

**Submission
No 153**

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

Name: Mr Paul Van Den Boom
Date Received: 21 September 2020

Good morning / afternoon

I'm writing to express my concern for the recently announced Co-Funding Agreement with the Corazon Mining & the NSW Government (Cooperative Drilling Grant) for prospects at Mt Gilmore, the backdrop to the jewel of the Clarence River.

I have spent the majority of my 40 years living, working and enjoying all that the Coffs & Clarence regions have to offer. I consider myself an outdoorsman and frequently surf, fish, swim, camp, hike, 4WD and just generally enjoy all that these areas have to offer.

The Clarence River holds a special place in my heart with many fond memories of spending time with my family, especially my father who has passed, on weekend getaways in places like The Gorge, Buccarumbi, Yamba and Grafton.

Fishing in the upper Clarence for bass is one of my favorite past times and encountering the endangered Eastern Cod on occasion is always an amazing experience. I was lucky enough to catch and release a large Eastern Cod with my son last year whilst bass fishing. This was his first proper fishing trip and he still raves about seeing such a beautiful fish up close. I have taught him the importance of catch and release fishing and how to handle and respect such amazing creatures so that they can survive and continue to repopulate so that future generations can also see their beauty.

I am clearly and loudly expressing my opposition to this action, that will destroy downstream floodplain farming, movement of the endangered Eastern Cod, and overall damage the health of the most powerful waterway on the eastern seaboard.

If mining were to proceed, it would impose unacceptable risks to the health of local waterways, specifically the Mann River, Clarence River and their tributaries, which are home to rare and endangered flora and fauna, and are vital to the health of our fishing, farming and tourism industries.

An Exploratory License has been granted to CZN to allow drilling on Mount Gilmore. The mountain is 49kms west of Grafton, located behind Copmanhurst and beside the popular tourist destination "The Gorge" which is also near the confluence of the Upper Clarence River and Mann River below Carnham Road.

On the Clarence itself, there have been many fish kills associated with historic copper mining impacts in the last century. The rare and stunningly beautiful Eastern Cod, found only in two rivers in the world, was almost completely decimated. Only through diligent conservation efforts has it just recently been brought back from the brink of extinction.

It is critical that the NSW Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee (No. 7)'s approach to this environmental crisis is to prioritise sustainable strategic planning and forward-thinking solutions that honour the past with future-focussed stewardship prioritising clean air, healthy soil, and reverence of water as our most precious resource.

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 through the hearts of all those who live along its banks.

I urge you to remove the unnecessary presence of exploratory licenses in these locations and work to protect our River for future generations.

Thank you for your time,