

To the panel members of the IPC, I object to the Dendrobium Mine Extension Project for the following reasons:

Mining within the special area of the catchment for greater Sydney causes significant geological and ecological damage, as well as continued drinking water loss. I refer the panel to Figure 9 of page 55 of Part 2 of the report by Independent Panel for Mining in the Catchment showing hydrographic evidence of swamps areas directly above mined coal seams can no longer retain surface water which would otherwise run off into the catchments. This is undeniable evidence that mining in the special area is compromising the water supply of greater Sydney. Furthermore, the diversion of water from swamps due to underground mining will increase the fire risk within the catchment area and cause further cracking and uplift within the tributaries that supply the reservoirs. Cracking will cause increased metal leaching into the reservoirs and consequently increased costs will be incurred by WaterNSW to remove metal contaminants.

I also refer to the panel to Open Letter to the Premier of NSW Regarding Coal Mining in the Schedule 1 Special Areas of the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment by 20 scientists, including chemists, geologists and hydrologists, which states that WaterNSW suggests the possibility that an average of 25 million litres a day of streamflow may be being diverted and lost from the reservoirs, because of coal mining in the Special areas. Referring to the 2018 WaterNSW scoping study and noting uncertain or unknown losses of groundwater supply to the reservoirs and uncertain or unknown leakage rates, the total loss rate could conceivably be greater than 25 MI/d. That is, drinking water losses could be between 2.5 and 9 billion litres a year, or more. Australia is highly susceptible to droughts and Sydney has been subject to water restrictions multiple times over the last decade.

The proposed project of South32 creates an absolutely unacceptable risk to WaterNSW infrastructure including the Avon and Cordeaux dam walls. As noted by WaterNSW, the 1000m setback from the dam walls is not enough and the setback should be at least 1500m, adding that, "Should any impacts occur to these dams, there is the potential that the risks and consequences could be extreme." There should be no mining in the Special Areas of Greater Sydney Water Catchment; this is the stated position of WaterNSW and the legislated purpose of Special Area protection.

By allowing South32 to expand their project within the Special Area will lock in 28 years of permanent damage to Sydney's drinking water supply including further losses of drinking water for Sydney residents, increased metal contamination of the reservoirs, increased fire risk within the catchment area, and an absolutely unacceptable risk of damage to the Avon and Cordeaux dam walls.

You've got to be brain-dead or corrupt if you think the pros of this proposal outweigh its cons.

Dr Edwin Clatworthy