



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

PO Box 589 Sutherland NSW 1499 | office@ssec.org.au
www.ssec.org.au | ABN 96 127 431 611

4 March 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

Forum to highlight the risky business of mining the water catchment as desalination kicks in.

An expert panel will speak about impacts of coal mining on water catchments at a “Protect Our Water” Forum in Sutherland on Thursday, 14 March.

The Forum coincides with the drop in levels of drinking water reservoirs and the activation of the desalination plant, a facility that Sutherland Shire residents will pay for but not benefit from.

“Forum speakers will explain how underground coal mining is damaging the water catchment and how coal mining can contaminate catchment rivers and creeks, even years after the cessation of mining,” said Gavin Workman, spokesperson for Protect Our Water Alliance.

“They will also speak about the expansion of coal mining in the Special Areas (inner catchment), including projects that are in the pipeline in 2019.”

“The NSW Chief Scientist said that Greater Sydney, including Illawarra, is the only example in the world of longwall mining being allowed in a public drinking water catchment. There is a good reason why other countries don’t mine their drinking water catchments.”

“A recent report confirms that millions of litres of water are lost from the catchment each day due to the impact of coal mining. The report – produced by the Office of NSW Government’s Chief Scientist - further states that the full effect of coal mining on catchment water quantity is unknown.”

“The recently activated desalination plant will only supply water to Sydney suburbs from Parramatta to the Eastern suburbs and south as far as Sutherland”, said Tassia Kolesnikow, chair of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre.

“Although other areas of Greater Sydney, including Sutherland Shire, need to cover the cost of the desalination plant, they cannot rely on it as a water supply.”

“The NSW government should prioritise protecting our water catchment over coal mining and implement the precautionary principle when it comes to catchment management.”

“They should ban mining in the Special Areas and impose a moratorium on the mining in the broader catchment until the impacts are fully

understood. The water catchment is no place for mining expansion by trial and error.”

The Forum will be held at 7.00 to 9.00pm, Thursday, 14 March, 2019 at The Club on East, East Parade, Sutherland.

The speakers are:

- **Dr Ian Wright** - expert on impact of mining on rivers and creeks, Western Sydney University
- **Julie Sheppard** - National Parks Association of NSW (NPA)
- **Nic Clyde** - Lock the Gate Alliance

The event is being organised by Sutherland Shire Environment Centre and Protect Our Water Alliance, out of concern for the cumulative and escalating damage to Sydney Water Catchment from coal mining.

More information about the event:

- https://www.lockthegate.org.au/protect_our_water_alliance
- Gavin Workman, Protect Our Water Alliance – 0437 767 404
- Tassia Kolesnikow, Sutherland Shire Environment Centre – 0401 061 544

More information about Dr Wright’s research:

Dr Ian Wright, Expert on impacts of mining on rivers and creeks, Western Sydney University, 0432 966 166, Email: I.Wright@westernsydney.edu.au