

Rivers of Shame

- Seven major rivers and numerous creeks in NSW, named below, have been permanently damaged by mining operations which have been allowed to go too close to, or under, river beds. Also some rivers are used as channels for saline and acid waste water pumped out from mines.
- Many more are under threat right now. Rivers SOS is concerned that Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, will continue to give Government approval for mining operations which will wreck several more of our rivers. Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor, and Environment Minister Bob Debus are also involved in these decisions, as are a range of relevant government agencies (EPA, Fisheries, DIPNR, SCA, etc.) on the Interagency Review Committee. This group gives recommendations concerning underground mine plans to Ian Macdonald, but has no further say in his final decision.
- The damage involves multiple cracking of river bedrock, ranging from hairline cracks to cracks up to several centimetres wide, causing water loss and pollution as ecotoxic chemicals are leached from the fractured rocks. Aquifers may often be breached. Satisfactory remediation is not possible. In addition, rockfalls along mined river gorges are frequent.
- The rapidly rising price of coal and the royalties gained from expanding mines for a cash-strapped government make it all too tempting for the Lemma Government to sacrifice natural heritage for the sake of short term gains.
- Rivers SOS is a coalition of 30 groups which have joined together with the sole aim of campaigning for the NSW Government to mandate a safety zone of at least **1 km** round all rivers in NSW, to protect them from damage being caused by mining operations. Such a safety zone is surely not much to ask, given the huge profits being made from our coal.
- The following rivers/creeks have been damaged by, or are under threat from, mining - mostly coal mines, either underground or open cut, therefore we divide areas below according to the location of NSW's five major coalfields:

Southern Coalfield:

- **Lower Cataract River, Upper Georges River:** very badly cracked, drained and polluted
- **Stokes Creek, Bargo River, Upper Nepean River, Flying Fox Creek, Wongawilli Creek, Native Dog Creek, Waratah Rivulet:** cracked, polluted.
- **Upper Georges River and Upper Nepean River:** also acting as conduits for polluted and saline wastewater pumped out from 3 mines.
- **Camp Gully Creek, Hacking River:** coal wash reject leaches into creek from collapsed waste dump, then into river: creek and river often turn black.
- **Upper Cataract River** (part of Sydney's water supply), **Upper Nepean River, Upper Georges River, Bargo River, Mallaty Creek, Ousedale Creek, Leafs Gully Creek, Lily Pond Gully**

Creek and several unnamed creeks: all under immediate threat from mine plans now seeking approval and going far too close to these river/creek beds in all cases.

- **Duck Creek, Kembla Creek** and several unnamed creeks and a hanging swamp are all under threat from the new Dendrobium mine near Cordeaux Dam.

Western Coalfield:

- **Goulburn River:** has been diverted into an 8 km manmade channel, impacting on base flow and water quality, in order to facilitate mining operations. Is now under threat from further operations that will damage the beauty spot known as “The Great Dripping Wall” in the Goulburn River Gorge.
- **Farmers Creek:** cracked, had to be paved with cement where it runs through Lithgow. Pumpouts of 15ML/day from Centennial mine into **Farmers Creek** and the **Wollongambe River**, badly polluting the water. Iron and manganese is being deposited on the bed of Farmers Creek and the Wollongambe River
- **Cox’s River:** base flows impacted by mining, hanging swamps damaged, lack of environmental flows, rising salinity and alkalinity due to mine dewatering. Long Swamp, at the source of Cox’s River, dying probably through longwall mining
- **Moolarben Creek, Cumbo Creek, Wilpinjong Creek:** in headwaters of Goulburn River, all under threat from open cut mine development. Wilpinjong may cease to flow altogether. Cumbo Creek and other unnamed watercourses to be “re-located.”
- **Lett River, Hartley Vale:** cracked, flow ceased, platypus deaths.
- **Neubeck’s Creek:** contamination and erosion of banks from open cut mining
- **Kangaroo Creek:** rising salinity from mine dewatering (Angus Place Colliery)
- **Jew’s Creek:** rising salinity from mine dewatering (Baal Bone Colliery)
- **Daylight Creek:** Former Sunny Corner mine site contaminated creek with lead, cadmium, copper, zinc and arsenic

Newcastle/Hunter Coalfield:

- **Hunter River:** salinity due to multiple mines in catchment area
- **Bowman’s Creek:** Ravensworth, flow disappeared due to cracking
- **Diega Creek:** Wakefield, flow disappeared due to cracking
- **South Wambo Creek:** Bulga, flow disappeared due to cracking

- **Glennies Creek, Eui Creek, Fishery Creek, Black Creek, Foy Brook:** cracked and polluted.
- **Pages River:** Now under threat
- **Kingdon Ponds:** Under threat

Gunnedah Coalfield:

- **Mooki River:** threat from BHP Billiton's massive new Carroona development.
- **Upper Namoi River:** upper Namoi region groundwater, used by farmers, also threatened by the above.

Compiled with information from all groups in the NSW Rivers SOS alliance.
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Updated: September 2006