

To whom it may concern,

I strongly oppose the Dendrobium Mine Expansion as scientific research, the reports provided by South 32 for the proposed expansion, and South 32's previous actions have demonstrated that this project would result in unavoidable and irreversible environmental and socioeconomic consequences.

South 32 seek to mine in the Special Areas of the Greater Sydney Water Catchment. Special Areas are established to restrict activities that threaten the protection of water quality. Long wall mining is widely known to contaminate water sources where South 32 already has a history of threatening local water quality. For example, cracking from South 32's long wall mining activities resulted in the contamination of the Waratah Rivulet in 2011, near Helensburgh, and the Eastern Tributary Stream in 2019 which flows into Woronora Dam. More recently, South 32 was fined \$15K for water pollution by the Environment Protection Authority in April 2021. The proposed actions of South 32's mine expansion would result in further pollution events that would threaten the viability of our drinking water supply and the safety of over 5 million people who rely on the Greater Sydney Water Catchment. Mining activities should not occur within these Special Areas. This is in agreement with WaterNSW's position.

Long wall mining activities result in subsidence which fundamentally disrupt surface flow and groundwater hydrology. The impairment of these hydrological processes directly threatens the health of endangered and ecologically significant upland swamp communities. These ecosystems host significant biodiversity, capture carbon and store and filter water. When long wall mining damages these habitats, they cannot be restored. These ecosystems which stand as a natural solution to climate change are lost. It is critical that the degradation of these swamps does not continue.

South 32 also fails to address the notable cultural desecration they propose to undertake as there are 31 Aboriginal Heritage sites in close vicinity to the proposed works where 6 of these are directly above the longwalls. These Aboriginal Heritage sites include irreplaceable shelters with rock art and axe grinding grooves which inform First Nations' identity, Dreaming and wellbeing. It should also be stressed that this cultural desecration is not just about the specific sites recognised by the state. This entire area is of significant cultural value to the local Aboriginal community.

The local community and scientific experts have fiercely opposed the Dendrobium Mine Expansion from the start. Despite this clear opposition founded on valid concerns, the project was undemocratically declared State Significant Infrastructure where the NSW Minister for Planning now has the final word on the proposed expansion. It is the first time in the history of NSW that a mine has been declared as SSI. It is incredibly dispiriting and distressing to learn that the NSW Planning Department coached South 32 to overstate their relationship with BlueScope Steel when applying for SSI approval. I hope this clear conflict of interest is appropriately and transparently addressed when the department provides recommendation to the Minister. I implore the department and the Minister to keep the future of younger generations at the forefront of their minds. It is significant to the state of NSW, the state of a safe water supply, the state of the environment, and the state of future generations that the mine expansion is rejected.

Thank you for your time.

Kara Tuck