

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

**NEWS RELEASE**



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**BORAL BREACHES ITS COMMUNITY LIAISON UNDERTAKING**

**BUT FOMR WILL MEET TO TRY TO PREVENT SAND**

**MINING ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION**

Boral Australia has rejected the request of Friends of Minnamurra River (FOMR) to honour its community liaison commitment and undertake an independent environmental impact statement (EIS) of its proposed new sand mines in the Minnamurra River catchment but FOMR will still meet with the company to try to prevent the serious environmental damage that a NSW government department says the sand mines will cause.

FOMR wrote to Boral in late January asking the company to live up to its published commitment to continue to work with the community to ensure Boral “meet or exceed all of our planning conditions” in the two new sand mines and, consistent with that undertaking, to work with FOMR and the community on preparing a full and independent environmental impact statement, under NSW government guidelines, for the mines.

In its reply to FOMR of early February, Boral rejected the FOMR proposal for an independent environmental impact assessment, saying its own environmental assessment, not a more rigorous EIS, of the sand mining project two years ago was sufficient.

Instead, Boral proposed that FOMR meet with Boral’s “technical team members to share our plans moving forward and discuss the proposed mitigation and environmental monitoring regime” (for the new sand mines).

FOMR Chair, Will Chyra, said today FOMR will accept Boral’s meeting invitation because, he said, it is absolutely essential to try to prevent Boral from destroying hectares of native trees, other native vegetation and animal and bird habitats – despite their supposed current protection under NSW government legislation - when it establishes its two new sand mines.

“This environmental destruction is not only unacceptable but it is unnecessary, because we know that Boral has entirely adequate sand reserves in its unused Stage 4 of its existing sand mines on the western side of the Princes Highway at Dunmore, well away from the Minnamurra River,” Mr Chyra says.

“We will use our promised meeting or meetings with Boral to encourage the company to utilise its existing Stage 4 mining area instead of tearing up State-protected and threatened ecological communities for new mines,” he says.

“Boral’s new sand mines in the Minnamurra River catchment will be environmentally disastrous and their approval late last year by the NSW government shows that NSW governmental environmental protection legislation is not worth the paper it is printed on,” Mr Chyra says.

“The NSW government has given Boral permission to bulldoze hectares of native trees, other native vegetation and animal and bird habitats. This also bulldozes the legislation the NSW government itself has put in place supposedly to prevent just such environmental destruction,” Mr Chyra says.

“The NSW government is overriding its own legislation and allowing the total and permanent destruction of a large area of natural environment, just for a multi-national corporation’s couple of sand mines with an operational life of only three to four years anyway.

“This entire project should be strongly opposed by all thinking people everywhere,” Mr Chyra says.

The NSW government’s Department of Environment, conceded in November 2020 that the new sand mines will cause substantial environmental destruction. It said Boral’s new mines will:

- Require the clearance of 4.5 hectares 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 agency;
- 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.

In meeting with Boral and in our public activities, we will be doing everything we can to stop this disastrous situation from occurring and we invite local, State, Australian and international communities to support us,” Mr Chyra says.

The new Boral sand mines are opposed by a minister in the NSW government, Gareth Ward, who is also the MP for Kiama and by Kiama and Shellharbour Councils.

FOMR has established a Go Fund Me website at <https://au.gofundme.com/f/save-the-minnamurra-river-from-boral-sandmines?qid=23c70095197c71c24a14538bbe71b5e9> to fund its opposition to the new sand mines.

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