

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ó St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader

Heathcote Candidate stands up for Royal National Park

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Posted By Greg Petty ó Independent Candidate Heathcote

The Premier's "change of heart" to stop the Tillegra Dam in the face of overwhelming public condemnation of the government's flawed plans finally gives hope to the many thousands of Shire and Illawarra residents that care about their Royal National Park.

If the Premier feels some 97% of 2,700 submissions to stop the Tillegra Dam is sufficient, we eagerly await the Premier's decision to reinstate the equivalent 7d land zonation over the environmentally sensitive lands adjacent to Royal National Park, Garrawarra State Recreation Area and the Illawarra Escarpment.

Without the land review, Coal Seam Gas (Methane) cannot proceed and the threat to Sydney's Drinking Water will be eliminated!

Why would Wollongong City Council ignore over 95% against of 3,347 submissions rezoning and proceed to the Preliminary Report?

Why would Wollongong City Council ignore over 18,200 opposing submissions against the second round of submissions (Preliminary Report)?

Why would Department of Planning or Wollongong City Council ignore the 1994 Helensburgh Commission of Inquiry's findings that environmental assessments be conducted before any development?

Why would residents since the 1990's submit over some 40,000 submissions against?

Why has the National Parks Association Southern Region Secretary written letter after letter to the successive Labor governments seeking the extension of the Garrawarra State Recreation Area? The Woronora Rivulet is already dry and the Dhawarral creeks and streams are already showing contamination.

The precedent for community consultation in planning process was established by the Otford Protection Society Incorporated Planning Proposal over these very lands but Minister Kelly rejected it. Why doesn't Minister Kelly care about the Royal National Park, the world's oldest named National Park and its environs?

Premier, time has come. The opposition to rezoning of these 7d environmentally sensitive lands, the creation of 15 gas wells, a methane power station in Helensburgh (in the path of the 2001 bush fires no less), the threat of mining under the Sydney Water Catchment (Woronora Dam) is far too great for any person. The residents and community know it and have told the government in no uncertain terms and numbers, far greater than the Tillegra Dam.

Do the math's Premier. Tillegra stopped after 97% of 2,700 submissions. Wollongong City Council over 95% against of 3,347 and 18,200 against in the Preliminary Report, over 40,000 against since 1900's. What are you waiting for?

Premier, if these facts don't persuade you, maybe my announcement last Friday that I will stand as an independent candidate for Heathcote at the forthcoming March 2011 election will bring the issue to the ballot box.