

Sara Wilson - Rivers SOS comments on Moolarben Stage 2

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To: <plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au>
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Subject: Rivers SOS comments on Moolarben Stage 2

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To: NSW Department of Planning

Re: Moolarben Stage 2 (DA No. 08 0135)

The Rivers SOS Alliance is a network of 47 environment/community groups around NSW. Our goal is to have river systems protected from irreversible mine or CSG damage. Sixteen rivers around NSW have been cracked and/or polluted by mining operations which have been approved by your department, not to mention damage to numerous creeks, dams and lakes. Given the need to preserve water resources, we hope you will give a higher priority to protection of river systems in future.

One of our first Rivers SOS regional meetings was held on the Goulburn River, and Rivers SOS members then had the opportunity of walking along the river to see The Drip. It is a very beautiful and precious site, which is already a tourist attraction. We not only want you to keep mining well away from The Drip and the Corner Gorge, but we also ask you to protect the rest of this important river. It has already been diverted to accommodate mining, not far from The Drip, and this manmade channel is a depressing sight and a sad comment on the values of some.

Please ensure that this river is protected now and in the future. As a society, we simply cannot afford to continue the degradation of our river systems in order to allow maximum extraction of coal - short term profits at a terrible price for the environment and for our water resources. The O'Farrell government, and the Minister Brad Hazzard, assured us that there is to be a better balance between economic (mining) needs and the environment. We trust that this will be demonstrated in this case.

We in Rivers SOS have seen in research such as Professor Philip Pells's report on the loss of Thirlmere Lakes that dewatering of mines and depressurisation of underground aquifers can and has resulted in loss of surface water. Please keep mining well away from the Goulburn River and its ground water sources.

The accumulated knowledge of impacts of mining on river systems resulted in BHP Billiton announcing, in 2005, that they would no longer mine directly beneath major rivers. Similarly, Xstrata's Tahmoor Colliery agreed, after independent research was carried out, to move mine plans further back from the Bargo River two years ago.

We hope that you in the Department of Planning will follow this more enlightened stance. We would hope that

public servants in Planning would stay ahead of the mining corporations in terms of protecting vital environmental assets belonging to all of us in NSW. The desire of the corporations to extract every last inch of coal is understandable. Their willingness, on admittedly rare occasions, to protect our rivers is therefore commendable. Failure of governments and their agencies to do likewise is no longer acceptable,

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Graham

Vice President, Rivers SOS Alliance