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Dear Editor

This is for immediate publication as an open letter to the residents of the Tweed Shire from the Tweed Water Alliance please.

Trevor White

On behalf of the Tweed Water Alliance

An open letter to Tweed Shire residents

The drought is taking its toll. All sectors of the community are affected with agriculture hardest hit and local businesses are feeling the knock-on losses.

With no end to the drought in sight, our community is doing it hard. Water restrictions are looming; water carriers cannot fill from the reticulated supply at Tyalgum or Uki.

The water bottling industry, nevertheless continues to operate relentlessly. Water is being trucked out with no consideration for the community, no concern for anything but profit at the expense of the community.

The industry claims that groundwater and surface water (creeks and rivers) are unlikely to be connected are based on flimsy, biased and self serving 'evidence'. The same hydrogeologist wrote three groundwater reports to support three separate development applications.

The Tweed Water Alliance assert that these reports were never subjected to appropriate scrutiny. More eminent, highly credentialled hydrogeologists report say a connection **is** highly likely. It is the stated position of NSW that groundwater and surface water are interconnected according to a [commissioned and accepted 2011 paper](#).

Simple intelligent logic would support this and skeptically refute the paid-for 'science'. The three reports provided for the water miners were desktop studies, the refuge of the incompetent or the compromised.

The water extracted for the bottling industry is therefore missing from our water courses. It is still being extracted as the NSW government declares a state of emergency while bushfires destroy property and habitat. During the recent bushfire west of Uki, a Rural Fire Service truck was seen heading in one direction with a water miner's truck passing it travelling in the opposite direction.

Our calculations put the current annual extraction from the four approved development applications of Tweed water miners at 190.2 megalitres annually. We allege and have prima facie evidence that it is much more than the approved 120 megalitres.

In real terms this is the daily 'take' of the water supply for 2,757 people. Every day. As the residents of the Tweed Shire face imminent, stringent water restrictions.

There is no legislative mechanism to reduce or stop pumping during drought. There is only the conscience of the operators. This seems to be utterly missing.

Council and council officers are now on notice that the community has had enough. This has to stop.

It's grand larceny and in our view council is complicit.