

**Ken Greenwald**

**Speaking notes for PAC Hearing, Wallarah 2 Mine Proposal ,**

**Friday November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017, Wyong Golf Club**

This is the sword of Damocles proposal - once approved permanently swinging over the heads of the 333000 people that live on the Central Coast, the third largest urban area in NSW. A population that is over 100,000 more than the Northern Territory but the water catchment of the Central Coast is so small it would be a blip on the Northern Territory map.

But this is the chosen spot for the Wallarah 2 mine right bang smack in the middle of the water catchment for our growing metropolis.

If you took a picture in the Yarramalong Valley you would say, so what, there is no major development here!

But that is the thing about water catchments no major development is meant to be there above or below.

No currently planned or future proposed longwall panels should have any part in a in our water catchment area.

The days of mining the Burratorang Valley, Avon and Cataract Rivers have surely gone this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In any case previously mined catchments had very large areas. The Sydney Catchment Area is 16,000 km squared. We could only wish to have such a large catchment but such areas are NOT a precedent for our water catchment area quite the opposite. The Central Coast Catchment is so small it must be carefully managed with especially with no major large alternative feeds to replace those lost.

Water is the resource in Central Coast valleys and it is a resource the coast will need at infinitum but in reality a very scarce resource. No value can be placed upon it and the value surely would negate and value to the community from any short term coal project.

The risk from this project is recognised in the report. The Catchment is made up of water flows supplied primarily from the Wyong River and a major ground water system in the same valley that supplies agriculture as well as the coast's water supply. Both interlinked and both need to be guaranteed to be protected.

The water supply system has really just been built, just been finalised as reliable, able to be stored, pumped and extended. Far different than before the drought of the early 2000's when water was scarce very scarce. But the whole system is reliant on the Wyong River and the Valley's ground water flows.

To approve a mine in this area now in my mind is unacceptable. The Coast has spoken in fact it screamed they needed water especially during the long last drought. No one yelled we want coal, in fact during the period they did yell that they did not want gas extraction or coal mining in these same valleys.

The Community was very loud when the first application for the Wallarah 2 mine was proposed in a larger but similar area. The community wanted water not coal and the mine was rejected by the minister in 2011. There were 220 objections at that time.

Much has changed the population has grown and the area is largely suburban relying on the now completed water supply system based on the Wyong River and its catchment as its major resource.. The Central Coast is a growth region and those people simply need as they say Water not Coal.

The draft report states that there must be guarantees that the mine will have no net impact on the potential catchment yield.

Well the only way this can be really guaranteed is for the application in my opinion to be assessed as a refusal it will be too late if an unforeseen incident does cause an impact on the catchment, its reliability, its yield or possibly its quality.

No condition, no clause, no words can really guarantee a fix. This is not a building that can be rebuilt this is a natural water system.

Any risk no matter how small, any risk on this small catchment supplying such a large urban area is too high a price to pay. In my opinion too much of a risk to much of a sword swinging long term over the heads of the whole population of the Central Coast, a population who will be here long after any mine has left.

This mine is a special case that puts up problems that have been recognised in the draft report.

So much so the conditions proposed for the applicant appear very onerous, but this actually highlights the fact that if these conditions are needed.

Plus the cost benefit the project will deliver still requires clarification after so many years as asked for in the commission's report.

Then there really is only one outcome that protects the community and protects the real asset of the valley its water. That is in my opinion is for the commission to refuse the application, because coal should not be mined in the valley for the reasons already given. The water catchment should be protected from mining for the benefit of the public of today and tomorrow.

Let's continue to put the focus on building the Central Coast and guaranteeing a risk free catchment and water system because as proven we will need every drop.