

CONVERSATION & LINKS

Opening conversation: 18 July 2007 with PATRICE NEWELL & JULIE SHEPPARD of Rivers SOS. Also screening of short film, 'RIVERS OF SHAME'

HELP CHANGE POLICY

Stop Our Water Being Ripped Off!

1. Visit the websites – Rivers SOS: www.riverssos.com
The Total Environment Centre: www.tec.org.au

Rivers SOS campaigns for a safety zone of at least 1km round all rivers to protect them from ongoing damage. Rivers SOS is a coalition of environment and community groups formed as a result of the wrecking of rivers in NSW by mining operations.

2. Make a Submission –

To the *Inquiry into Underground Coal Mining in the Southern Coalfield* (stretching from Sydney to the Southern Highlands) until 30 July 2007.

Submissions must address the terms of reference.

See terms at Department of Planning:

www.planning.nsw.gov.au/planningsystem/panels.asp

Post: Southern Coalfield Panel Secretariat,
c/- Department of Planning, GPO Box 39, Sydney 2001.
E: Peter.Downes@planning.nsw.gov.au.

The Inquiry's terms of reference don't even mention the water supply catchments. The Inquiry is directed to trade off revenue with stopping coal mining related damage to essential water supplies.

OTHER LINKS

State Government Coal Mining Approvals Process

DOP – Department of Planning: www.planning.nsw.gov.au
The Minister is Frank Sartor.

DPI – Department of Primary Industries:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

The Department of Mineral Resources is the primary consent authority for coal mining as it grants mining leases. It comes under the umbrella of the Department of Primary Industries (DPI). The Minister is Ian Macdonald.

Exhibitions

The Trouble with the Weather: UTS Gallery, July 2007;

www.utsgallery.uts.edu.au

Alison Clouston & Boyd: www.burraborang.org

SPECIAL THANKS

Patrice Newell, Climate Change Coalition and Julie Sheppard, secretary Rivers SOS. Thanks also to Dave Burgess, Total Environment Centre, Bob Percival, Woolloomooloo Film Society, Lisa Havilah, Campbelltown Art Centre and Vivian Vidulich, Wollongong City Gallery. Toni Warburton is represented by Mori Gallery.



Toni Warburton, *Catchment Studies: volumes 1-5, 2002–2007.*

Collage, paper, cardboard, gesso photocopies, watercolours, coloured pencil, ink, graphite, glue, book binders' muslin, buckram.
Artist books bound by Newbold and Collins.

Artist Notes on *Catchment Studies* (edited):

The Hedwig beaker attained the status of a relic as it had the miraculous property of making ordinary water taste so pure that it seemed like an exquisite wine. Peat, an ancient and essential purifying filter for wetlands was dredged from Wingecarribee Swamp in the Southern tablelands of NSW under the cynical jurisdiction of a mining lease, despite ten years of public outcry. This removal of part of its structural fabric weakened the entire peat land and in 1998, after heavy rains, most of the swamp collapsed. This ecological disaster also compromised the local drinking water.

THE CROSS ART PROJECTS

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THE CROSS
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Undermining RIVERS

SYDNEY'S DRINKING WATER ENDANGERED BY LONGWALL COAL MINING

18 July to 11 August 2007

Artists DEBORAH VAUGHAN
and TONI WARBURTON
with Rivers SOS

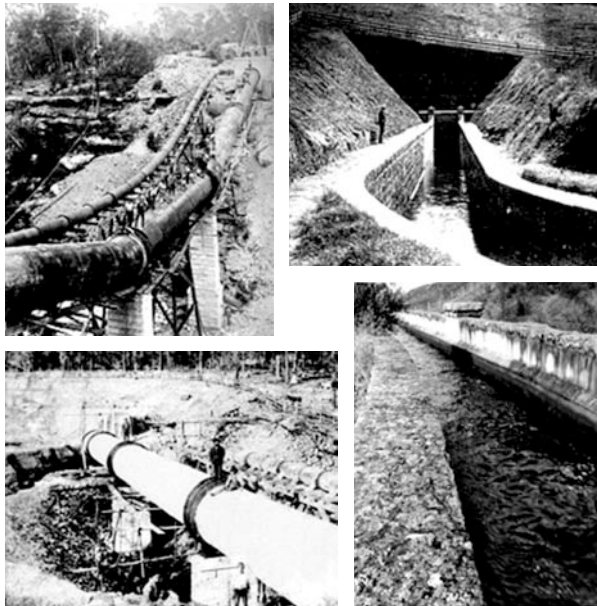


Toni Warburton, *Rain water in a glass*, 1999. Lithograph.

UNDERMINING RIVERS is an exhibition placing works by leading contemporary artists Deborah Vaughan and Toni Warburton side-by-side with activist commentary to ask who owns Sydney's pristine water resources. Rivers in our sacrosanct water catchment areas have been cracked, drained and polluted: undermined by underground coal mining.

Sydney Catchment Authority has no power to stop mining directly under and beside the rivers and dams of the Upper Nepean catchment area. Until recently, it was fundamental that protection zones applied to essential drinking water catchments. In the midst of a global water crisis what new madness is this?

Although these special catchments are normally hidden from view, dramatic photographs by environmentalist Julie Sheppard show vanished rivers and creeks, poisoned water and barren ground. Longwall coal mining causes this subsidence damage. Once the gargantuan longwall machine has made its cut (of up to 2km long) and passed, the roof is allowed to fall. The short film 'Rivers of Shame' shows the wider impacts of this greed for coal.



'Upper Nepean Water Supply Scheme, 1880-1883'. Showing (clockwise): Upper Nepean Water Scheme, brick-lined inlet of Mount Annan Tunnel, Upper Nepean Water Canal, Water Supply. The four big Upper Nepean dams - Nepean, Avon, Cordeaux and Cataract - supply 20% of Sydney's supply of drinking water. Water is pumped to the city's Prospect Reservoir. Courtesy Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society.

In their installations, artists Deborah Vaughan and Toni Warburton also raise moral questions. As Deborah Vaughan's work 'Train Schizzes' (2007) underscores, coal supplies are no abstract issue but one close to our heart. Her looped footage of empty and full coal trains eternally running up and down the Illawarra Line suggest the conflict: our computers, stoves and heating run on cheap coal-fired electricity. But we pay with environmental consequences.

In Toni Warburton's 'Wall Chronology: Transactions to Catchment' (1990-2007) a sculptural figure of a boy in eighteenth century dress drinks a beaker of water. He seems to read a poetic wall-text describing the pleasure of his drink. Alongside, an elegant wall installation of ceramic, glass and artist's books connects the ancient beaker form and purification rituals to the natural science of water filtration.

If the coal mining damage continues, we will need more than a desalination plant to secure adequate water resources. Global warming has begun and there is more abrupt climate change ahead. Yet our policy makers and state Treasury are reluctant to change their ways.

In recent years, the state government has approved new longwall leases for the world's largest resources company BHP Billiton (Illawarra Coal) and the world's largest coal company, Peabody Energy (Metropolitan Mine), under our water catchments. More are in the pipeline.

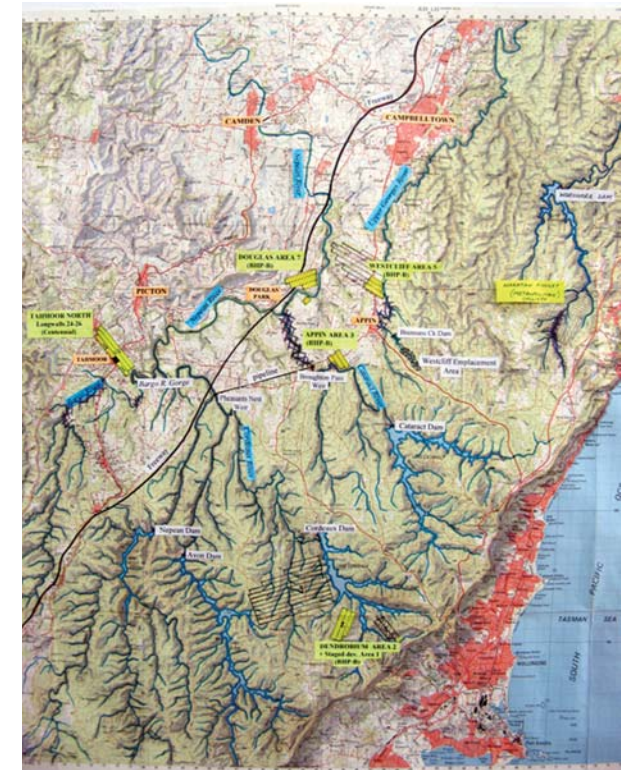
Jo Holder, July 2007



Julie Sheppard, 'Waratah Rivulet: Cracked, Drained, Polluted', 2007. The Waratah Rivulet makes up about 30% of the Woronora Dam catchment. The Rivulet is dry because of the impacts of underground longwall coal mining 500m below the surface.



Deborah Vaughan, 'Train Schizzes', 2007. Installation, variable dimensions.



Julie Sheppard, 'Map showing proposed longwall coal mines that threaten rivers in Upper Nepean and Upper Georges River Special Catchment Areas, NSW', 2007. Printed map, pen and collage.