

Mining jobs won't last - our need for water will

Kristina Keneally says she approved mining under southern Sydney's water supply as a trade-off between the environment and jobs ("New mine could crack dam floor", July 23). Perhaps more honestly, the Planning Minister is trading off a guaranteed supply of fresh drinking water for countless families for mining company royalties and donations to the Labor Party.

Jobs are the last thing on her mind as she approves mine after mine and our natural heritage slowly disappears. It is time the Government stopped wheeling out the tired old "jobs versus environment" excuse to justify its poor decisions. The only jobs ministers are trying to shore up are their own.

Cate Faehrmann executive director, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Sydney

Three cheers for Michael Richardson for exposing the Government's scandalous abuse of Sydney's water supplies by approving longwall mining under Woronora Reservoir. Water aside, this mine's 23-year approval takes us well beyond the date by which the Federal Government expects carbon trading to reduce carbon emissions by more than 25 per cent from 2000 levels.

That is not going to happen without betraying those 1950 people whose jobs Kristina Keneally claims to be protecting with this mine. She should be planning and funding their progressive redeployment for a sustainable future in which coal remains sequestered underground.

This mine-blinded Government is either indifferent to the untenable future of coalmining or contemptuous of climate concerns. What exactly is the role of its Minister for Climate Change and the Environment?

Murray Scott Heathcote

So advice from the Government's own agencies and experts was ignored for the most part by Kristina Keneally when she approved a plan allowing Peabody Resources to mine coal underneath part of Woronora Reservoir. And this in a time of increasing drought and predicted water restrictions.

It is bad enough that the Government is allowing mining all over the supposedly highly protected Sydney catchment. It is worse when these companies are allowed to damage and possibly drain Sydney's water storage dams.

The Rivers SOS Alliance, of which I am a regional representative, has been calling for a three-year moratorium on mine expansions in the catchment while research projects on the impacts of mining on water resources are completed. Obviously the NSW Government is so desperate for cash it will not countenance such a pause.

When are the people of NSW going to wake up to the damage being done to their drinking water catchments by mining companies in league with this disreputable Government?

Caroline Graham Douglas Park

Worried about loss of water from a cracked Woronora Dam? No problem. Simply build another desalination plant and power it with the coal mined that caused the problem in the first place. Surely not beyond the vision of this Government.

Rod Hughes Epping