



28 JUNE 2013

MEDIA RELEASE

You and Mining – What are the Facts?

THE Save Our Macleay River (SOMR) committee will next month host two workshops to highlight individual rights when it comes to mining and a Public Forum with a panel of speakers.

The Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) workshop, concerning the rights of landholders and the protection of the environment, will kick off on Saturday 20 July at 10.30am at the Anglican Hall in West Kempsey. The Forum with panel discussion begins at 1.30pm and will conclude with a Q&A session. The second EDO workshop starts at 10.30am on Sunday in Bellbrook.

Invited guest speakers include environmental scientists, various government officials and politicians, mine operators, representatives from the Dhungutti Nation, and author Sharyn Munro.

SOMR is a community-based organisation formed after a series of well-attended public meetings earlier this year. It aims to raise awareness of past, current and potential future pollution in the Macleay River catchment from mining operations on the Northern Tablelands and the gorge country.

Other key goals are to monitor further mining and exploration leases in the catchment, establish regular water testing, distribute information, contact mine operators and form alliances with other community groups who are concerned about the impact of mining on the lives and livelihoods of ordinary people.

According to Macleay resident and SOMR member, Bernadette O'Sullivan, the Macleay River is the lifeblood of the local community

“A significant portion of the community relies on the river,” she said. “For some, it is their only source of drinking water. Businesses depend on it, especially tourism, as does primary industries and many others. So water quality is paramount for every resident in our catchment.”

Fellow member, Susan Furber, acknowledges the continued and genuine importance of mining to Australia's economy, but is concerned with the perceived push toward mining from all levels of government.

Both women are increasingly alarmed that safeguards at current mine sites have not been properly implemented.

For more information go to www.saveourmacleayriver.com, a website designed to empower the community to become a strong advocate for water quality in the Macleay River.

Keep an eye out for another SOMR event - Paddle for a Cause, which will be held in late September. To coincide with the Macleay River Festival, Paddle for a Cause hopes keen paddlers with kayaks and canoes will support the event and come 'upriver' and enjoy the upper Macleay's breathtaking beauty.