

Friends of Minnamurra River Incorporated¹

www.saveminnamurrariver.org

9 Samuels Lane
KIAMA DOWNS
NSW 2533

Email: FOMR2533@gmail.com



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Monday 22 January 2024

URGENT CALL TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: IMMEDIATELY STOP BORAL DESTROYING MINNAMURRA SACRED SITE AND NATIONAL HERITAGE NOW THE COMPANY HAS NEW LOCAL SAND RESOURCES

The federal government is being called on to immediately stop Boral Limited continuing to destroy the Minnamurra sacred site it is currently sand-dredging now that the company has acquired large new sand resources adjacent to its existing sand mines at Dunmore, NSW.

For years, Boral has used the excuse that it is running out of sand to justify its destruction in 2022 and 2023 of its Site 5A, a rich Aboriginal heritage site, in front of Dunmore House, Minnamurra, and now its daily sand-dredging destruction of its Site 5B, out of public view immediately behind or south of Dunmore House.

Site 5B is the subject of a current application by an Illawarra Wodi Wodi Elder for an emergency declaration by the federal Minister for the Environment, Tanya Plibersek, using the powers of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act (ATSIHP Act), to stop Boral destroying the sacred site.

The sacred site burial ground, proven to also contain a wealth of nationally significant cultural heritage and artefacts after more than 30,000 years of continuous Wodi Wodi occupation there, is the same area currently recommended by a federal government-commissioned expert consultant for declaration, also under the ATSIHP Act, by Minister Plibersek as a Significant Aboriginal Area.

So far, the Minister has failed to make the declaration which would immediately stop Boral destroying the site and would protect the area from damage and destruction in perpetuity.

FOMR Chair, Will Chyra, said today that he hoped Boral Limited was enough of an Australian corporate citizen, sensitive to Australian history and culture, to immediately stop destroying the Minnamurra sacred site now that it had recently bought 10.5 hectares of new sand resources right beside its existing sand mines west of the Princes Motorway at Dunmore.

On 23 December 2023, Boral exchanged contracts for the purchase for \$4.4 million of a 22.7ha former farm adjoining its existing sand mines. According to marketing information,

¹ Friends of Minnamurra River (FOMR) is an active incorporated community-based association formed six years ago to conserve, protect and enhance the estuarine and catchment ecosystems of the Minnamurra River. It has qualified expertise available to it and within its membership in plant and animal ecology, archaeology, hydrology and environmental science.

the property has 10.5 hectares of mineable sand with 4.85 of those already approved in 2004 for sand mining as a State Significant Development by the NSW Minister for Planning (Development Application 195-8-2004). The sand mining area already approved even borders a previous Boral dredge pit.

Mr Chyra says Boral will undoubtedly also seek NSW government approval to mine the balance of 5.66 ha of sand it has acquired by buying the former farm, giving it 10.5 ha for mining well into the future.

“If it has a corporate conscience, Boral should and must get out of Minnamurra Site 5B right now.

“Boral should not have pre-empted the Minister’s declaration of a Significant Aboriginal Area in the first place but now that has just acquired many more alternative sand resources closer to its existing mines, it no longer has any excuse at all for continuing to destroy priceless Australian cultural heritage at Minnamurra Site 5B and that all important, very sensitive sacred site,” Mr Chyra says.

As a result of Boral’s purchase, Mr Chyra said, he would again be contacting the federal Environment Minister today with a renewed request to the Minister to immediately grant the current ATSIHP Act Section 9 application over the Site 5B area at Minnamurra and then move quickly to make a Significant Aboriginal Area declaration for the entire specified area covered by the Section 9 Application as recommended by the Minister’s expert consultant.

Media contact: Will Chyra, Chair, FOMR Inc., 0419 633 191



FOMR Inc. Photo taken 21/01/24: Destroying a recognised Sacred Site and National Cultural Heritage Site – Boral Limited’s daily expanding sand dredge pit, Site 5B at Minnamurra, eventually to be 27-metres deep and 7.5 hectares in area, with the dredge and operator unable to even detect let alone prevent destruction of ancient human burials and countless and priceless 30,000 years of human culture.

The Commonwealth and State protected endangered ecological communities of Bangalays and Littoral Rainforest, seen in the background, are soon to be cleared by Boral unless it stops operations here immediately or is forced to do so by the federal Environment Minister.