

- Damage to the eco-systems of the lakes and creeks feeding into the lakes will damage the tourism and recreational industries such as fishing and boating. Again this will cost jobs.

c) Critical issues to consider

- The cost associated with damage to infrastructure is astronomical even in comparison with the huge amounts received in royalties
- The cost associated with the loss to the state for a successful class action for drop in home values could be astronomical even in comparison with the huge amounts received in royalties.
- This money to fix a disaster resulting from the mining would have to be found quickly while revenue from the coal royalties would be generated slowly
- The loss of up to 6000 future jobs from the adjoining industrial area would be a major blow to the State Plan strategy of creating new employment on the Central Coast
- The loss of jobs in agriculture, reduced tourism, recreational activities such as fishing and boating would be a further major blow to the State Plan strategy of creating new employment on the Central Coast
- The chances of a major rail accident increase dramatically when slow moving coal trains are mixed with fast passenger trains. A major recommendation from any inquiry into a serious accident involving a coal train would almost certainly be to quadruple the tracks similar to the Hunter at great cost to the state. Once it happens we cannot go back and have to pay to fix it just like Granville and Waterfall.

Dust and Noise Impacts

a) Dust and Noise Benefits from mining

- Nil

b) Dust and Noise Damage from mining

- Health damage particularly from small particles which lodge in deep lung tissue. Children and the elderly are more at risk
- Psychological damage to nearby residents from continual noise particularly at night. If drugs are used to alleviate these problems it places further strain on medical system
- Damage to properties from dust
- Drop in real estate values. This may lower socio – economic profile of the area and increase local crime in an district which currently does not have or require a close police presence
- There are 5 schools close to the mine and another 4 close to the railway tracks between the mine and the coal loader at Newcastle. The cost of protecting the 5 near the mine and moving the 4 near the railway tracks would be very high

c) Critical issues to consider

- Effects of very small particles of coal dust on deep lung tissue are well known and similar to asbestos. This is a similar situation to James Hardie when the effects of asbestos became known and the Company chose to ignore the risks. In spite of what Kores say about complying with government air quality guidelines this would not solve the problem. There is no published data by the EPA on the contents of particulate matter less than 10 micrometres in diameter. The Asbestos that was mainly responsible for serious health problems were the particles less than 10 micrometres in diameter that affected deep lung tissue. You could probably mine and store asbestos at Blue Haven and pass the government air quality guidelines that Kores continually refers to. Currently there is no published EPA 24 hour monitoring done on dust emissions in the area. There is some done by Kores. This also means there is no independent baseline data available for levels or types of dust emissions in the area. This is a litigators dream. In the case of James Hardie the compensation was in the billions. Litigation payouts in the future could follow the USA where a single payout could be in the hundreds of million dollars. Putting a mine this close to a residential area where a government agency was the developer is not a risk that can be managed.
- Measures to protect school children would be very expensive. Media and political pressure to protect children is difficult to resist and measures have to be taken regardless of cost

Summary

There are 4 reasons why this mine is being considered, They are money, more money, a few jobs and more money.

There are 4 reasons why it should not proceed. They are damage to the environment, damage to the water supply, the cost of repairing the damage it will do and community ethics.

There are few examples of mines that do not damage the environment particularly on the central coast. Just based on experience and the data presented to the enquiry it is almost certain this one will be no different. Very little of the damage from previous mining has been cleaned up.

Damage to the water supply cannot be fixed. In the short term we may even be reduced to carting water from Sydney or the Hunter by rail if we damage Mardi Dam. Even large scale desalination is only possible if we can supply enough electricity from the local grid.

Wyong LGA contains a very small percentage of the population of NSW. Any catastrophe will have to be paid for by the wider community who benefit from the revenue the mining generates. If you cannot manage the economic risks you do not go there. That is why company directors can now be jailed for their decisions.

The biggest single point to make in all this is the ethics. It makes a block of land from Landcom seem like buying a car from one of those dodgy car dealers we see on TV. How many sick or dead people are allowable so that the people of NSW can enjoy

the increase in living standard provided by the extra money generated by the royalties? Are just a few very sick or dead children who develop respiratory disease from fine particles of coal acceptable? Is one too many? This mine is an immoral act committed against a local community for money. It breaks down the ethics on which western democracy is based. Right and wrong become merged. If you want the extreme version of this look no further than Iraq

Elected leaders of our society must display the highest level of ethics and decency. You cannot poison someone in their own home with fine particles of coal dust and then convince them that they are at grave risk if they speed on the freeway. I expect my elected community leaders to follow a high standard of ethics and decency. I do not expect to be sold out for 30 pieces of silver to a Korean coal company.

Ken Scales