

## Submission to IEPMC (personal details redacted)

---

I would like to make a submission to the Independent Expert Panel for Mining in the Water Catchment.

Mary O’Kane NSW Chief Scientist - **"Finally, it is important to recognise that many of these issues have a value dimension – that is, the features to be protected and the level of impact to be tolerated are not items that can be identified through a purely scientific enquiry. These are conversations that must be held with the community, in order for government to effectively balance the need for the economic resources of the Catchment with the ecosystem services it provides (drinking water) and the values of the land itself."** May 2014

It appears to me from this statement given in 2014 by the Chief Scientist that the process of protecting our water catchment has regressed. It has taken five years to come to the conclusion that the water catchment is being permanently damaged and water is being lost by coal mining, yet there is no conclusive figure offered or how this damage is going to stop.

The community consultation that **must be held** has been watered do to group consultation. Even tho these groups have great dedicated people involved in them, they have limited resources and are floundering trying to get this message about destruction of our catchment out to the community. It is an unbelievable scenario. The Chief Scientist Department of the NSW Government needs to engage with the community directly and get this information out there. The community are left out of so much of the approval process, unable to access proponent/Govt Department discussions or comment on SMP’s or EMP’s.

And the answer to the question what **"level of impact to be tolerated"**- is no amount impact is acceptable, as this impact is permanent and it occurs in our vital water catchment. Proper consultation with the community could easily confirm this.

But this question isn’t being asked, instead we are being asked to comment on TARPS, adaptive management and formula. When no amount of monitoring or remediation is ever going to repair cracked swamp bedrocks or fill dried lakes.

**The economic resources of the Catchment** is in fact only one resource, **drinking water**. To think that any other resource is more valuable than perpetual water is ludicrous. Coal as a resource is short term and permanently damaging to the water.

I also reiterate my belief that the Panels Terms of Reference are sadly limited and manipulative. I appreciate the expert panel’s work, however I feel that the terms of reference limit the expert panel’s ability to assess the larger picture, which is whether an invaluable resource, a water catchment and system which provides for a city of over 5 million people, is allowed to be irreversibly damaged for short term gain.

I am sure the panel appreciates the responsibility placed upon them and their duty of care. We would like the panel to reconsider the adequacy of the terms of reference and the risks to the water security of the people of New South Wales. We would like the panel to consider recommending the effective banning of mining in water catchment areas, for the sake of the people of New South Wales, and the people of Australia.

Thank you

---

Gavin Workman