



RRCFC - unique upland swamp Endangered Ecological Community threatened by mining exploration

Rylstone, Australia, September 15, 2021 – locals fear unique threatened ecological communities on the western side of the Blue Mountains may be lost forever if mining exploration in the area is allowed to go ahead.

The NSW Government is currently undertaking the first stage of the Hawkins Rumker Preliminary Regional Issues Assessment (PRIA) process that, along with the yet to be announced Ganguddy-Kelgoola PRIA, is intended to open up the Upper Cudgong Valley for coal exploration and exploitation.

Before the RRCFC commissioned an investigation seeking to quantify the real value of the valley's landscapes and the potential impacts of coal mining; the presence of endangered Montane mire ecological communities within the Hawkins Rumker areas – of equal value to the hanging swamps of the Blue Mountains and Newnes Plateau region – was unknown.

These ecological communities are unlike any populations anywhere else and they're a vital part of the ecology and agricultural production of the area as they act like a giant sponge. They absorb water during rainfall events and release it slowly during droughts providing water for wildlife, the environment and farmers' livestock.

According to Molino Stewart environmental principal, Shireen Baguley, author of the RRCFC's submission to the PRIA on the region's Aquatic Ecology, "The Swamp Grassland and Sphagnum Bog in the central part of Coxs Creek are thoroughly unique while their conservation status is poor at regional, state and national levels. There is more than 21.5 km of EEC between Reedy, Breakfast and Coxs Creeks, and Reedy Creek and Breakfast Creek have extensive tracts of riparian meadows. Reedy Creek contains the most intact riparian vegetation types in the entire Lawsons Creek catchment and in some ways these areas are even more fragile as they're isolated and more drought prone."

Independent conservation biologist/ecologist, Dr Ian Baird added, "the critical factor for development of these peat swamp types is reliable water, and groundwater inputs typically play an important role in these sandstone landscapes, backed up by direct rainfall inputs. Coxs Creek, Reedy Creek and Breakfast Creek catchments have significant areas of NSW and Commonwealth listed Endangered mire ecological communities which would be threatened by any coal mining which affected groundwater levels."

RRCFC spokesperson, Janet Walk, said, "Regardless of the type of mining proposed – underground or open cut - there will be severe and irreversible impacts on surface water including springs, creeks and rivers. This will lead to the permanent loss of the meadows, sphagnum bogs, wetlands and associated ecosystems as well as a wide range of threatened species, populations and communities.

"Coal mining in the same types of montane mires on the Newnes Plateau has contributed to the drying out and destruction of these ecological communities. The NSW Government has admitted its own erroneous environmental approvals processes were to blame and that there is no more social licence for undermining these sensitive areas. In the Hawkins Rumker potential release areas, there is a clear pathway to avoid making the same mistakes again."



The vegetation is an important part of the complex of endangered montane mire communities distributed across the tablelands and adjacent ranges of NSW and are referable to the Montane Peatlands and Swamps Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) listing under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and the Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 listing.

For media enquiries, contact Darren Baguley; media@rylstonecfc.com or 0409 155 594.

About RRCFC

The Rylstone Region Coal Free Community (RRCFC) is a self-funded, non-politically aligned community group committed to protecting the Upper Cudgegong Valley and the region around Rylstone and Kandos by stopping further exploration of coal and approval of new coal mines in our region. Our aim is to protect the land, heritage, culture and community for now and future generations by fully informing the community of the implications of the Hawkins, Rumker and Ganguddy-Kelgoola coal exploration releases. For more information about the RRCFC, visit www.rylstonecfc.com; follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).