

19 September 2022

The Hon. James Griffin MP
NSW Minister for Environment and Heritage
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Griffin,

Re: Request for action to be taken on recent pollution of Camp Creek Gully in Royal National Park by Metropolitan Colliery, Helensburgh

The Australian Plants Society NSW Limited (APS NSW) is a community organisation with over 1500 members across New South Wales, including a well-established group in Sutherland Shire with a history of over 50 years. APS NSW strongly advocates for the protection and conservation of our unique natural areas including bushland, waterways and marine areas, and the incredibly diverse flora and fauna that inhabit these areas.

Our members are highly concerned and distressed to learn of a recent pollution incident in Camp Creek Gully, Royal National Park, due to the operations of Metropolitan Colliery at Helensburgh.

This pollution occurred inside our oldest national park and in our “backyard”, which is Sutherland Shire. Our members have extensive knowledge and expertise of the flora and fauna of the Royal National Park and regularly undertake voluntary conservation and rehabilitation activities in these and other local areas. Camp Gully is a proposed site for re-introduction of Platypus by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which will now be delayed due to this incident. Camp Gully feeds directly into the Hacking River.

We do not accept that the extensive rainfall this year, is an excuse that the Colliery can use to defend this extremely detrimental outcome. This is not the first pollution incident reported to have taken place, due to the Colliery operations (Sydney Morning Herald, 14 September 2022 <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/royal-national-park-creek-runs-black-after-coal-mine-pollution-incident-20220913-p5bhlj.html>)

We support the current investigation by the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

We urge you as Minister of Environment and Heritage to:

- Use your authority and influence to impose severe penalties for these and other similar pollution incidents which harm natural areas that protect biodiversity.
- Impose stop-work orders and cease extraction activities when such events take place.
- Consider, as a society, ending the life of this Colliery. We advocate that we must move away from the use of coal as a fuel and steel-making resource, to negate climate change.

Metropolitan Colliery is repeatedly demonstrating it is causing severe detriment to the health and integrity of the Royal National Park and its biodiversity values.

We urge you to undertake strong and appropriate action, for the benefit of our local environment and biodiversity, now and for future generations.

Yours Sincerely,

Dan Clarke (B.Sc – Hons)

Conservation Officer, on behalf of the Board of Australian Plants Society – NSW.

Email: office@austplants.com.au