



6th. November, 2017

Planning Assessment Commissioners, Mr. D. Johnson, Mr. A. Hutton and Dr. P. Williams,  
Wallarrah 2 Coal Project,  
Commission Secretariat,  
Level 3,  
201 Elizabeth Street,  
SYDNEY.  
N.S.W. 2000

Dear Sirs,

I have previously made submissions, expressing my strong opposition to the Wallarah 2 Coal Project, to both the Director of Planning Services, at the Department of Planning and Environment and a previous Planning and Assessment Commission, of which both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Hutton were members. I outlined my reasons for urging a refusal of the previous applications by the Wallarah 2 Coal Project in those submissions and understand that those documents are available to the present Commission members and so I need not reiterate the grounds for my opposition in this current submission. I will however state that my concerns, as expressed in these earlier submissions, remain current.

Although I note that all speakers at the Planning Assessment Commission meeting, held on 3rd. November were, on this occasion, speaking against the proposal I am sure written submissions in support will be made. From my point of view, by not speaking publicly those favouring the application have denied me and others of the opportunity to comment on or perhaps refute the grounds upon which they base their support.

It concerns me that many people of the Central Coast are of the belief that permission has already been refused, after the last Planning Assessment Commission meeting, and will not therefore voice their opposition to this project at this time. I suggest that the strong opposition of the people of the Central Coast may be read in recent electoral results for the State Parliament of New South Wales. Following a public promise by the then Premier, flanked by all Liberal candidates for Central Coast seats, all sporting "WATER NOT COAL" red tee-shirts, that approval **would not be given** to the Wallarah 2 Coal proposal, every seat for the Central Coast was won by the Liberal candidate. However the "no ifs, no buts" promise failed to materialise and at the following state election all but one sitting Liberal member in Central Coast electorates lost their seat. An indication that opposition to this project is not only from the people of the Wyong Valleys and areas in the immediate vicinity of mining and coal loading activities but across the Central Coast region.

The areas of Blue Haven and San Remo, which will be severely and adversely effected by the coal loader, for reasons given in previous submissions, sited on the edge of the village of Blue Haven, are areas classified as low socio-economic areas and as such some of the residents either remain uninformed of the proposal or do not understand the effects of having a coal loading facility "next door" to their homes and the schools their children attend. Certainly there are others who, although they oppose the proposal, lack the capacity to express their disapproval of the Wallarah 2 Coal Project for varying reasons. Others,

including members of the wider community, either lack the confidence or are too intimidated to make a submission. I have received verbal thanks from various people as they consider that I am expressing an opposition to the Wallarah 2 Coal Project that they are unable or unwilling to do.

The Wallarah 2 Coal group acknowledge that subsidence and pollution will occur but apparently do not consider such events to be a problem. I assure you, gentlemen, that we, who live on the Central Coast, do not hold such a view. The increasing urbanisation of the Central Coast sees our natural environment diminishing and therefore reduces nature's ability to overcome, mitigate or at least survive such pollution events. We are in a position to lose what is irreplaceable and in some instances even unknown. Wallarah and Spring Creeks at this time continue to be the habitat of the native water rat, now commonly known as Rakali (*Hydromys chrysogaster*). According to aboriginal lore, as I have been given to understand, where there are water rats or Rakali there will be platypus. Whilst the platypus, a protected native animal, has not been documented in the Wallarah or Spring Creeks they are known in both the Wyong River and the Ourimbah Creek systems. That pollution of the Wallarah Creek and Spring Creek systems will occur is granted by the Wallarah 2 Coal group and as a result of the water flow patterns such pollution will possibly be carried upstream from the pollution sites to areas where it is possible that platypus may still exist. With decreasing habitats for our native animals surely this is yet another reason to resist such a short term project, as the Wallarah 2 Coal Project, in favour of preservation of our environment and endangered native wild life.

From my attendance at various meetings it seems that the only benefit that may be derived from the Wallarah 2 Coal Project is based on financial/economic grounds. The projected figures have been questioned and deemed to be highly inflated by people who understand these matters far better than I. Considering the life span of the Wallarah 2 Coal Project is given as approximately twenty five years and is anticipated to provide employment for only four hundred people I sincerely question the net benefit which may accrue if the project is given approval.

The jobs available will probably be filled by experienced mine workers, who have either lost their jobs or have had their working hours limited, due to either closure, "moth-balling" or reduction of output from mines in the Hunter region, to our immediate north. The prospect of employment opportunities for local people therefore seems to be overstated by the proponents of this project. There appears to be no consideration to the inevitable loss of jobs arising from probable pollution of land, water and water ways as a result of mining and coal loading activities. The mine may offer employment for a mere twenty five or so years but the jobs and business that will be lost from the effects of pollution and subsidence are those that would be sustainable and provide continuing employment for many years into the future. It may be argued that the increasing health problems of the local people, which are known to accompany mining activities, could necessitate employment of more staff in the health sector. However as this sector is heavily funded from the public purse this would be a liability to the state, commonwealth and community rather than a benefit.

I found that in trying to ascertain information, from the Department of Planning and Environment's web site, that there were times when I and another were unable to pass the opening screen. Where I was able to obtain other information I found it concerning that many of the issues were marked as "addressed", yet I was unable to ascertain how such

concerns were to be addressed by the Wallarah 2 Coal group. This successful prevents one from questioning or challenging the methods proposed to address areas that have obviously been acknowledged as areas of risk.

I sincerely question how approval can be given to a proposal that has been under challenge for the past twenty years and now has so many "conditions" attached as to be impracticable from any reasonable view point.

The New South Wales State Government has already set a precedent in the "buy back" of two coal mining licences, another option that we have seen unfulfilled at this time with the Wallarah 2 Coal Project. Gentlemen, your rejection of this current application we hope would encourage the "buy back" of the Wallarah 2 Coal Mining licence. With all the conditions attached at this time the cost of this buy back should surely be at a discounted price to the public purse.

On Friday you heard and received submissions from people with greater knowledge than I have and were given information, much from credible and reputable sources, to support their arguments. I found myself in agreement with the views expressed by the speakers and can only endorse their pleas to have this proposal rejected.

The Wallarah 2 Coal Group cannot categorically guarantee that the vital water catchment and aquifer of the Wyong Valleys will not be damaged through the proposed mining activities. As the Wyong Valleys water is currently the primary source of potable water for the Central Coast region and if required as a supplementary supply for Hunter water it is essential that it is not put at risk. I therefore remind you of a statement by Greg Hunt, the Federal Minister for Innovation, Industry and Science that "we can never take risks with water". As any damage will undoubtedly be irreversible then I hold that you would be justified in declining approval on this basis alone. Therefore I consider that, in the interest of our future and that of the area it behoves you, gentlemen, to refuse approval of the proposal.

Unfortunately we are assured of subsidence, pollution of land, air and water as well as an increase in health problems, especially for those living in the immediate areas of activity associated with the proposed Wallarah 2 Coal Project. In view of these negative aspects, together with the prospect of water issues and the dubiousness of financial/economic benefits I most sincerely, ardently and respectfully implore you to reject this proposal and give relief to the people of the Central Coast from the dire threat of the Wallarah 2 Coal Proposal. The Wallarah 2 Coal Project has been a threat over our lives and well being, like the sword of Damocles, for the past two decades; it is beyond time to sheathe and lay it to rest thereby enabling the people of the Central Coast to resume their lives with the usual degree of an assured future for themselves, their children, their grandchildren and future generations and the environment in which they live..

Yours sincerely,



M.K. Baxter.