

Submission
No 90

**INQUIRY INTO RATIONALE FOR, AND IMPACTS OF,
NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN
NSW**

Name: Mrs Georgia Green

Date Received: 21 September 2020

OPPOSITION TO THE PROSPECT OF MINING, EXPLORATORY LICENSES, DAMMING OR DIVERTING THE CLARENCE/BIIRINBA RIVER NSW.

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my deep concern for the recently announced Co-Funding agreement between Corazon Mining and the NSW Government (Cooperative Drilling Grant) for prospects at Mt Gilmore, Carnham NSW 2460.

I acknowledge and pay my respects to the traditional custodians of this area the Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr people on whose land this proposed mine is located. The Clarence river and surrounds are abundant with cultural places and stories and this needs to be protected.

We own a property at Kippenduff which is approximately 50km, as the crow flies, from the above-mentioned proposed site. The mighty Clarence river surrounds this property and is the closest major waterway. It is vital that the Clarence and the adjoining 24 tributaries are protected to ensure the health of this unique and diverse ecosystem.

I am clearly and loudly expressing my opposition to this action that will significantly impact cultural practices, destroy downstream floodplain farming, movement of the ENDANGERED Eastern Cod and impose unacceptable risks to rare and endangered flora and fauna that are found in these waterways and their surrounds.

The Eastern Freshwater Cod (*Maccullochella ikei*) is native ONLY to the Clarence and Richmond Rivers in north-eastern NSW. The species is listed as 'endangered' under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and the NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994. Despite NSW fisheries implementing a recovery plan for the species in 2004, the review in 2016 unfortunately found that the numbers of Eastern Freshwater Cod had not increased. One of the main objectives of the Eastern Freshwater Cod Recovery Plan is habitat protection and restoration. If mining were to proceed as proposed, this endangered species would become more vulnerable to extinction.

The existing multimillion \$ farming, fishing and tourism industries in this catchment will be negatively impacted, if not destroyed, if this mine goes ahead as they rely on the health of the mighty Clarence River and associated waterways to operate. These are established and flourishing industries that should not be negatively impacted for a temporary monetary gain associated with a mine that destroys the environment.

An Exploratory License has been granted to CZN to allow drilling on Mt Gilmore. The mountain is located 49kms west of Grafton near the junction of the Clarence and the Mann rivers in Carnham, NSW 2460.

It is critical that the NSW Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee (No.7) approaches this issue with cultural respect, habitat protection, clean air, healthy soil and water as the priorities. Water is our most precious and vital resource. If the natural flow of a waterway is altered, dammed or polluted from mining the damage will be irreparable and future generations will be greatly affected.

I refer to the second half of item 1(a) in the terms of reference, where the Inquiry is to consider "other options for ensuring water security in inland regions".

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/2614/Terms%20of%20Reference.pdf>

There are currently 18 active exploratory mining licenses in the pristine upper reaches of the Clarence River, and on top of that, there are four councils out west who have revived interest in damming part of the headwaters to redirect water inland.

The Clarence Valley Council does NOT support water diversion from the Clarence.

I reference and endorse Council's adopted policy position (from resolution 15.081/16 at its meeting of 18 August 2016):

"That Council reiterates its policy position of opposition to any proposal that would result in any diversion of water from Clarence catchments, as previously resolved by Council resolutions 12.005/06, 05.006/07 and 10.017/10"

The Clarence River flows over 390kms and is central to thousands of lives and livelihoods. It is culturally significant and sacred to the Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr traditional custodians. The biodiversity that exists within this ecosystem is unique and vital, not only to the flora and fauna but also to humans and should be protected.

I urge you to remove the unnecessary presence of exploratory licenses in these locations and work instead to protect and sustain our mighty Clarence river.

The decisions that you make today will be remembered by future generations.

I sincerely hope that you will be remembered for protecting the mighty Clarence River and all it gives life too.

Thank you for taking the time to read through my submission.

Yours Sincerely,

Georgia Green