

Petition to the President and Members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales

This Petition of residents of New South Wales calls on the House to protect the Greater Sydney drinking water catchment, and ensure that biodiversity offsets are not used to enable Peabody's destruction of endangered Coastal Upland Swamps in the Woronora Reservoir 'Special Area' catchment. Six swamps could be impacted by mining induced subsidence if the Metropolitan Colliery MP08_0149-Mod-4 modification is approved. New research has found that damage to swamps from mining is irreversible, and that **over 45% of swamps at the Woronora Plateau are at risk of collapse if undermining there continues**.

Swamps play a vital role filtering the water in the catchment, slowly releasing and purifying it through natural peat ecosystems, even when other parts of the catchment become dry. Swamps are listed as a threatened “endangered ecological community... facing a very high risk of extinction in NSW in the near future”.

“Significant concerns” about this modification have been raised by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water: a “potential for irreversible impacts to high priority groundwater dependent ecosystems and impacts to the ecological and hydrological functioning of watercourses within Sydney’s drinking water catchment.” Further monitoring is no solution. By the time impacts are apparent remediation is no longer possible.

If this modification is approved, the original conditions of consent from 2009 will apply. This means Peabody will be allowed to purchase offsets even if the company causes serious and irreversible damage. These swamps are a high biodiversity 'red flag' area: no offset can stand in to replace them.

We ask the House to protect the integrity of the Woronora Reservoir 'Special Area' catchment, and ensure that Peabody are not permitted to use biodiversity offsets to legitimise irreversible damage to critical public infrastructure: Sydney relies on a properly functioning water catchment for its survival.

* Please mail completed petition sheets to Save our Swamps, PO Box 3080, Bundeena, NSW 2230