

Ulan Coal Mine Modification 4

Slide Show Presentation to the Independent Commission Panel 19.6.2019

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## **Objection of concern re: Water Impacts on the Great Dripping Wall and the Goulburn River by Ulan Coal Modification 4**

### **Introduction:**

- Today you have heard the scientific evidence which underpins our community's concerns about the adverse Water impacts on the Goulburn River and the Great Dripping Wall should this modification be approved.
- I want to invite you on a journey of exploration from a different aspect. As you view the slides they will take you into the beauty of this special place. I will challenge you to imagine what the River Walk and the Great Dripping Wall would be like without Water.

### **Slides 1 – 7: Mining Impacts**

1. This First photo, taken long before Coal Mining started, shows the lush vegetation that existed at The Drip back in the 20's. *early 1900's*
2. We fast forward to 2017 to discover the headwaters of the Goulburn River in a sorry state. There was no surface flow near the Drip Picnic area and just murky puddles left along the river walk. Distressed local families who had brought their children to play in the cooling waters, as they have done for generations, called Mudgee District Environment Group.
3. It was found that Ulan Coal's desalination plant had broken down therefore the water releases had stopped.
4. There was an outcry in the local media for Ulan to take immediate action. Some commented that it was the drought not the Mines that had caused the river to dry up. Yet even in the worst drought it had never been so dry. From a local's perspective and long term knowledge this was not the natural state of the Goulburn River.
5. However, Bobadeen Creek, downstream from the picnic area and just upstream from the Dripping Wall water was plentiful and was flowing freely. The contrast between the two sections of the river showed clearly that we have now reached a stage where the headwaters of the Goulburn River are dependent on water from the mines.
6. Since then the creek water has continued to flow all through the latest drought. The community is concerned that the extension of coal mining activity will deplete this remaining resource.
7. Come sit with me and contemplate the risks. In 2014 the Government promised Nil impacts on the water at The Drip from Coal Mining. The Drip is

not just the Great Dripping Wall but also the Goulburn River. One part cannot be separated from the other. It needs to be seen as an entire ecosystem.

**Slides 8 – 18: The River Corridor Walk**

8. People from our community, Australia and in fact from all over the world visit The Drip. They leave with revived spirits. A dry river will deprive them of this experience. In today's stressful world we all need these special places.
9. The drawdown on regional ground water with this extension of mining by Ulan Coal Mine will impact on the water that feeds the damp cool places along The River Walk. Why take the risk of losing this?
10. Mosses and lichens will dry out and disappear.
11. All plants to survive need some water. These weeping grasses (*caladium procerum*) depend on the water as it seeps through the rock face.
12. This Green Hood Orchid (*Pterostylis* sp) found along the walk is already classified as vulnerable.
13. The Ivy Leaved Violet (*Viola Hederacea*) a native forb does well in moist conditions. No water: no native violets.
14. People come to The Drip to learn about its plants. Will they come if it is a barren waste land?
15. We all enjoy the antics of Blue Wrens. Will they be here if there is no water? I doubt it.
16. This King Fisher is dependent on a healthy flow in the river being maintained at all times. It is critical that the water releases happen in keeping with environmental flow standards and that the salinity is kept at a minimum level.
17. My great grandson was fascinated by this Lizard.
18. Even the Black Snake has a place in the ecosystem. Reptiles need water.

**Slides 19 - 25: We arrive at The Lookout then make our way along the Great Dripping Wall.**

19. From the lookout we get our first view of this amazing place
20. The Great Dripping Wall has a mysterious air.
21. It's been compared to a Cathedral
22. The coastal wetland species of plants that grow on The Great Dripping Wall are considered a "Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem" and highly at risk.
23. Water, even in drought, constantly seeps though the wall. That's why it was affectionately named by locals as The Drip.
24. It was thought that the water came from a perched aquifer but recent studies have further confirmed that the source is ground water and therefore will be adversely affected by any increase in Coal Mining.
25. To maintain the water flow to the Great Dripping Wall Modification 4 must not go ahead. The Government must keep its promise of Nil Impacts on the Water feeding "The Drip".

**Slides 26 – 29: Save The Drip for our Kids**

- 26. These children and their mother made this banner because they have a long family history of happy days at The Drip. They care about its future.
- 27. Children can't resist getting in the water. Imagine no water to play in!
- 28. The water as it flows over the rocks gives an endless delight of exploration.
- 29. Having fun in the water is not limited to small children.  
No water. No fun!

**Slides 30 – 40: Our Community Cares about The Drip, even miners!**

- 30. Aboriginal families have a deep connection to this sacred place.
- 31. No matter what age it is worth the walk.
- 32. Many an hour is spent deep in conversation in quiet places near The Drip.
- 33. A local Wiradjuri elder sadly contemplates another loss.
- 34. A mother and daughter write and draw to express their commitment to Saving The Drip.
- 35. Over the years there have been many community and family picnics as well as educational events.
- 36. I was amazed at the intensity of anger shown by the Gulgong Pensioners when I shared with them our concerns about the impact of mining at the Drip. They all wanted to jump into action and write letters to protect this special place that has been an important part of their history.
- 37. Despite the extreme summer heat MDEG members happily shared with locals and visitors at the Mudgee Show their concerns for The Drip.
- 38. Paddy singing to Save The Drip
- 39. The Sign "Protect our Rivers" has been used to express our concerns for the plight of not only the Goulburn River but many others under threat. Australia is a dry country we must do all we can to protect our rivers including The Goulburn River.
- 40. At the Time 2 Chose Rally I came across this young Sydney student who had visited the Drip and was captivated by its beauty. It's not just the local community but people far and wide who are passionate to Save the Drip.

**Slides 41 – 42 Conclusion:**

- 41. Keep the Water Dripping!
- 42. Don't let it dry up!

Can we risk reaching the tipping point and the Great Dripping Wall, The Goulburn River and their interdependent ecosystems being destroyed by lack of water?  
Please don't approve this modification.