

Xstrata fine for subsidence damage to pay for Sugarloaf improvements

By MICHELLE HARRIS Oct. 9, 2014, 10:30 p.m.



MAJOR SPILL: Grout flows along a creek below where workers tried to fill cracks from mine subsidence.

[Sugarloaf subsidence archive \(http://www.theherald.com.au/story/1773319/sugarloaf-conservation-area-subsidence-archive/\)](http://www.theherald.com.au/story/1773319/sugarloaf-conservation-area-subsidence-archive/)

MONEY that mining company Glencore Xstrata has paid as an offset for the subsidence damage caused to the Sugarloaf state conservation area will be spent on improvements including walking tracks and environmental remediation.

The miner agreed to pay \$100,000 to the government following the mine subsidence damage from its West Wallsend Colliery and a major grout spill into a creek.

While it was initially suggested the amount may take the form of an offsets package, the money

will finance works in the conservation area that the Office of Environment and Heritage is planning.

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These include improving walking tracks, and access roads, new signs explaining biodiversity values to visitors at key recreation points and environmental efforts such as pest management.

As well, the health of waterways in the area will be given a boost through remediation projects along creek lines.

The works are expected to be carried out early in the 2015/16 financial year.

A chasm opened up in the reserve after subsidence above Glencore Xstrata's West Wallsend longwall mine in 2012.

Eight months later workers attempting to repair cracks spilt 75cubic metres of grout into a creek bed.

Orica Mining Services, contracted by Glencore to carry out the grouting, is being prosecuted in the Land and Environment Court. The state government admitted in a report released earlier this year that it was "not appropriate" that it kept the damage and grout spill secret from the public.

Glencore Xstrata's Bulga coalmine was fined \$65,000 earlier this year for water pollution after hundreds of litres of dirty water leaked from its Broke operations into a nearby creek.



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