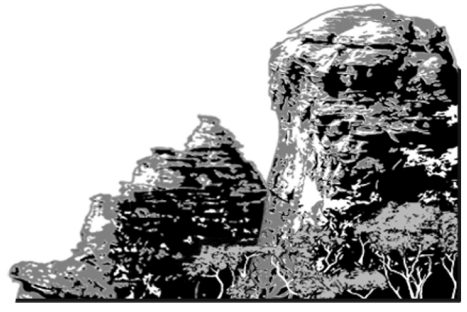




# Protect the Gardens of Stone

“Say NO to open cut mining!”



Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2012

MEDIA RELEASE: For immediate release

## “Coalpac following an age old formula”

Blue Mountains Conservation Society campaigner Justin McKee has warned Cullen Bullen residents to be wary of Coalpac employing ‘age old’ mining company tactics to win over the region in a bid to forge ahead with its devastating open cut mining project.

At a Cullen Bullen community forum regarding the controversial ‘Coalpac Consolidation Project’, held on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February, Mr McKee said Coalpac was following an age-old formula to divide and conquer.

“The process any mining company will follow to divide and then conquer a community is age old and I’ve witnessed this in the Hunter Region time and time again,” Mr McKee said.

“First a company will employ the nicest person they can possibly find to be the Community Relations Officer to forge local relationships. The company will then go about understanding exactly what the local issues are, create local community opinion leaders while buying up land and offer the loudest people in the community either jobs or above market rate sums for their property and demand they sign confidentiality agreements. All the while the company will claim the middle ground in all its communications so that others’ opinions seem radical. Finally, the company will sett about marginalising everybody else so that the community is left completely divided.

“We have to keep in mind is that the process in place that approves mining operations gives little consideration to social values or community function.

“The community is well and truly informed about the outstanding natural values of the Ben Bullen State Forest and appreciate that ripping it up will negatively impact their health and lifestyle. There is a clear understanding that an open-cut mine operating within a few hundred metres of their town will deliver a bleak future.

“It’s laughable to see Coalpac Pty Ltd announcing in the media its pithy \$5,000 donation to the Cullen Bullen Rural Fire Service. In October 2010, The Australian reported Melbourne’s Liberman family is planning a sale of its Cullen Valley and Invincible Colliery operations that could fetch \$420 million.

“Environment groups around the state, the NSW ALP, the Greens, Lithgow City Council and the majority of local residents object to the open-cut proposal and want mining in the area to be kept underground. Coalpac is on its own with its proposal – let’s hope the NSW Coalition Government’s process results in an outright rejection of the proposal.

“With the volume of signatures now received from Cullen Bullen residents in their petition that objects to the proposal, is it absolutely clear Coalpac is underestimating the opposition to its outrageous proposal.”

**Media Contact:** Contact Justin McKee on 0404 824 020

Referenced news article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/liberman-family-plans-to-sell-coal-mines/story-e6frg8zx-1225944402236>

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