Objection submission for the Dunmore Lakes Modification 2 project

I am in opposition to the proposed sand mine pit 5A and also 5B.

I will mainly talk about 5B as this is where I have most concerns although it should be understood I strongly object to both pits being approved.

The reasons I believe 5B should not be approved are as follows

The existing Bangalay Sand Forest cannot be moved or duplicated anywhere close by.

It is composed of Eucalyptus botryoides , commonly known as Bangalays ,These trees are hundreds of years old which is how long it takes for substantial tree hollows to form.

These old hollow bearing trees are a habitat for birds and mammals that need hollows for shelter and nesting.

Threatened species such as the Powerful Owl need big hollows in large trees such as these Bangalays The adjacent Littoral Rainforest whilst providing suitable hunting territory for owls is not rich in trees that form hollows.

In the event that this Bangalay Sand Forest is destroyed, the deep pond created in its place will be a very mediocre aquatic habitat and certainly useless to the terrestrial animals currently using the Bangalay Sand Forest.

The reasons I believe it will be a poor aquatic habitat are as follows.

Firstly the pond will be separate from the river so will not be accessible to many fish that move from fresh to brackish water as part of their lifecycle.

This includes Australian Bass, Sea mullet, the endangered Australian Grayling and also many other smaller species.

Another concern I have is that there is potential for the salinity of the Minnamurra River to be altered by fresh water seeping or overflowing into it from the 5B pit.

The river has already been affected by run off from the Shell Cove housing development situated to the East due to extra fresh water entering the river. This has resulted in a change in the Mangrove population

There is surely a strong likelihood for this to occur if a deep pond of freshwater is positioned within a few hundred metres of a tidal river. Currently the sand and existing trees act as a filter that allow freshwater to slowly permeate into the river

Aquatic life in the river that is reliant on a certain level of salinity is likely to be negatively impacted if this pit is excavated. For example Australian Bass move downstream from freshwater to breed in brackish water.

If the water chemistry is altered they may have less successful spawning or will have to move further down the river placing their eggs and young in danger from predation.

The pond will be too deep to be of use by wading birds, as it will lack shallow margins or wetlands that most water birds rely on for foraging.

The ponds however will quite likely be colonized by invasive exotic species such as the noxious Alligator weed, Elodea Canadensis and Common Carp.

These invasive species all pose a risk to the biodiversity of the river.

They have all established substantial populations in Boral’s previously mined pits to the west of the proposed extension.

The Carp have migrated from Boral oldest sand mine lake which abuts Dunmore Lake Housing estate ,into the most recently finished pit and I have observed them in the river which proves they are capable of escaping in flood conditions.

Carp are responsible for severe environmental degradation and resultant loss of native fish species.

The endangered Australian Grayling could be made locally extinct If a large number of Carp manage to establish themselves in the river.

The water plants are readily moved by floods or on water birds legs and can severely alter the freshwater habitats they invade,

I have little faith in the local sand mining companies doing long term establishment of replacement forests as off sets for forests that will be destroyed even if there was suitable land available nearby.

In the case of the Bangalay Sand Forest there just isn’t available land anywhere in the vicinity of the existing forest that could be planted up to replace the trees that will be lost.

The surrounding land is either occupied by another EEC such as Littoral Rainforest or is a different geology, Latite which would support a different forest type.

If currently cleared land, which is comprised of sand was planted up with Bangalay Sand Forest there is a fair chance that in the future the mining company would apply to have it cleared for sand extraction.

This is what is currently being proposed down at Gerroa by another company.

I am also concerned that the resident White Breasted Sea Eagles will be severely stressed by all the activity associated with construction of the 5B pit.

Boral are saying the Eagles nest is 280 metres away from the work site so they will not be disturbed.

On the contrary I believe the loss of mature Bangalays that are no doubt used for perching and the noise and visual disturbance caused by the whole extraction process is likely to drive these apex predators away from their current nest which they have been using for many years.

These iconic and majestic birds are incredibly important to the local community as is the whole Minnamurra River ecosystem and therefore I implore the IPC to say no to the application for Dunmore Lakes modification 2 project

Yours Sincerely

Carl Glaister