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MEDIA RELEASE

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Federal approval step towards significant environmental outcome

Coal & Allied says the Federal Government's approval of a project in the Lower Hunter is an important step towards achieving a significant environmental outcome for the region.

Coal & Allied today received Commonwealth environmental approval for a subdivision and residential development on a small section of land on the Wallarah Peninsula.

The approval imposes additional stringent consent conditions on Coal & Allied, which the company says it is committed to comply with.

General Manager Property Development, Keith Dedden, said Coal & Allied had received approval from the Federal Government under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act for its subdivision and residential development of approximately 100 hectares of Coal & Allied land at Gwandalan, Nords Wharf and Catherine Hill Bay.

"The proposed development is on just 11 per cent of Coal & Allied's landholdings in the area. The Commonwealth approval has a number of conditions attached. A key condition is that following final development approval from the NSW Government, Coal & Allied transfers the remainder of our land in the area – approximately 850 hectares, close to 90 per cent of our landholdings – to the NSW Government for permanent conservation.

"This development will deliver new homes, community services and associated infrastructure in an area that has been earmarked by the New South Wales Government's Lower Hunter Regional Strategy as one for future growth," Mr Dedden said.

"This will be a great environmental outcome for the Wallarah Peninsula, as it will help conserve endangered ecological communities and conserve threatened fauna and their habitats.

"Once finalised, these new conservation areas will complete the long sought-after Wallarah Peninsula conservation corridor that is identified in the Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan. It will provide a corridor between Lake Macquarie and the ocean, and close the gap between Wallarah National Park and Munmorah State Conservation Area. This will have the effect of conserving a green buffer on the South Wallarah Peninsula which will separate Newcastle and the Central Coast."

Mr Dedden said Coal & Allied was committed to achieving strong environmental and community benefits from this project.

"The Federal consent conditions ask that Coal & Allied prepares management plans for the conservation lands interface, and that we provide annual reports and independent audits of actions taken. It also asks us to protect the Charmhaven Apple, which is a tree endemic to the Central Coast region of NSW," Mr Dedden said.

"We are keen to work with the Commonwealth and the community to ensure these conditions deliver their environmental objectives.

"We look forward to progressing the regulatory process so that we can help to deliver significant environmental benefits to the region, along with the economic stimulus, new jobs and new housing that the development would create."

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Meanwhile, Coal & Allied continues to work with the New South Wales Department of Planning and the Department of Environment Climate Change and Water on the required planning and regulatory approvals required for this development.

Media Enquiries:

Alison Smith 07 3361 4223 / 0438 787 038