



# Protect the Gardens of Stone

“Say NO to open cut mining!”



Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012

**MEDIA RELEASE: For immediate release**

## “Coalpac proposing new acid mine drainage problem for environment”

Former CSIRO scientist, Dr. Haydn Washington, says Coalpac Pty Ltd is proposing new and unpreventable Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) problems for the environment. This environmental disaster would be in addition to the company’s AMD impacts on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area coming from its decommissioned Canyon Colliery.

“In its environmental assessment for the Coalpac Consolidation Project, Coalpac Pty Ltd omits critical scientific analysis by not outlining that sulphur levels of up to 0.8% pose major risk of AMD,” says Dr. Haydn Washington. “Despite its claims, Coalpac will not be able to prevent the problem by simply monitoring it.”

“The geochemical reality of what happens when sulphide bearing rock is disturbed is that almost always causes AMD. What we will have left is another ongoing, environmental problem from Coalpac that nature, and those that appreciate it, will suffer for many generations.”

Dr. Haydn Washington is an environmental scientist and former CSIRO scientist who worked for seven years on heavy metal pollution of rivers.

“When sulphide deposits are disturbed and oxygen gets access, a bacteria *Thiobacillus* gains energy from turning this to sulphuric acid. There is very little one can do to stop this occurring no matter how fine monitoring systems might be or how much is invested in them. We cannot continue denying this issue,” says Dr. Washington.

One of Australia’s most environmentally valued rivers, the Grose River, is suffering severe heavy metal water pollution as a result of ongoing AMD issues coming from Coalpac’s 900 hectare, Canyon Colliery, which was decommissioned in 1997. The old Colliery is located within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Dr. Washington says, “Acid mine drainage caused by mining is older than the Romans. Indeed some of their mines are still polluting today. Coalmines in the area have a history of AMD, so there is no reason to believe that Coalpac’s 843 hectare coal mining proposal for the Ben Bullen State Forest will not cause AMD.”

“There is severe loss of aquatic ecosystem health due to coal mine discharge from Canyon Colliery,” says Justin McKee of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. “Coalpac’s environmental management record is poor. The company confuses ‘monitoring’ with ‘prevention’.”

### Media Contacts:

Dr. Haydn Washington, Environment Scientist: 0427 367 024  
Justin McKee, Blue Mountains Conservation Society: 0404 824 020