

Coal Projects in the Drinking water Catchments of Sydney and Wollongong

Refer also to: Appendix 1; Map of NSW Coalfields and Appendix 2; Map of Coal Projects Southern Coalfields; Appndix 3 is a recent MR from lock the Gate Alliance and Appendix 4 a collection of opinions from those who attended an Oatley Flora and Fauna field day in affected areas.

- 1. The Metropolitan Mine within the Woronora Dam catchment.** 25 longwalls were approved in 2008. Since then Flat Rock Swamp has been drained and is dead. Longwalls continue to advance towards the Dam under Waratah Rivulet which contributes 30% of its water yield. Many of its long pools have been drained dry, and its rocky bed has been spectacularly shattered. Where water remains, iron staining, slimes and methane bubbling are apparent. Peabody, the proponent, has filed for bankruptcy in the American courts. There are community concerns they will be unable to meet rehabilitation commitments.

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/woronora-reservoir-source-dries-up-longwall-coalmining-gets-blame-20140224-33d0h.html>

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/energy/top-coal-miner-peabody-files-for-bankruptcy-20160413-go5jsn.html>

- 2. Russell Vale UEP (formerly NRE1) within the Cataract Dam catchment,** audaciously proposed an untried multi-seam mining technology, and longwalls that would negatively impact of swamps and streams, and has been criticised by the NSW Dam Safety Committee, as it would come unacceptably close to the Dam wall.

The NSW PAC Inquiry has found of this proposal that; "***On the basis of all the information provided, the Commission is of the view that the social and economic benefits of the project as currently proposed are likely outweighed by the magnitude of impacts to the environment.*** "

"The Commission is of the opinion that from the information presented to it, these issues have not been satisfactorily resolved."

"The Commission finds that it is not satisfied that the project is consistent with the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) 2001 that it would have a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality in the catchment area. The magnitude of water loss is uncertain with the projected range from the proponent and Water NSW varying from minimal to 2.6GL/year. The Commission considers this is a high risk situation."

The proposal is yet to be rejected by the government, despite the fact that its proponent, Wollongong Coal " is arguably **not a viable and trustworthy** entity.

It has accidentally buried one of its Longwall machines recently, its parent company, Jindal Steel, has been non-compliant with law in both India and Australia, its mine has suffered recent roof collapses raising questions of worker safety, and it has retrenched much of its workforce. It is also struggling financially, and its operation has been described in respected business circles, as a 'stranded asset' .
<https://australianmining.com.au/news/environmental-defenders-say-wollongong-coal-not-fit-and-proper-person/>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-07/wollongong-coal-expansion-stranded-analyst/7304782>

3. The Dendrobium Project within **both the Cordeaux and Avon Dam catchments**. This huge project was approved in principle in 2008, before there was adequate awareness of the environmental impacts of mining. WaterNSW, the government agency responsible for drinking water delivery, have now taken a strong stand, and following the disclosed damage of 89 impacts that has so far resulted to swamps and streams within this project area, have announced that the further approval of SMPs (the detailed mine plans) for the next set of Longwall mines, presents an "unacceptable risk", to Sydney's drinking water.

The agency states "***it appears that mine subsidence from the first 3 longwalls in Area 3B is causing the diversion of significant volumes of surface flows into deeper aquifers and out of the surface storages used to support Sydney's drinking water supplies***". The proponent is Illawarra Coal, formerly a fully owned BHP subsidiary, but now part of South32, after BHP divested itself of its coal assets in the Southern Coalfield. They have incidentally admitted responsibility for gas releases in the Nepean River, near Douglas Park, following subsidence and cracking linked to their nearby Bulli Seam Operations. With the decline in coal prices, South 32 has recently announced the loss of around 300 of jobs in its Illawarra operations.

<http://www.nature.org.au/news/2015/12/government-report-confirms-damage-to-sydney-s-water-catchment/>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-25/south32-cuts-300-jobs-in-illawarra-region/7198856>

4. Wongawilli (Formerly Delta) a current with huge damaging potential project in both the **Cordeaux and Avon catchments**, also of Wollongong Coal.

Outside the drinking water catchment; Methane Releases in the Nepean

The Bulli Seam Operation originally proposed to mine for coal under 50 sq kms of the landscape at the southern and south-west of Sydney. Its final approval in 2011

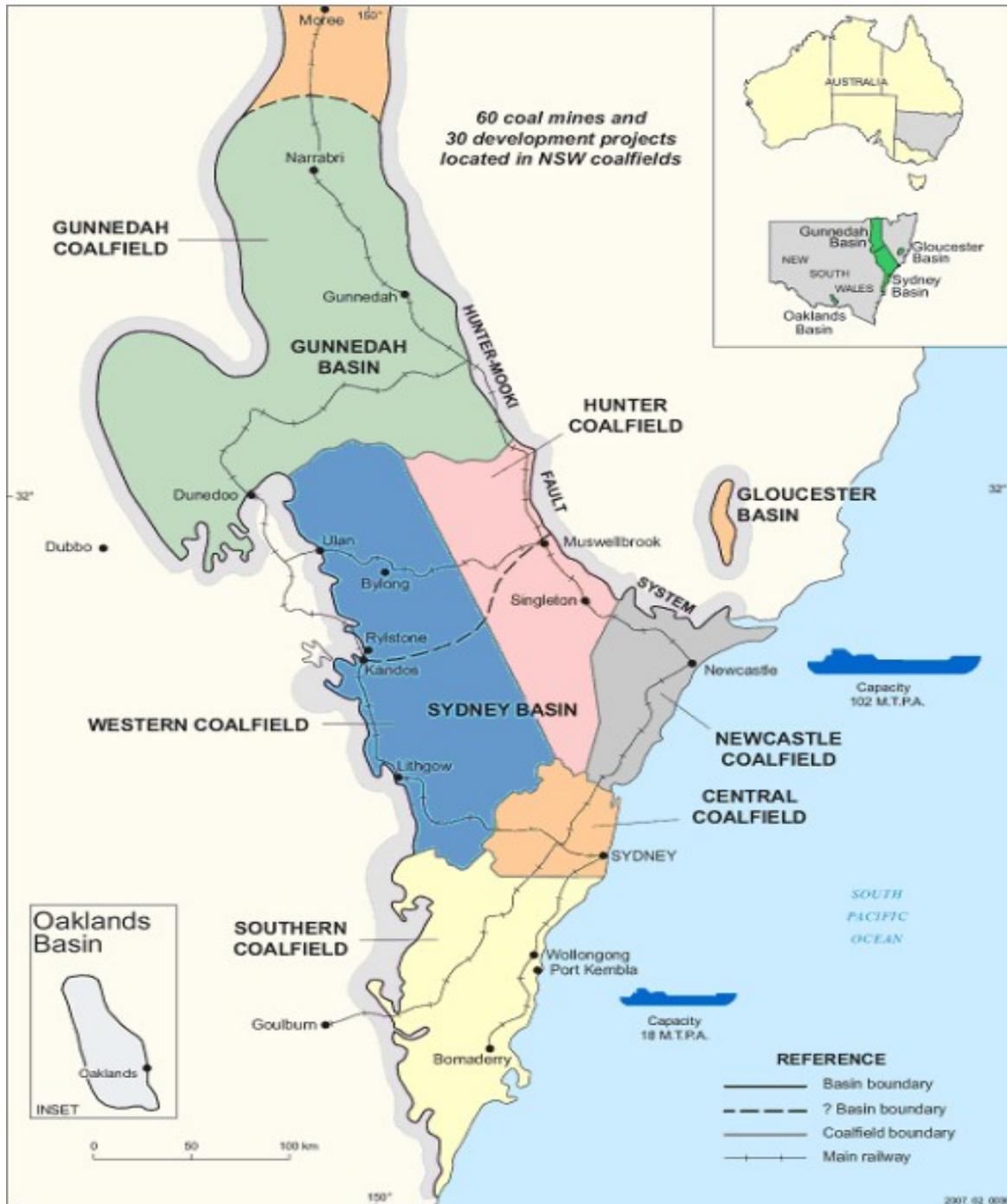
excluded 40% of the project area, called the Eastern Domain, enabling the area to be declared as Dharawal National Park. Longwall Mining is proceeding with approvals for approximately 75 mines in the western domain under rural areas and villages, and in some cases close to the Nepean River.

Recent utube and a Channel 7 new report have highlighted an ongoing problem of mine related methane gas releases. South 32 openly take responsibility, as they have mining approval and claim these methane releases are within predictions. It can be expected that they will be ongoing, for a very long time.

South 32 have been admitting gas releases in those Nepean reaches in reports on their website since 2008 (see Regulatory Report section, Nepean River impact reports 2012-13). Some are particularly close to the river. The next set of mines shift to Appin Area 9, which will be under Douglas Park village and railway, and close to the Nepean gorge once again.

Notes prepared by; Sharyn Cullis, m.0421 714 391. Email; go_river_@hotmail.com

Appendix 1; Coalfields of NSW



Appendix 2;

Appendix 3; MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 2 May 2016

Indian court rules that criminal corruption charges against billionaire owner of Wollongong Coal will go to trial

A special court on Friday (29 April) in New Delhi ruled that a criminal corruption case brought by India's Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) against Naveen Jindal and his company Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) will go to trial [1].

The case is significant for residents of the Illawarra as JSPL majority-owned company Wollongong Coal is trying to develop one of the most controversial coal mining projects in NSW, at Russell Vale near Wollongong.

"Given that corruption charges against the Indian owner of Wollongong Coal Ltd will now go to trial, the time has come for Minister Anthony Roberts to be transparent and decisive. Is this a fit and proper company to carry out risky mining in Sydney's Water Catchment? Surely the "fit and proper" legislation is not just for decoration," said Kaye Osborn, spokesperson for Illawarra Residents for Responsible Mining Inc.

Ramesh Agrawal - winner of a global environment prize known as the 'green Nobel' – visited NSW from his home in India four weeks ago to present evidence to Minister Roberts that Wollongong Coal is not fit and proper.

"After Friday's development and court order, Minister Anthony Roberts should not wait for a final decision of court. The Court found a prima facie case against Naveen Jindal and JSPL's associate companies. The charges are severe and no government should ignore them. This company is not fit and proper to operate in any part of the world," said Mr Agrawal.

A court document obtained by Lock the Gate sets out the prosecutor's case, alleging that a "deep conspiracy" was hatched with Naveen Jindal as "the central figure around whom the entire conspiracy revolved.

The Court heard that Naveen Jindal was the "sole beneficiary of the allotment of captive coal block in favour of the two companies". In echoes of ICAC findings in NSW, the Court heard that "it was purely on account of a criminal conspiracy hatched by various accused persons that the entire "Amardanga Murgadanga coal block" was allotted in favour of Naveen Jindal Group of companies."

The case against Jindal is part of a set of 52 cases in India where alleged collusion between government officials and private companies resulted in under-priced sales of coalfields. India's state auditor said in 2012 that without the Court's intervention cancelling corruptly allocated coal blocks, this would have cost India about \$33 billion in lost revenue.[1]

The Russell Vale coal-mine extension under a Special Area of Sydney's water catchment was criticised earlier this month by both Water NSW and the NSW Planning Assessment Commission as risking "unacceptable" impacts on Sydney's drinking water supply.

Media contact: Nic Clyde, Lock the Gate Alliance. Mob. 0438 282 409

Appendix 4;

Comments from Participants at the Field Inspection of Dams threatened by the the Dendrobium Coal Expansion; 1/5/16.

39 people participated on our Picnic at Cordeaux dam to protest about environmentally damaging longwall coal mining projects in the Metropolitan Drinking Water catchments. Their particular concern on that day was the proposal to extend the Dendrobium mining operations in the Cordeaux and Avon Dam catchments, despite the fact that so far this project has done the most harm yet seen in terms of both draining water yielding swamps and tributary dam streams.

Here is a selection of their comments.

Geoff Francis: "Australia is the only OECD country to permit longwall coal mining beneath publically-owned water catchments. This anomaly has arisen partly through technology outpacing regulation. It is really a third world standard of environmental management in what is supposed to be a first world country."

Robin Dickson: "Water is our most precious resource!"

Donald McGuire: "I find it almost beyond belief that any government would not only permit but actively encourage certain risk to our water."

Elaine McGuire "Without good water reserves there can be no good health"

Julian and Annette Sheen: "Longwall collapse means surface collapse too-our water goes down the drain.)

Yvonne Penn: "Water is more precious than coal, diamonds, gold etc. No waer no life. Please look beyond dollars and beyond the next 500 years. Future wars will be over precious water."

Vicy Bolling:" Longwall mining poses too great a risk to our water suopply. We cannot compromise our drinking water."

Graham Lalchere: "Why is our government the only one in the world to allow coal mining under its water catchment areas? Very short-sighted."

Heather Stolle:" You can't drink coal!"

Kim and Anne Wagstaff: "Undermining our water catchments is undermining our future. Water sustains life."

Pat Durman: "Plan for our future generations not profit."

Barry Durman: "There is no back-up plan, No Plan B, if we lose our water supply."

Marie and Des O'Connor: “Just realizing that making money for Mining companies is more important than our drinking water.”

Graham and Margaret Walters: “Australia is the driest continent. Potable water is essential for life and maintaining it is our top priority.”