



Mr Carl Dumbleton
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
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February 18, 2013

**Re: Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) Review of the
Coalpac Consolidation Project, Cullen Bullen, NSW.**

The PAC report on the Coalpac Consolidation Project was determined on 14/12/12. I am writing to support the recommendation “that the the project should not be approved” because, as stated in the Executive Summary, “when the merits of the project are considered as a whole, the benefits of the project are substantially outweighed by the breadth and potential magnitude of the impacts”.

The health impacts of the proposed mine on the residents Cullen Bullen is of particular concern. NSW Health advised the Commission that increases in dust levels (PM10) will lead to “increased morbidity and mortality in the Cullen Bullen community from respiratory and cardiovascular disease”. Further, that “the project cannot meet NSW air quality criteria at all residences” and “the Commission considers this to be a high-risk situation” (Executive Summary). Such advice cannot be ignored and these adverse health outcomes must be avoided.

The Ben Bullen State Forest is home to over 600 hundred native plants and animals, some of which are threatened to extinction. The project area contains thousands of ‘vulnerable’ Eucalyptus cannonii trees, and about 40 hectares of ‘critically endangered’ Box Gum Woodland. The Commission recognised “the high quality and species richness of the native vegetation present in the project area” (Recommendation 50). This unique habitat is characterised by pagodas which the Commission “considered to be internationally significant geological features some 250 million years old and worthy of total protection” (Executive Summary).

Rehabilitation is incapable of ever restoring this forest. I would endorse the Commission's statement that " given the considerable uncertainties concerning the likelihood of rehabilitation on this project area being capable of delivering a satisfactory biodiversity outcome, rehabilitation not be given credence as a mitigation strategy in the assessment" (Recommendation 54).

I restate my position that the Ben Bullen State Forest should be declared a State Conservation Area due to its high conservation values, preventing open cut coal mining operations but allowing underground coal mining.



Luke Foley MLC

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Shadow Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Shadow Minister for Planning and Infrastructure