I am struggling to see the benefits as well as the environmental concerns that seem to have been ignored.

Firstly, if I run in the catchment area (and I never leave anything behind, and that includes bodily fluids and waste) I will be either chased, fined or both. Yet somehow it is acceptable to mine under the water catchment area, and dams. The risks to our clean water supply and stability of the ground is questionable to say the least. Mining companies (and any company which has potential environmental issues) can agree and say (or even do) put mitigants in place. That does not mean they will follow through with them once approved, they can just pay a fine and know they will not be shut down.

Secondly, the company setting up the mine is a) not local, and b) has such a huge debt that in any other industry would be insolvent and in receivership. What is to hold them to account if they have no money – no fines, no remediation.

Thirdly, what are the remediation plans for after the mine? How will they make good with the area? Any promise can be taken with a pinch of salt as that is what the original owners of the mine said they would do before this came along. Who is to say that they won’t change their minds and continue mining?

Fourthly, and probably most importantly, the escarpment and catchment area is such a beautiful place. It is openly used by walkers, runners and mountain bikers. All of whom look after the trails, respect the area and take away with them what they bring in with them. With what is happening in the world at the moment, mental health should be at the forefront of people’s minds. Exercising and getting into nature is a proven way of improving mental health which, in the long run, reduces the need to rely on mental health programmes. I for one need to get out onto the escarpment and run, it’s one of the main parts of my life that keeps me grounded and positive about life.

Fifthly, the impact to wildlife could be one that cannot be reversed and will have a huge impact. That not only includes wildlife on the escarpment but also in the ocean where any run-off will end up. For people who don’t use the escarpment trails this will also have a major impact. What environmental damage will be done to our beaches, what health impact will there be if people are swimming in potentially toxic run-off.

I implore that the decision be proposal be denied and the escarpment returned to people who will respect, value and use it for what nature created it for.