

From: [Neil Purnell](#)
To: [IPCN Enquiries Mailbox](#)
Subject: Letter of objection - Dendrobium Extension Project - SSD8194 - South32 - req'd by 15th Dec 2020
Date: Monday, 7 December 2020 3:02:59 PM

Dear Commissioner,

I write to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) to indicate my objection to the proposed South32 - Dendrobium Extension Project (SSD8194) as per the following points:

1. The SSD8194 proposal which would allow 22ML of drinking water to be drawn down daily from the “Special Area – water catchment” at/near Avon Dam and surrounding surface and catchment waters - is entirely unacceptable [1]. At that rate of depletion, it is equivalent to 22,000 tonnes of fresh water harvest being taken from the Sydney Water Metropolitan water reserves daily, which is equivalent to squandering the volume of 8.8x Olympic Pools per day – only to be drawn into mine workings and thereafter being contaminated and polluted by salts, chemical contaminants and heavy metals via coal contact - and discharged back to the surface as polluted waters only to require retreatment and disposed of to the marine environment as “mine wastewater discharge”.
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2. Based on the average consumption per day per Sydney Resident (@200L/d) [2], consider the proposed annual average mine water take of 8.03GL is equivalent to enough annual drinking water for an entire population comparable to the City of Darwin (133,000)[3]
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3. At that rate of water draw down , South32 Dendrobium mine could fill a trench equivalent to measuring 1m wide, 1m deep and 8,030km long - of clean fresh water; the same distance as that between Sydney and Busan - South Korea (8,009km) [4] – Figure A. That trench and that proposed water-take would fill 3,203 Olympic sized swimming pools every year, or waste 8,008,000 tonnes of fresh water and subsequently turn it into polluted waste - per annum.



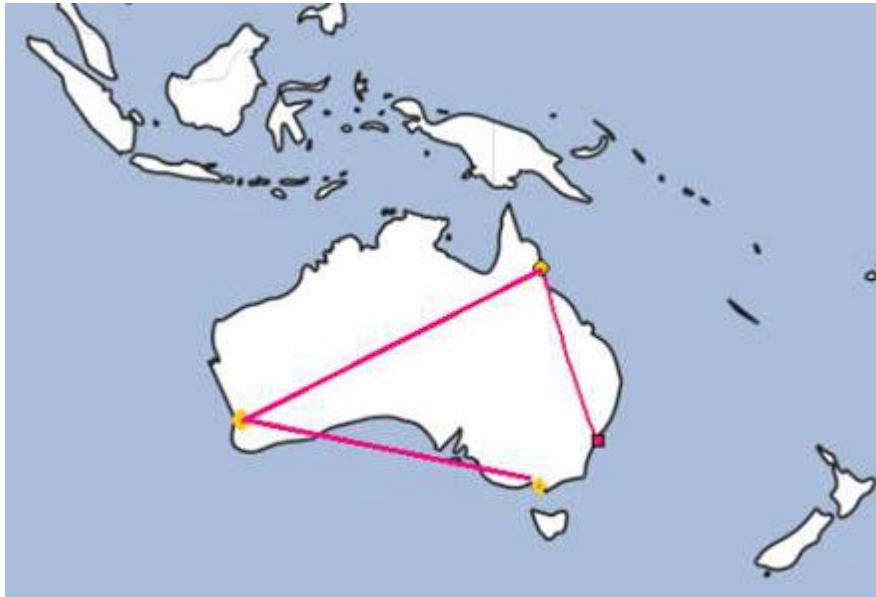


Figure A

Figure B

It is almost equivalent in distance to digging a trench 1m wide, 1m deep and filling it with NSW freshwater - extending from Sydney NSW to Cairns QLD (1954km), extending the trench from Cairns across to Perth Western Australia (3443km) and returning that trench to Melbourne Victoria (2727km) – a total distance of 8,124km [5] – Figure B; **only to pollute it then DUMP IT AT SEA - EACH AND EVERY YEAR.**

4. If South32 we to be permitted to draw down water equivalent to 22ML/day at Dendrobium Mine and draw that water from the WaterNSW catchment areas, and we extent that same dimensioned trench around our planet and filled it with that same mine water-take, South32 could circumvent our plant in less than 5 years with that same trench - filled with wasted vital resources[6].

Furthermore, I am an ex-steelworker from Port Kembla, having experienced the dramatic reductions in staffing levels during the 1980s decline where 21,000 staff were once employed and subsequently reduced to approximately 6,000 thereafter – I am pleased to say most of us have found additional career opportunities and moved well on. I am also an ex-underground coal miner and have experienced and witnessed the many ups and downs in the employment cycles attributed to world demands and declines for coal resources, and still we prevail; as will the employees in the Illawarra if/where necessary. Local employment is not entirely dependent upon the provision of local metalliferous coal – not at either Port Kembla Steel Works nor for the regional miner South32 – who also has alternate lease extraction options available to them. Alternate employment options are and will be open for the masses to migrate toward - should market demands require/provide such needs. It must be stated however, we cannot so readily find new water resources and “special areas” – nor replace them once we have mindlessly, greedily, arrogantly destroyed them!

There lies plenty of options open to the management of mineral resources across this great nation other than the historical permission of coal extraction from below either housing and community areas or high value “special areas” – specifically those areas that are dedicated to the

harvesting of the very resource which sustains each any every one of us, yourselves, your children, our grandchildren and those many generations ahead of us.

It is totally unacceptable that the most precious of all natural resources (millions of tonnes of fresh water annually) would be sacrificed to make a polluting coal mine a commercially viable proposition or to indicate/suggest that the Illawarra Economy is dependent upon the provision of local coal resources in order to prosper. I therefore ask that the IPC make an appropriate determination such that the water catchment areas within the defined "Special Areas" not be undermined and that the impacts to natural features are completely avoided. I appeal to the IPC not to support the Dendrobium Expansion Project SSD8194 due to unsustainable and irreversible impacts to our natural environment and highly valued water resources.

Please consider my objection to the Dendrobium Expansion Project SSD8194 for the benefit of our wider community – rather than the limited interests of and benefit of so few.

References:

[1] DPIE Assessment Report, op cit, P. xii

[2] On average, each person in Sydney uses about 200 litres of drinking quality water every day. From: <https://www.sydneywater.com.au/sw/education/drinking-water/water-use-conservation/index.htm>

[3] List of Cities In Australia by Population - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_in_Australia_by_population

[4] Distance Calculator (World) - <https://www.distance.to/Sydney,New-South-Wales,AUS/Busan,KOR>

[5] TimeandDate.com - Distance Calculator (Australia) - <https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/distanceresult.html?p1=240&p2=927>

[6] Space.com – How big is Earth - <https://www.space.com/17638-how-big-is-earth.html>

NB: one (1) Olympic Sized Swimming Pool holds a volume of 2.5ML of water.

Kind Regards

Neil Purnell