

Nambucca Valley community triumph over mining pollution threat



After 18 months of intense campaigning, Lock the Nambucca Valley (LNV) members are delighted that Precious Metals Resources (PMR) has relinquished its antimony Exploration Licence (EL 8016), claiming that exploration was not justified.

EL 8016 which allowed exploration activities over 330square kilometres of the upper catchment of the Nambucca River has now been cancelled without any exploration being done. LNV is claiming the news as a triumph of community action to protect land, water and the valley"s economic future.

"The threat posed by EL 8016 to local agricultural land, our river system and town water supply has disappeared with the stroke of a pen," said group president Rudy Van Drie. "The vast majority of property owners within the exploration area in the upper reaches of Taylors Arm, South Arm, Buckra Bendinni and North Arm expressed strong opposition to any antimony exploration or mining activities in the valley. No one wants permanent arsenic and antimony pollution on their land or in their water, as has happened in the Macleay Valley because of antimony mining."

Although LNV will never know how much its existence and actions influenced PMR"s decision to pull out, the strong community opposition to proposed mining activities was well known to the mining company.

According to LNV, the group wrote twice to PMR introducing itself, posing a number of questions and attempting to commence dialogue with the company, however PMR never responded to LNV's questions or undertook any community consultation regarding its proposed activities.

It is well known that much of the valley's local economy is dependent on a healthy river system.

"The community has made it known that it does not need or want a polluting industry which takes its profits out of the valley and leaves behind a permanent and expensive problem like the toxic antimony processing site at Urunga Lagoon and the ongoing arsenic pollution of the Macleay River and floodplain from the Hillgrove antimony mine area at its headwaters," said Mr Van Drie, who is a hydrologist by profession.

Many properties in the valley display Lock the Gate" signs and LNV is advising land owners, especially those in the upper catchment, to leave them where they are. Mr Van Drie said there still remains one much smaller exploration licence in the upper Taylors Arm area and there were no guarantees that another massive exploration licence like EL8016 will not be granted to another company. That is why LNV will continue to be vigilant and keep the community informed via its web site and social media.

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