

Submission on Draft Hunter Regional Plan

- Having lived in the Upper Hunter catchment and become ill from exposure to sulphur gases and dust emissions from mines to the point where I had to leave the area I speak from my heart in the following points.
- Having worked professionally in the Upper and Lower Catchment areas on river health and management I have seen first hand the disparity between how the government treats landowners, community and general business as against the corporate owned and operated coal mine industry.
- I wonder why this government has even bothered to ask for public input?
- Then however I recall how the process works for government that wishes to just continue to treat the Hunter catchment and all its diverse communities, history and incredibly important linkages to the Great Dividing Range re: Gondwanaland fauna and flora and I realise this is just a tick in the box for the Department Heads and politicians once again.
- **This government HAS most of the information it asks for in this process already. It was diligently and professionally collated as the CMA's came to their forced closure when this government began its process of politicising the environment just after being first elected to office. During that process many members of the Hunter communities contributed, the reports were written by professionals who knew their environment and their patch and I guess these are sitting on a shelf in someone's office.**
- **I suggest you go and find them and read them and act upon them. Re-writing what was already produced has been a waste of tax payers money and a waste of departmental staff time.**
- I suggest the government re-employ all of the Compliance Officers who used to keep track of the mining companies and their disregard for environmental laws which will to give some credence to the current legislation. That legislation is so totally disregarded by the extraction industries in that catchment it is criminal. I invite any one who reads this submission to go an area overlooking the pits on a windy day and then remain there at dusk and into the evening. You will have noticed not too much movement around in daylight. Come nightfall - while the wind continues to howl through the valley - the lights are all on and its full bore to catch up on the lost days production targets - all at the expense of the health of the community. This is just one example. The salt load in the Coquun (Hunter) River is another example of giving sway to the extractive industry over the health of the river. Disgusting is the only word I have for it.
- Government is allowing the Hunter catchment to be slowly yet surely killed by the greed of a non-required industry and this is to the detriment of us all.
- Your communities suffer health and wealth issues because of the extractive pollution all through the catchment and you, the government, are responsible for allowing that to continue. Shame rests upon you all.