

**Friends of
Minnamurra River (FOMR) (Incorporated)**

NEWS RELEASE



14 January 2021

**KIAMA COMMUNITY GROUP SEEKS AUSTRALIAN AND WORLD SUPPORT
FOR BORAL CHALLENGE**

A Kiama community group is seeking support from the environmentally concerned in Australia and around the world to support a challenge to the recent NSW government decision to approve two sand mines close to the Minnamurra River, sand mines which the same government's environment department says will destroy government-protected rare ecological plant communities.

Friends of Minnamurra River (FOMR) has established a crowd funding website inviting financial support for its intended challenge to the approval, mainly on economic grounds, of the proposal by the multinational building materials' supplier, Boral, to dig two large mining pits adjacent to the Minnamurra River to extract sand for construction sites in Sydney.

The crowd-funding website, with details of the FOMR Fighting Fund, went live this week at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-the-minnamurra-river-from-boral-sandmines>

FOMR is an association of community volunteers formed four years ago in the Kiama local government area to protect the biodiversity and fragile marine, terrestrial and aquatic environments of the catchment, banks and estuary of the Minnamurra River, one of the last largely natural estuaries in southeast Australia, so far relatively unmodified by industry and urban over-development.

It's chair, Kiama Downs' Will Chyra, says FOMR intends to fight the approval to have it reversed or at least have a new Boral application assessed under the government's new environmental protection legislation. He says the government allowed Boral to have its original application assessed under old, outdated and inadequate legislative criteria.

Mr Chyra says habitat destruction is one of the biggest crises faced by Australia and the world and the mining threat to the Minnamurra River is very much a part of this crisis.

"Even the NSW government's own environment department concedes that the sand mines will destroy the local environment and yet this destruction of landscapes many thousands of years old is for mines that will have a life of only three to four years", Mr Chyra says.

Kiama Council and Shellharbour City Council, strongly oppose the Boral sand mines and are supported by a large majority of their residents.

Mr Chyra says that the Planning, Industry and Environment Department of the government which gave Boral approval, has documented in its November 2020 assessment of the Boral proposal that the sand mining will:

- Require the clearance of 4.5 ha of Bangalay Sand Forest which is a listed endangered ecological community (EEC) under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, destroying habitats for the Barking Owl and Masked Owl;
- Destroy or adversely impact communities of Southern Myotis, listed as vulnerable in NSW and subject to a conservation strategy by another NSW government;
- Require the clearance of three hectares of other native vegetation as well as the clearance of three hectares of exotic grassland;
- Increase the risk of downstream pollution and sedimentation of already stressed seagrass beds and fish habitat in the Minnamurra River estuary;
- Destroy Aboriginal cultural materials and both identified and unidentified Aboriginal archaeological sites;
- Necessitate the building of a network of flood levees or bunds which will be a landscape-disfiguring 5.5m to 6m high.

Mr Chyra says the changes in flood flows that the sand mines will cause, also risks toxic flows into the Minnamurra River and its tributary, Rocklow Creek, from the former Kiama Council landfill and human excreta dump sites, just across the road from the mine sites.

He asks everyone to consider the threats posed to the irreplaceable environmental and scenic values of the Minnamurra River by the sand mining approval and recommends a visit to FOMR's crowd funding website at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-the-minnamurra-river-from-boral-sandmines>

Contact: Will Chyra – 0419 633 191