Unbelievable Queensland! We Have A Major Problem, if this case is typical.

Coral Creek Sonoma **12.9.10 – 11am**. Signs of levee bank channel overflow.
In 2005 at public information sessions held by Qcoal & ELP for the proposed Sonoma Coal Project explicit promises were made to mine no closer than **100 meter** from Coral Creek. We discover that the buffer for the pit was reduced to **30 meters** only after getting photographic evidence. We also learn that associated mine works like roads, levees, bunds etc. can come even closer than 30 meters as can be seen here.

Sonoma Coal Mine pit
(Strip 8/9, Block 10)
12.9.10 11.26am.
Dewatering Pump running
at approx. 50 litres/sec

Source: DERM RTI release No. 10-132
From: Final Environmental Incident Report – Sonoma Mine Management Pty Ltd 6.10.10

Leighton's pump crew had decided to use this channel to carry water pumped from the pit because the 2 highwall pumps usually used to take this water to the south of the pit were broken down. Sonoma Mine Management was not aware that this was occurring.

At 10.30am 13.9.10 the site was inspected by SMM superintendent, and there was evidence that water had spilled from the drainage channel, and had made it's way under a drainage bund between the channel and the levee (piped through a crack in the bund), and drained over the levee towards the creek.

Leighton supervisors advised SMM that the pump in question was put in place in strip 8/9 on Sat 11.9.10 at approx. 1pm. The pump was then turned off at midnight 11.9.10 and restarted at 7.30am 12.9.10 and ran until 9pm. It was restarted at 7.30am 13.9.10 and turned off at 10.10am when the discharge became known.

It is estimated that approx. 80,000L of water in total was pumped whilst the pump was running (running at approx. 50 litres per second). Of this water, the majority has remained inside the bunds. It is estimated that 15 to 20 KL has escaped from the bunds and levee. **We have calculated that if the pump ran at 50L per second that is 180,000L per hour and 4,890,000L for the total pumping time of 27 hours and 10 minutes.**

From Sonoma Mine Management's Final Report: *There is evidence of water reaching Coral Creek in a small area only (one pond in the high flow channel, which had dried by 10.30am on the 13th Sept.*

From Environment and Resource Management (DERM) Penalty Infringement Notice (Number: 000555): *Investigations have identified that water contaminated by mining activities was pumped from the northern end of the open cut pit into the site's water drainage channel, where the contaminates breached the channel and the flood protection levee to discharge across land into the bed of Coral Creek....DERM was advised that quarterly inspections of the flood protection levee had not been undertaken for 2010...The failure of the water management system/procedures has been identified as not being an isolated event. On 18 July 2010 an unauthorised discharge, occurred with 250 KL to 750 KL of water overtopping from the co-disposal decant return water dam.*

The photographer and another witness can testify to at least a 100 meter length of the flow of mine water along the southern side of Coral Creek's bed.

Sonoma Mine Mgt. - Coral Ck Diversion- EPBC Referral 2011/5800-Summary Table of Contents & Responses.

Elements of issues and assertions raised by Party. PARA #3 (e)

Record of monitoring is poor and neglect shown when contaminated water escaped into Coral Creek which is unforgiveable.

SMM response

Routine and regular monitoring activities are performed within and around the mine site in accordance with the EA and site management plans On 13 Sept 2010 an accidental release of water occurred adjacent to Coral Creek. A small quantity of clean water was released from a non-authorised point as a result of a pit water pumping pipeline moving and spilling water out of a channel drain. The water reached an area in the high flow channel on the Coral Creek floodplain. It did not reach the Coral Creek bed. The water was tested by SMM and independently by DERM who attended the site to investigate, and DERM concluded that no environmental harm was caused.

Salts & heavy metals at low levels can badly effect the water microflora, sensitive species like fungi and fish breeding.



The water in this spill was tested for contaminates and the results showed elevated levels of Nitrates, Salts and the metals Vanadium, Uranium, Silver and Selenium. These toxins do not biodegrade and accumulate reaching dangerous levels quickly.