

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [NSW Productivity Feedback](#)  
**Subject:** Submission re Independent Planning Commission Review  
**Date:** Friday, 15 November 2019 4:21:15 PM

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Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the review of the Independent Planning Commission..

I feel very strongly that the IPC evaluation process should be maintained.

I live in the Illawarra and have attended several PAC hearings over the last decade, relating to new proposals for extensions to coal mines in the Illawarra and also applications for exploration of coal seam gas. I found these opportunities meant I was able to take an active interest in the process, especially important when many residents are concerned about potential conflicts of mining in our drinking water catchments. This surely is an example of what democracy is all about?

I attended the hearings for the Wollongong Coal Russell Vale Project of 2015 when the PAC commissioners rejected the proposal after thorough scrutiny. To have such scrutiny by the commissioners, who are distanced from the Planning Department and the proponent, is most necessary. This surely helps to balance the influence of the Minerals Council, for example, who are strong lobbyists in their own interests. It also helps to reduce risks of corruption which has been recognised by the ICAC.

Furthermore, I think the process should be made fairer, to encourage more community participation. eg Plenty of time should be allowed for accessing thorough perusal of the applications and reports. The call for submissions re the IPC was in a 2 week time frame which is not ideal. Time of day and place should also be taken into account to allow as many people as possible to attend the hearings.

As IPC public hearings extinguish legal appeal rights, it is really important that any interested member of the public should be allowed to address these meetings. I would think it likely that a point of view or evidence from a member of the community could highlight an issue possibly not thoroughly considered previously. eg Possible evidence of noise and pollution problems for residents.

Severe drought and catastrophic bush fires in NSW are making it clear that the effects of climate change are rapidly having serious consequences. Living in the Illawarra, I am particularly interested in the management of mining of our drinking water catchments, that are a vital part of the Greater Sydney Drinking Water Catchments, providing water to around five million people. So much damage and water loss has already been created. Any future risks must be evaluated very, very carefully and I believe anyone with concerns should be encouraged to participate in the evaluation process.

Thank you.

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