

## SOMR update December 2023

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### **Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro**

Downloading the OMPHS EIS documents from the NSW Government Planning Portal and uploading submissions was most complicated during the first days of publication and even more so during the last days of the 28day period allowed for submissions. The deadline extension for additional submission issues from 16 to 20 October hardly improved the situation.

Nevertheless, the SOMR committee was well prepared and lodged a comprehensive submission. Several members and other interested people and organisations kindly sent copies of their considered submissions to SOMR which are archived. Submissions are now awaiting OMPHS and the government's response to the OMPHS Development Application & EIS.

In the meantime, with the advances in technology and availability of large batteries in proximity to power lines, pumped hydro has become obsolete.

### **Hillgrove Mine**

Hillgrove Gold and Antimony Mine is again being sold. The antimony deposit is described as one of the 10 largest in the world and the largest in Australia.

Red River Resources bought the Hillgrove Mine in August 2019 undertook some sampling to restart the project, then mined and processed some gold. In September 2022, the company went into receivership, the mine was once again placed in care and maintenance mode.

On 27 November 2023, Larvotto Resources Limited lodged a prospectus to raise funds for the proposed acquisition of 100% of the Hillgrove Gold and Antimony Project from Red River Resources Ltd for a sum of \$8 million.

In October 2023, after the initial Larvotto announcement about the intended acquisition, media reports described the company as "junior explorers", the managing director was quoted as saying, "Not many junior companies get the chance to move up the resource curve so rapidly and cost effectively."

<https://www.australianresourcesandinvestment.com.au/2023/10/23/australias-largest-antimony-deposit-is-set-for-a-revival/>

SOMR will write a letter of introduction to new mine manager, to regain the rapport shared with prior owners and ensure environmental protection and remediation works continue under the new management.

## **Clybucca Illegal Dams**

During the last week of November 2023, Kempsey Local Court began to hear evidence regarding 32 criminal charges against vegetable growers Xiuming Lin and Green Leaf Australia Group Pty Ltd of Clybucca. The charges are brought by the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) a department of NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and responsible for the enforcement of water resource legislation in NSW.

The charges under the Water Management Act relate to the building of several dams, some in close proximity to the Clybucca Wetlands, and the unauthorised harvesting of water.

NRAR first was notified due to an anonymous complaint to NSW Water about “tampering with ground water in early 2020”. NRAR launched investigations in mid-2020 and subsequently gathered detailed evidence, which is now being presented to the court. An NRAR investigator noticed the dams on Google maps and carried out the first site inspection. Several other inspections followed with detailed recording of the locations, wall construction, depth of water, pumps and pipes. Photos and videos were taken on the ground and by drones, sonar measurements were recorded, detailed maps were viewed and have now been presented as evidence.

SOMR representatives have observed most of the court proceedings.

Presentation of the evidence had not been completed by 1<sup>st</sup> December, the last day set aside at Kempsey Local Court, and is set to continue in late April 2024.



Google image of the Green Leaf farm at Clybucca

### **Antimony Exploration in the Macleay and Nambucca Valleys**

Summit Minerals Ltd with Exploration Licence 9235 has been preparing for antimony exploration for their Windfall Antimony Project.

At the beginning of 2023, their representatives gained Access Agreements with several property owners in the Mungay Creek area. More recently, they approached property owners in the Nambucca Valley regarding the same project.

Community members were alarmed by experience of contamination from old antimony mines in the area. The *Lock the Nambucca Valley* group organised a public meeting on 14 November in Macksville. About 120 people attended. Many questions and concerns were addressed to Summit Minerals' Community Engagement Officers, who informed the meeting that the company has "paused" the exploration in the area. One question was whether the people's objections or the company's financial performance have led to the decision. A statement has since been published, declaring that the Summit Minerals has decided not to commit further resources to this project and "is actively considering divestment opportunities for the project."

### **SOMR Information Forum 2024**

Under the heading "Macleay River Water Quality - SCU-SOMR citizen science project" SOMR and Prof Johnson of Southern Cross University (SCU) propose a Community Forum to take place in Bellbrook in February or March 2024 to relay the findings of water testing.

SOMR members have collected Macleay River water samples at Bellbrook for some 7 years, which have been analysed by Prof Scott Johnson at SCU in Lismore to understand Arsenic and Antimony mobility in the catchment. With base-line data before the 2019 bushfires and 2021-2022 floods, impacts and changes can be measured. This work has become a significant leading project in the field, nationally and globally.