



10 March 2009

## **OPEN DAY ON OPEN CUT IMPACTS**

Greg Piper, Member for Lake Macquarie, is encouraging the public to take an interest in the auger coal mine proposed for Lake Macquarie.

The Centennial Coal Company has proposed the mine, but it must be clarified whether it will avoid the prohibition on new open cut mining contained in State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007.

According to Mr Piper, the government announced the SEPP immediately after he declared his candidacy for the seat of Lake Macquarie, at a time when there was widespread community concern over the proposed Awaba Open Cut.

"The SEPP includes a ban on new open cut mining in the City of Lake Macquarie," said Mr Piper. "This auger mining can't proceed without the excavation of a significant pit. The effects on residential amenity of surrounding suburbs and the potential health risks for residents must be considered."

According to Mr Piper, about 70,000 people would have been within the 10km dust hazard zone of the Awaba open cut if it had proceeded. "This new proposal requires an open cut trench before the augering can start and I understand it would be within 700 metres of Blackalls Park" said Mr Piper.

"People need to be protected from dangerous mine dust," said Mr Piper. "The SEPP is meant to protect people from the hazards of open cut mining, so this open cut and auger operation must be considered carefully."

According to Mr Piper, Centennial Coal will be having an open day at Blackalls Park Public School on Saturday 14 March from 9:30am to 12:30pm.

"This mine would affect a lot of people," said Mr Piper. "I encourage anyone living near north Lake Macquarie to go to the open day this Saturday and see what is proposed."

"The affected suburbs within a 10km radius would even include Boolaroo, Speers Point, Warners Bay, Eleebana and Valentine" Mr Piper said.

"If this was approved for Blackalls Park it could happen anywhere in Lake Macquarie," he added.