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NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW
protecting nature through community action

Bushwalking NSW

The Hon. Chris Minns, MP
Premier of New South Wales
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

CC: NSW Minister for the Environment, NSW Minister for Water, NSW Minister for Planning

17 April 2025

Dear Premier Minns,

A strategic, integrated waste solution for Mt Piper Power Station and associated coal mines

The Gardens of Stone Alliance requests a six-month planning moratorium on consent modification proposals for Mt Piper Power Station and associated water treatment plants and coal mines to allow for the development of an integrated waste management solution for these operations.

As you would be aware, Mt Piper Power Station and its associated coal mines lie in the headwaters of the Coxs River, part of Sydney's drinking water catchment. The coal mines now generate polluted waste water far in excess of the needs of the power station, overwhelming the original no-discharge mine water management system. Therefore, a viable alternative is now needed. This also presents the opportunity to address serious pollution sources from historical mining in the area.

Solving this problem through successive consent modification proposals for each coal mine and related infrastructure is flawed and lacks strategy and direction. Missing from these types of proposals has been the public interest objective of securing high environmental and drinking water standards through the use of improved wastewater treatment. The lack of an overall plan to achieve this objective will drive down existing water quality and adversely impact on Sydney's world-class drinking water.

Coal mines associated with Mt Piper expect to generate over 50ML/day of wastewater by the end of the year, far exceeding median natural flows of the Coxs River in this area¹. This poses a serious risk to Sydney's water supply, which a piecemeal approach driven by multiple consent modifications is not designed to handle. Further, legacy mining impacts and inadequacies in treatment of brine byproduct are contributing to increased salt and other pollutant levels.

The alliance requests your administration acts now to make a strategic intervention.

There is an urgent need for a six-month moratorium on further consent modifications. With several modifications shortly to be submitted, a moratorium will grant breathing space for government agencies to negotiate a permanent waste management solution for the complex Mt Piper power generation ecosystem. This will ensure that the whole-of-life impacts of coal mines and the power station improve, rather than harm, Sydney's drinking water. Such a plan will ensure treated mine discharge does not harm aquatic life as it passes through the World Heritage Area, start to address

¹ Based on maximum median monthly flows 2000-2025 at Coxs River gauging station upstream of Lake Lyall (gauge number 212058)

legacy mine pollution and provide clean, pleasant, low-salt (soft) drinking water for five million Sydney residents.

The alternative approach of multiple consent modifications lodged by Centennial Coal, a company with an abysmal environmental track record², represents regulatory failure and a failure to systematically address long-standing pollution issues.

The Gardens of Stone Alliance strongly urges you to immediately implement a six-month moratorium on further consent modifications while a strategic integrated waste management solution is prepared.

For further info and reply, please contact Andrew Cox on 0438 588 040 or andrew@4nature.org.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Cox
President, 4nature

and on behalf of other Gardens of Stone Alliance members:

Jacqui Mumford
CEO, Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Annette Cam
President, Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Keith Muir
Hon Projects Officer, Wilderness Australia

David Bell
President, Bushwalking NSW

Richard Styles
President, Lithgow Environment Group

Gary Dunnett
CEO, National Parks Association of NSW

² See [Centennial Coal: Environmental Scorecard](#), Gardens of Stone Alliance, Jan 2025.