

Stop Water Mining

Why?

The Water Mining industry throughout Australia has become prolific, thriving without consideration for our environment. The industry is unmonitored and underground, water systems are still poorly understood.

In Tweed, even before drought and bushfire, residents realised this industry was unethical, the taking of common property for the benefit of a few.

As we experience drought, subsequent water restrictions, bushfires and empty tanks, this industry continues to thrive. It takes water out of the ecosystem we share. The profits are enormous, for a very few operators and at a growing cost to Tweed Shire residents and our heritage protected Gondwana Rainforests.

The long term impact of groundwater extraction on surface groundwater systems is unknown. They are certainly connected.

For this reason alone Water Mining must stop immediately.

Our NSW Minister for Water, Melinda Pavey can and must act now to stop this industry.

Water extraction (water mining) is the removal of groundwater. A bore licence and development consent is required to remove and sell bore water. To obtain a water extraction licence for the bottled water industry the licensee can convert an existing farming irrigation licence to a commercial licence through NSW Water.

Under this arrangement water is removed from its ecosystem completely and put into one use bottles.

Bottled "Spring Water" is simply bore water with tricky, untrue marketing.

Water cartage refers to local small businesses who cart water to fill household tanks. They have limited cartage capacity and are restricted to filling household tanks within the shire with town water. They are honourable operators, please support them.

Please share, educate and do not support this industry.
We are lucky in Australia to have clean tap water.

It takes up between 3 and 7 litres of water and one litre of oil to produce just one one-litre bottle of water.

There is no reason to buy bottled water in Australia.

If you need buy a filter for your tap and carry a water bottle like the good ole days.

Relevant laws

The Kunghur water extraction operation lies in the upper Tweed River catchment, within six kilometres Nightcap, Mount Jerusalem, Wollumbin, and Mebbin National Parks.

Nightcap and Wollumbin are both UNESCO Heritage Listed National Parks parks protected under *The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (and amendments)*.

Under this act water is a resource of national importance and any action that has, will have or is likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a World Heritage property must be referred to the responsible Minister for consideration, in this case Federal Environment Minister Susan Ley.

Under *Section 324 of the NSW Water Act 2000* the NSW Minister for Water Melinda Pavey has the power to stop this industry to protect a water source. Repeated requests have fallen on deaf ears.



Background

- A total of 3,240,000 litres is removed from underground the Tweed Shire each week (near 2 million litres current and proposed extraction per year).
- Tweed Shire has 4 bulk water extraction operations, with a 5th approved and under construction.
- In 2018 a survey by Tweed Water Alliance showed 99.7% of residents in Uki do not support Water Mining. Regardless, 4 out of 7 Tweed Shire Councillors voted in favour of a DA to extract water on Rowlands Creek Road in 2018 (which happened to be owned by an ex –labour minister).
- With drought there are restrictions on residents and on local water carters (that fill hinterland water tanks), but there are no restrictions on these bulk water carriers that are profiting from the Tweed Shire's underground water.
- Although water extractors can remove and sell water according to their NSW WATER licence, the amount is supposed to be metered with tanker traffic limited in number and hours of operation, Tweed Shire has no Compliance Officer to monitor or enforce these conditions.
- All tributaries that feed into the Tweed River have stopped running, the Tweed River has stopped flowing.
- Tweed Shire Council now augments river flow by releasing water from Clarrie hall Dam dropping it 1.5% per week to keep Bray Park Council Water Treatment Plant operational to serve the Shire.

- Currently 70,000 Tweed Shire residents prepare for level 1 water restrictions (as Clarrie Hall Dam reaches 75%), supply. Tweed Coastal and hinterland communities are now sharing concern.
- Dry tributaries closer to some water extraction operations appeared sooner than those further away. Water extraction appears to lower the baseline of rivers.
- Limited record keeping of the upper Tweed river systems means little data to compare prior to this level of water extraction.
- All tankers have Queensland number plates - NSW and Tweed motorists and ratepayers maintain these local roads.

Some of our Tweed Shire Councillors are listening to their constituents, and sharing our growing concerns.

The Tweed Shire Councillors who always voted in favour of Water Extraction operations and against our environment were;

- Councillor Warren Polglase,
- Councillor James Owen,
- Councillor Pryce Allsop

- Councillor Reece Byrnes voted in favour of the Rowland's Creek operation once and the Mount Warning operation once – never forget that.

The Tweed Shire Councillors who voted in favour of LEP change to stop further water extraction applications are;

- Councillor Chris Cherry
- Councillor Ron Cooper
- Councillor Reece Byrnes
- Mayor Katie Milne

There is an enormous groundswell of opposition to the water bottling industry and we invite you to join it.



Please spread the word, particularly to people who are not really convinced. It takes a little courage to change someone's opinion.

But that's how effective change starts – with you.

