

DUNMORE LAKES SAND PROJECT – STAGE 5 MODIFICATIONS – DUNMORE - NSW

Woronora Plateau Gundagara Elders Council (WPGEC) do not support the proposed modifications of extraction of DLS Boral AFT 1 & DLS Boral AFT 2. The proposed modifications & extraction will see the mine's life extended for a further three to four years, causing irreparable and complete destruction of a rare and valuable natural and cultural landscape. Dunmore Lakes is one of very few undisturbed estuarine environments remaining in the Illawarra region and wider surrounds. It holds an intact and rich archaeological site, and encompasses land of cultural and modern historical importance. The identified high significance of harm to the impacted area must be considered to be of more worth than the profits to be made from the proposed destructive activities by Boral. Mitigation, in this case of direct and total loss of value of this site, would be an inadequate solution and it is preferred that the afore mentioned modifications and further mining activities cease completely.

WPGEC along with other key stakeholder groups and the local Aboriginal community are of the strong belief that this site is significant for several reasons:

1. Its value as a rare undisturbed estuary environment in the Illawarra region.
2. The intactness of its archaeological deposits and its cultural importance as a site of continuous occupation with evidence of a lengthy and maintained connection to this land. This has been established through previous archaeological investigations, the most recent and relevant to this specific study area being the test excavations of 5A and 5B completed by Kelleher Nightingale Consulting and registered stakeholder groups between the 19th and 23rd November 2018. A total of 461 artefacts found at site DLS Boral AFT 1 and 828 artefacts found at site DLS Boral AFT 2. These artefacts included coarse silcrete flaked fragments with cortex, crystalline quartz backed artefacts, retouched jasper and silcrete, a petrified wood backed blade, an agate geometric microlith, a charcoal feature, and a hammerstone which was recorded *in situ* at around 65cm depth. The number and distribution of artefacts clearly show that occupation and activities at this site occurred during a prolonged period of time, and on a repeated basis. Furthermore, analysis and interpretation of the material recovered from these test excavations may suffice for the purposes of understanding and managing sites in similar estuarine environments, thus not requiring the data from the proposed salvage and allowing this site to remain otherwise intact.
3. Its proximity to the site of a massacre which occurred just to the south of the study area.
"In October 1818 Lieutenant Weston, land owner at Dapto and Cornelius O'Brien, formerly a stockman at Sandon Point and now the overseer of a property at Yallah, organised a group of seven labourers and convicts. Unusually armed with muskets, cutlasses and pikes, they headed to Kiama supposedly to fetch two muskets lent to a group of people living on the Minnamurra River. According to Young Bundle, who was long trusted by the British, the posse killed all the people at the camp. The attackers admitted only to wounding a boy in self-defence. After a sharp letter of protest from Charles Throsby to Governor Macquarie, the murders were investigated by D'Arcy Wentworth, the Principal Superintendent of Police, along with other magistrates. They took no action against the killers despite a letter from Governor Macquarie to D'Arcy Wentworth expressing his "surprise, regret and displeasure" at their findings".
(Donaldson et al 2017:13).

This atrocity has now been formally acknowledged by Kiama Council, an action which should prompt appropriate respect for the site and its surrounds.

4. Its high potential of containing burials due to the traditional practices in the Illawarra region of digging graves in the soft soil along waterways, including the Minnamurra River, or into sand banks. Additionally, the proximity to the massacre noted in (3) may provide further

weight to the possibility of burials. Observations by early European settlers of similar mass deaths in the region detail how the dead would be buried nearby and close to water. Lynch (1820), for example, recounts how around seventy men, killed in the battle of Fairy Meadow, were buried in the scrub between the battle ground and the sea, between the two arms of Fairy Creek. There is therefore reason to suspect, due to the natural landscape of the Dunmore Lakes area, its recent history, and comparable information, that there may be burials from both the distant and more recent past.

The Aboriginal people of Australia possess one of the oldest continuous living cultures in the world. The protection of cultural and spiritual landscapes and materials, including sacred sites and artefacts, both past and present, is vital to maintaining this culture. We believe any type of mining of the land is unacceptable, especially for the financial gain of a highly profitable company that has already destroyed other parts of the land and impacted the local communities and environment to date. The Government has legislation in place to protect heritage listed buildings as they represent Australian culture and history, and this is seen being enforced around Australia on a daily basis. Aboriginal culture and history demands the same respect and value, through the regular and repeated preservation and protection of significant sites such as Dunmore Lakes.

We oppose any approval for the mining of sand for this project.

Kind Regards
 Kayla Williamson
 Woronora Plateau Gundangara Elders Council

REFERENCES

Donaldson, M., L. Bursill, & M. Jacobs, 2017. A History of Aboriginal Illawarra, Volume 2: Colonisation, Dharawal Publications: Yowie Bay, NSW.

We have supporting signatures below of stakeholder groups and community members that also have the same view as listed above.

NAME	GROUP/COMMUNITY	SIGNATURE

