



## From the President

July 2011

VALLEY WATCH INC

P.O. BOX 637, YAMBA 2464

valleywatchinc@gmail.com Phone 0488 979 196

Creating a sustainable future

### Wild Cattle Creek - worse than you can imagine

In the May newsletter I made mention of a forum on antimony mining in Dorrigo which Barb and I were going to attend. In the June newsletter I reported that it had been cancelled.

Since then you may have read in the *Daily Examiner* and *Coastal Views* some of the concerns about the proposed venture.

Antimony is a metal with similar properties to arsenic. It is both toxic and carcinogenic. It is used as a fire-retardant and with lead in battery plates, but its most recent – and profitable – use is in high-tech semi-conductor devices.

The proposal by the company Anchor Resources Ltd to undertake antimony mining on the Dorrigo plateau is of immense concern to Valley Watch.

The nine streams of the plateau, including Wild Cattle Creek and the Bielsdown River, are tributaries of the Nymboida River which is the source of the Regional Water Supply for the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour through the 30,000 megalitre Shannon Creek dam.

The Dorrigo plateau has some of the highest rainfall in NSW – up to 3000 millimetres (3 metres!) per year. Both arsenic and mercury will be by-products of the mining process. It is proposed that they be stored in tailings dams. But with that much rainfall it is impossible to guarantee that there will be no migration of toxic minerals from mines in such high rainfall areas.

This has happened in the past – over 50 km of the headwaters of the Macleay River have been contaminated by antimony from the old Hillgrove and Bakers Creek mines east of Armidale.

A processing plant for antimony was established at Urunga Lagoon in the 1960s. Fifty years later both the Lagoon and the upper reaches of the Macleay River have been gazetted as Contaminated Sites because it has been impossible to remediate them.

We remember too the threat posed by cyanide contamination to the fishing industry from the Timbarra gold mine in the late 1990s. Despite all the assurances given about the safety of the cyanide process in extracting low-level grade ore – overflow of the cyanide holding ponds was “almost impossible”, according to the mine’s owners – the mine had to be closed in 2001 because of two successive overflows following heavy rainfall.

Valley Watch has written to both the Minister for Resources and Energy, Chris Hartcher, and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Brad Hazzard, expressing the view that “under no circumstances should the NSW government allow antimony to be mined in the catchment of the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour Regional Water Supply”.

*Gary*

#### AGM - claiming the date

With the 2009 revision of our constitution we made Valley Watch’s financial year from July 1 to June 30, as is common practice.

That means we are required to hold our Annual General Meeting by the end of September each year. Your Committee has chosen Saturday September 3 as the date for the 2011 AGM. Appropriately, that is just before Threatened Species Day (September 7).

Our constitution requires that we call for nominations for the Committee 8 weeks before the AGM. While nominations can be received up to 7 days prior to the meeting – that is, August 27 – we would like to receive them before the AGM notices are sent out on August 10 so we can include a complete list of nominees with the meeting notice.

Attached is a nomination form. Please consider standing for the Committee – it is important to have a turnover of members.

Details of the time and venue of the AGM will be in the August newsletter.

#### Your Committee

<b>President:</b>	Gary Whale
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Athena Batcheldor
<b>Secretary:</b>	Ronwyn Lopez
<b>Treasurer:</b>	David Lopez
<b>Committee:</b>	Gary Brisbane Carolyn Jeckeln Barbara Whale Ros Woodward

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