



News Release

Attention News Editors
For immediate release
9 May 2008

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Rivers DVD doesn't present the full story: Illawarra Coal

Illawarra Coal has urged potential viewers of the second Rivers SOS DVD, Rivers of Shame II to acquaint themselves with the full story about mining and rivers, before making any judgements.

The company, which operates longwall mines at Appin but has for the past four years NOT mined under waterways including the Georges, Nepean and Cataract rivers, has expressed concern at the current wave of misinformation, which is having an adverse effect on the lives of people who live and work in the region.

Illawarra Coal's General Manager Sustainable Development and External Affairs, John Brannon, said he believed the public deserved a better balance of information.

"As a proud local, our company believes local people – many of whom work for, or derive direct and indirect benefits through our long-time presence in the Illawarra – should be presented with the facts. And the facts are that we are not mining under rivers, we are seeking to mine in a sustainable way, and our mining is not having any impact on the quality of Sydney's water supply," he said.

Mr Brannon said that Illawarra Coal made a decision not to mine under rivers four years ago, resulting in a major reduction in impacts on rivers. In the region of the Nepean River, there is no measured impact on aquatic fauna, there is no water loss and any impacts are minor and less than predicted in approved plans.

"Subsidence effects identified recently in the Nepean River are minor releases of gas at the surface which are a normal and temporary impact from mining that have no long term effect on the environment.

"Illawarra Coal is committed to making responsible mine planning decisions and to protecting natural features, such as rivers and as a business we make our decisions based on fact," he said.

"The fact is that there have been impacts from our mining in the past, and Illawarra Coal has not shied away from the responsibility of successfully dealing with the impacts, particularly from past mining directly under the Cataract and Georges Rivers.

"The company has successfully undertaken rehabilitation works in each case, restoring water flows and the health of both rivers to as close to pre-mining conditions as possible.

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“Importantly, rehabilitation to the Georges River has ensured that pools do not dry out, even in times of low flow – this has been clearly demonstrated by water flow monitoring data collected since the completion of rehabilitation.”

Mr Brannon added that the Company’s applications to mine are comprehensive in nature and include predictions of impacts based on years of scientific data collected by experts.

“Illawarra Coal has been operating in the Southern coal fields for close to 80 years and we are committed to environmentally sustainable mining in order to provide ongoing economic benefits to the region and state,” he said.

“Our company has consistently demonstrated its high level of commitment to sustainable mining, recently winning the Australian Institute of Energy’s Excellence in Energy Award in the Energy and Environment Category for its world first greenhouse reduction initiative – West VAMP; and Sydney Water’s Largest Volume Reduction Award for its water savings initiatives at its Appin Mine operations.”

The economic contribution of Illawarra Coal accounts for about 4.4 per cent of the Gross Regional Product in the Illawarra and Wollondilly regions.

In detail that represents, including flow-on effects about 5900 jobs, \$520 million in Gross Regional Product and \$278 million in household income.

For every one person employed by Illawarra Coal, there are almost another five jobs created, which is the highest employment flow-on effect for the regions – even greater than the metals industry, retail, construction and education.

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