



## **Greg Piper MP**

### **Member for Lake Macquarie**



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **MINISTER'S ANSWER AUGURS WELL**

Greg Piper, Member for Lake Macquarie, today won a battle in the war against surface mining in the City of Lake Macquarie. He was quick to praise the community's campaign against the now abandoned Olstan open cut and auger mine and its support for his Surface Coal Mining Prohibition (Lake Macquarie) Bill 2009.

In Parliament today Mr Piper was able to get the answer that the Government had previously refused to give on whether the proposed auger mine would be permissible under planning law. In Question Time today the Minister for Planning responded to a question by Mr Piper and disclosed for the first time that the Government had legal advice that the mine would not be permissible.

Today's question to the Minister follows on from a Freedom Of Information request that Mr Piper lodged yesterday with the Department of Planning. The FOI request seeks all legal and technical advice on the auger mine's permissibility under the government policy prohibiting open cut mining in Lake Macquarie.

"This information has been kept from community until now," Mr Piper said. "Through its silence the Government had kept a grey area over whether a further similar proposal could eventuate, but today's question has changed this."

"I conclude that this legal opinion would have been the Government's trump card against my Surface Mining Bill, but now I've flushed it out," Mr Piper said.

"With this new information on auger mining my surface mining Bill is even more relevant," he added. "The community deserves assurance that all forms of surface mining are prohibited in Lake Macquarie and that this will be guaranteed by an Act of Parliament."

"We don't want to see any more creative proposals to avoid the ban on open cut mining," Mr Piper said. "I will be consulting further with the Lake Macquarie community on pushing ahead with my Private Members Bill to win an iron-clad solution to the threat of surface mining."