



Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Planning
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Lands
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

MEDIA RELEASE

22 February 2011

ILLAWARRA HAS INPUT INTO NSW COAL AND GAS STRATEGY

Residents, industry representatives and other stakeholders from the Illawarra and Southern Highlands are invited to have their say on the NSW Government's plans to prepare a NSW Coal and Gas Strategy.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, and Member for Wollongong, Noreen Hay, will address a **community and stakeholder forum at the City Diggers' Club on Thursday from 10am to 12.30pm.**

"This public consultation coincides with the release of a scoping paper about the preparation of the strategy which is on exhibition for 10 weeks until 15 April and is available on the Department of Planning's website," the Minister said.

"The Government hopes to develop a range of initiatives to provide greater certainty for stakeholders, communities, the mining industry and the environment.

"Community and stakeholder input will help us identify the local issues in regards to coal and gas mining, and is a key step which will guide the preparation of a more holistic NSW strategy."

The Illawarra forum will be the second of four being held in coal regions throughout the State with the Government already considering feedback provided at the first forum in Gunnedah, which was attended by around 200 people.

Mr Kelly said speakers raised issues including potential conflict between mining and agriculture, environmental impacts, housing affordability and a desire for genuine consultation throughout the preparation of the strategy.

"They also wanted the strategy to address how other industries and activities such as farming and agriculture can grow, rather than simply focusing on coal seam gas and coal mining," the Minister said.

Preliminary assessments indicate most of the activity in the coal and coal seam gas industries over the next 25 years will occur in the state's north, with the Illawarra region expected to experience only modest growth in coking coal output for the Port Kembla steelworks and exporting out of Port Kembla.

Mr Kelly said the NSW Government recognises however that much of this coal mining activity is expected to occur in locations with high conservation values and close to Sydney's drinking water catchments, and are issues which need to be carefully considered.

"In addition to this, there is ongoing coal exploration in parts of the Southern Highlands, and coal seam gas exploration and production occurring in parts of the Southern region," the Minister said.

Preparation of the Coal and Gas Strategy will be led by the Department of Planning, with assistance from Treasury, NSW Health, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), Industry and Investment NSW and Transport NSW.

A stakeholder reference group has also been established to assist in developing the strategy.

People wanting to attend the forum are required to register in advance at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/forums or phone 1300 305 695.