

## Friends of Minnamurra River Incorporated

9 Samuels Lane  
KIAMA DOWNS  
NSW 2533

**Email:** FOMR2533@gmail.com



**For Immediate Publication**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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### **FOMR ALERTS EPA TO MINING DEBRIS AND SAND POLLUTION IN NATURE RESERVE'S ROCKLOW CREEK DOWNSTREAM OF BORAL LIMITED'S DUNMORE MINES**

The Friends of Minnamurra River (FOMR Inc) organisation has today alerted the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to sand and mining debris pollution on Rocklow Creek in the Ruth Devenney Nature Reserve immediately downstream of Boral Limited's Dunmore sand mining operations.

Hundreds of tonnes of sand, together with mining debris, is covering the creek banks, the wetlands of the nature reserve and parts of the reserve walking track in a 120-metre wide fan only metres downstream of where Rocklow Creek flows out under the Princes Highway from Boral Limited's sand mining area west of the highway. (*See photographs.*)

The sand and debris is on both sides of Rocklow Creek, a tributary of the Minnamurra River, which means that it is in both the Shellharbour and Kiama local government areas. Rocklow Creek forms the boundary between the two LGAs.

FOMR's chair, Will Chyra, says that it appears entirely possible that thousands of tonnes of upstream sand has been washed down Rocklow Creek during recent high rainfall events and may well have been deposited as silt in the Minnamurra River, only several hundred metres downstream.

Interspersed with the tongues of sand spread on the creek banks and through the trees and plants of the wetlands are orange plastic buoys and parts of buoys very similar to those used to support pipelines on dredge ponds in sand mining operations.

There is also what appear to be thick rubber sheets of the type used in conveyor belts as well as other debris littering various parts of the reserve.

Mr Chyra says he expects the EPA to immediately investigate the source of the pollution, take every measure necessary to prevent it recurring and impose any sanctions under the EPA's environmental protection legislation which provides for pollution offence fines of up to \$1.0 million for corporations and \$250,000 for individuals.

The area must also be cleaned up promptly, he says, because the sand and debris is covering wildlife habitat and food sources at the focal point of the nature reserve and if left, will be washed further downstream in the next inevitable flood event.

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**Media Contact:** Will Chyra, Chair, FOMR, 0419 633 191

*(Photo captions page 4)*







## **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

Page 2, top: Just a few of the tongues of deposited sand, some of them quite thick, licking through wetlands on both banks of Dunmore's Rocklow Creek in the Ruth Devenney Nature Reserve, downstream of Boral Limited's sand mining operations at Dunmore. FOMR, 17 July 2022.

Page 2, bottom: Some of many pieces of debris spread through the Ruth Devenney Nature Reserve wetlands near Rocklow Creek, Dunmore. This one, dumped by the flooded creek waters beside the nature reserve walking track, is a buoy very similar to the type used to support pipes in sand mining dredge pits. FOMR, 17 July 2022.

Page 3, top: A Royal spoonbill stands on a newly deposited plug of sand looking for food on the edge of Rocklow Creek, Dunmore. The culvert taking Rocklow Creek under the Princes Highway from the upstream Boral sand mining area can be seen at the top left of the photograph. FOMR, 17 July 2022

Page 3, bottom: More industrial debris; what appear to be strips of heavy rubber conveyor belt, part of numerous items of debris apparently spread by Rocklow Creek floodwaters along the creek banks and in surrounding Ruth Devenney Nature Reserve wetlands, immediately downstream of the Princes Highway. FOMR, 17 July 2022