



Greg Piper MP

Member for Lake Macquarie



MEDIA RELEASE

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Greg Piper Announces Bill to Ban Surface Mining

Greg Piper, Member for Lake Macquarie, today announced his Surface Coal Mining Prohibition (Lake Macquarie) Bill 2009.

The Private Members Bill will apply a simplified definition of underground coal mining to the Lake Macquarie local government area and it will prohibit all other forms of coal mining.

According to Mr Piper, this will achieve what the Government set out to do when it introduced the State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007.

“The Bill simply defines mining by its location – either underground or on the surface,” Mr Piper said. “This makes arguments about particular processes irrelevant and it removes technical or semantic arguments about large access pits.”

According to Mr Piper, the Bill is in response to the uncertainty of whether a recent contentious application for an auger mine near Blackalls Park was permissible or prohibited. The Bill will provide a clear definition and it will give much stronger protection than the existing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).

“The SEPP allowed debate on whether the recent proposal for surface auger mining was permissible. There were many requests for clarification that went unanswered,” Mr Piper said. “An Act of Parliament will provide the certainty that the SEPP didn’t.”

“Environmental damage and possible public health impacts from surface mining are huge concerns for people in this area,” Mr Piper added. “The Government intended the 2007 SEPP to protect against this, but a new Act will provide greater certainty.”