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MEDIA RELEASE

The Rivers SOS Alliance Welcomes a Timely Leak.

Last week's leaked report from DECC on the impacts of coal mining in NSW, confirms and outlines the concerns which the 38 community and environmental groups in our alliance have been voicing for many years.

Though DECC Minister Verity Firth has refused to meet with a Rivers SOS delegation, at least we now know that senior staff in her Department share our low opinion of the way the Lemma government is approving mine plans hand over fist, with no regard for long term environmental effects – effects which the report rightly calls “devastating” in many instances.

The report calls for more input from DECC into decisions on mine plans and mine expansions, although it admits that its own officers are not at present always well-informed on the topic of subsidence impacts on the environment.

It notes that environmental impacts of mining can be long-lasting, leaving a tragic legacy for future generations. Also that “the environmental and social costs of mining should not be borne by the community ...”

As for rehabilitation of mine sites, the “true cost of rehabilitation” is not reflected in security deposits, and anyway “many environmental features cannot be adequately remediated.”

Because of destabilised and cracked river beds, net water loss and contamination of water from minerals and other contaminants leaching from fractured sandstone, the report calls for avoidance of mining near or under water courses – which the Rivers SOS Alliance has called for since its inception in 2005.

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(We would be happy to forward copies of this 57 page report to any reporters who might be interested.)

● Rivers SOS is a coalition of environment/community groups; formed as a result of the wrecking of rivers in NSW by mining operations. We campaign for a safety zone of at least 1k round all rivers to protect them from ongoing damage. Groups supporting this campaign are: The Wilderness Society ● Nature Conservation Council of NSW ● Total Environment Centre ● Colong Foundation for Wilderness ● Blue Mountains Conservation Society ● Mineral Policy Institute ● Minewatch NSW ● Sutherland Environment Centre ● Macarthur, Illawarra & Southern Sydney National Parks Associations ● Gloucester Environment Group ● Nepean Action Group ● Georges River Environmental Action Team ● Hunter Environment Lobby ● Greens NSW ● Waterkeepers Australia ● Central West Environment Council ● OnlyOne Planet Australia ● Mudgee District Environment Group ● Mountain Dragon Bushwalkers ● Lithgow Environment Group ● Pages River and Tributaries Water Users' Association ● Clarence Residents' Association ● Johnsons Creek Conservation Committee ● Save Barrington Tops Committee ● NSW Canoeists Inc. ● River Canoe Club ● Caroon Coal Action Group ● Australian Coal Alliance ● Wollondilly Bass Club ● Ironside Community Action Group ● Georges River Environmental Alliance ● Wollondilly Bass Club ● Barrington-Gloucester-Stroud Preservation Committee ● Upper Hunter Waterkeepers' Alliance ● Robertson Environment Protection Society ● Save Water Alliance