

Monday, 19 September 2011

Letter to the Editor of the Newcastle Herald

Your article about the Warkworth Expansion Project contains a number of inaccuracies that require clarification (“Wallaby Scrub’s stand against mining” – *Newcastle Herald*, 19/9/11).

The NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure is currently assessing an application by Coal & Allied to extend the Mt Thorley-Warkworth mine near Bulga.

As part of its application, Coal & Allied has prepared a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) which it wishes to enter into with Singleton Council. This VPA proposes that, should the expansion be approved, Council receive monetary contributions towards community enhancement projects and road management costs.

In undertaking its assessment, the Department has forwarded the draft VPA to Council for its consideration. This **is not** a proposal by the Department.

The Department is well aware of Council’s objections to the proposed expansion and has consulted closely with Council staff throughout the project’s assessment to resolve any concerns where possible.

However, **at no point** did the Department’s discussions with Council staff seek that “councillors reconsider their resolution” regarding the closure of Wallaby Scrub Road, as implied in the last paragraph of the article.

The Department is currently finalising its assessment of the project’s merits and Council’s views will be fully considered in the Department’s assessment report. Once complete, this assessment will be made public and forwarded to the independent Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) for a final decision.

Yours sincerely,

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NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure