



Media statement
5 February 2007

Wallarrah Project welcomes Independent inquiry

The announcement by Minister Sartor that an independent panel would inquire into proposals to mine coal in Wyong was welcome, the Manager Environment and Community for Wallarah 2 Coal Project, Peter Smith, said today.

"We have given a commitment to the community that the only proposal we would put before the government would be the one that safeguards the surface and underground water regimes," Mr Smith said.

"We believe that the inquiry will provide the community with added confidence that the water regimes can and will be safeguarded, which is very important, regardless of whether the region is in drought. "

"The panel process is part of the comprehensive and robust system for mining in NSW which involves extensive community consultation."

Mr Smith said that while a preliminary application had been lodged with the NSW Government there were still some months of work to be completed in engineering, environmental and economic areas before an application for development could be lodged.

"We are continuing our investigations and our consultation with the community providing information on many topics, including water, as it is finalised."

Mr Smith said the project team remained confident that a viable mine plan could be submitted and pointed out that the term viable did not solely refer to mining engineering outcomes but also to environmental and economic matters.

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