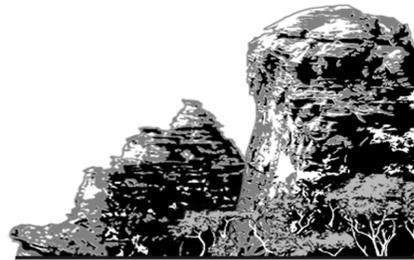




Protect the Gardens of Stone

“Say NO to open cut mining!”



Tuesday 7th August 2012

MEDIA RELEASE: For immediate release

NSW Health raises concerns over Coalpac Pty Ltd's proposal

Residents and environment groups have had their concerns around potential health threats from the Coalpac Consolidation Project, echoed by NSW Health. In its submission on the proposal, the agency identifies a number of long-term health effects from dust, emissions from blasting and noise effects for the people of Cullen Bullen and the local school.

Regarding air quality issues due to mining activities, the agency's submission states:

We have a number of concerns, particularly in relation to the long-term health effects from dust, emissions from blasting and noise effects.

...there is growing evidence that populations subject to elevated levels of coarse particulate matter conditions from mines have an increased risk of adverse health outcomes, particularly on the respiratory system.

... there is no evidence or explanation within the proposal of how (Coalpac will) conduct their operations if elevated dust levels are recorded and environmental conditions are unstable.

“The Blue Mountains Conservation Society has worked closely with residents from the Cullen Bullen community who had concerns and questions around this proposal,” says Justin McKee, Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

“The most commonly perceived threat were around threats to health, the kids attending Cullen Bullen Primary School and the livelihoods of residents.”

Residents' concerns were tabled with the legislative assembly in a petition tabled by the Local Member for Bathurst, Paul Toole in May 2012.

“In a public meeting this year, Coalpac delivered the same answer to questions from resident's regarding air quality, dust and noise. The company touted its undeveloped, unplanned and untested ‘real time monitoring system’ would save the day. We thoroughly support comments from the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District around this ludicrous notion:

that the proposed “real-time management system” reduce peak particulate matter emissions will have no impact on reducing the overall increase in long-term exposure to particulate matter for local residents.

“Coalpac is in no position to communicate to local residents that their is no basis for their concerns around health or livelihood at this stage. NSW Health have identified legitimate points for concern,” says Mr Justin McKee.

The Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District made a several recommendations on ‘Air quality issues due to blasting’ and ‘Noise and vibration’ that include:

- That a detailed health risk assessment of the potential impacts of blasting on Cullen Bullen is undertaken; and
- That noise blasting impacts on occupied houses and Cullen Bullen Primary School are reduced as far as feasible.

“Disturbing the environment to the degree Coalpac wishes too comes at a cost. The cost here is environmental and human health. It is disappointing that Lithgow City Council sold the people of Cullen Bullen out on this proposal,” concludes Mr McKee.

Link to NSW Health submission: <http://bit.ly/P3vhbX>

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