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Mine will contribute water Not deplete the aquifer

The proposed Wallarah No 2 coal mine is expected to be a net contributor to community water supplies rather than be any significant threat to local groundwater aquifers, the Environmental and Community Affairs Manager Peter Smith said today.

"We understand why people are concerned but the geology of this region is very different to those where groundwater has been affected. This will be a very deep mine and the water that will come out of the mine is not water that would otherwise be available from regional groundwater resources. Nor will this minor extraction of deep, saline groundwater encountered as a by-product of mining cause impact on the surface water supply system."

Mr Smith said the saline water encountered by mining the coal seam would be initially collected and used for dust suppression during construction and early operations. Thereafter, it is expected there would be surplus water which, after treatment, could be used by others and so reduce demands on the region's normal water supplies.

Mr Smith said the company had begun a process of providing up-to-date information to the community. This had included briefings to Wyong Council and the Community Liaison Committee. The company has been explaining how it has taken on board all the reasonable concerns of various stakeholders that it has consulted with over the nearly ten years of professional exploration and environmental planning work. Naturally, matters relating to water conservation and catchment management have been a high priority in project planning. This is how the company has been able to commit to becoming an active partner in water resource management.

Over the next few weeks a website will be launched and it would carry considerable information on mining processes and environmental matters. A community newsletter would also be distributed widely in a few weeks and as information came to hand it would be made available through briefings, the media, the website and newsletters.

"We appreciate that people need to understand what we are proposing and that takes time. At the same time it has to be understood that many studies are still underway and so some information remains incomplete. Even with a project such as this that offers substantial benefits, people initially can be reluctant to provide their full support if they have questions that need answers or if they become alarmed by inaccurate comments and scare stories that are promoted by activists."

"The best we can do is to provide balanced and clear information and be open to people's genuine questions."

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