

## WHERE IS THE TRANSPARENCY

It is of great concern how the Baillieu government and our own local councils can justify opening up [new allocations of coal in the Latrobe Valley](#) (Latrobe City and Wellington Shire division) when their own reports note increased subsidence trending significantly into the future.

Our coastal areas are already suffering with planning restrictions impacting on many areas of Gippsland mainly caused by offshore oil and gas production in Bass Strait.

Subsidence of about 2 m has been recorded over an area of several square kilometers near Morwell as a result of the existing open cut mines without even factoring in new coal based industry that both local and state government are actively endorsing.

So, if the Baillieu government grants these allocations to export coal, how are they going to prove to us in Latrobe Valley that they have assessed the ongoing and future environmental impacts given the falling water levels in this region over many years that have resulted in significant impacts with mine stability being the number one concern? So much so that there is a section in the [Mineral Resources \(Sustainable Development\) MRSD Act](#) specifically applying a levy for ***the purpose of providing measures designed to decrease geotechnical and hydrogeological risks to mine stability in the Latrobe Valley region coal mines.***

Yet, the Baillieu government pushes on ignoring all their own data, specifically the most recent report commissioned due to the freeway closure in Morwell last year from subsidence. This report is damning (it has been said) but has not been released to the public. Why?

Again, we need to ask the question of transparency as the Baillieu government wonders why there are so many FOI requests. Their answer is to just tighten the noose around our right to access appropriate information that ensures the decisions that this government make on behalf of our citizens have long term net community benefit without backroom dealing that allow all environmental checks to be bypassed.

Two of the coal allocations areas would require [river diversions](#); one of the areas would blanket Traralgon in coal dust whilst most of the area on offer is currently used for agricultural purposes. Heavy vehicle traffic will increase substantially on the rural road network, through townships to export facilities and road surface will further deteriorate. Increased mine water discharge will also further pollute the already poor condition of the Latrobe River and that of the Gippsland Lakes.

And don't forget that they can build a power station one kilometer from a residential house.

But what does the city centric Baillieu government care.

If Baillieu grants an allocation, he will also commit those landowners to years of uncertainty as currently exists with the Flynn group of farmers east of Loy Yang as they await their fate.