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## MEDIA RELEASE



### “National’s must champion policy on open cut mining”

The NSW National’s have a clear policy on open cut mining, namely that a 5km buffer zone apply to villages and towns in NSW. Community groups are calling for action that champions the policy in the Lithgow Region.

In a submission around strategic land use policy in NSW, the NSW Nationals stated:

*“4.0 Buffer Zones –Widen from 2 km to 5 km for open cut mines  
The Nationals submit that the proposed 2 kilometre buffer zone around SALs be extended to 5kilometre for future open cut mines and that a 5 km buffer zone apply to villages, towns and Critical Industry Clusters.”*

“It is early days regarding companies in Lithgow that are proposing large scale, open cut coal mining. In the Hunter however, where it has a long history, it has caused much environmental and social damage for the community.

“The local Member for Bathurst, Paul Toole, has the opportunity to champion the National Party’s sound policy which provides a definitive barrier between towns like Cullen Bullen and open cut mining operations. This would help a great deal to prevent future conflicts and inconsistencies in planning.

“George Souris, National Party Member for the Upper Hunter has seen the issues open cut mining presents to the community and the benefits of applying a buffer for towns,” says Justin McKee.

In an interview with the Global Mail, June 2012, George Souris raised a private member’s statement opposing the renewal of GRL’s exploration license:

*“The possibility that future mining will occur in such close proximity to the township and closely settled areas is creating great anxiety and uncertainty and will undermine the development and growth of businesses,”*

*“Tourism to our area contributed \$28 million to the local economy last year and has been growing strongly for many years now. This long-term sustainable industry is now under threat.*

*“Future mining within the boundaries [of these explorations] will seriously damage the scenic and social features that define the character and appeal of the region.”*

“The Coalpac Consolidation Project presents an extremely similar conflict for the residents of Cullen Bullen, the Lithgow Region’s tourism and the mining industry. The difference here is George Souris actively championing the policy of his party,” says Mr. McKee

“While the Member for Bathurst Paul Toole is attempting to stay unbiased and not be seen to interfere with the planning process, can he realistically remain unbiased and honour party policy?” asks Mr. McKee.

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Link to National Party submission:

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=oD0cOCtdCOc%3D&tabid=205&mid=1081&language=en-AU>

Link to Global Mail article: <http://www.theglobalmail.org/feature/the-race-to-mine-the-hunter-valley/268/>