

Majid Al-Mubarak

Where are the Mandaean going to Baptise?

*Aka Heyii, Aka Mari, Aka Mandā id Heyii*

[which roughly translates into English as 'There is Life, There is God and there is, knowledge of Life']

I am from the Mandaean community and have lived in Wallacia for 20 years and am against this cemetery proposal. It is not 'in the public interest' and the needs of our Mandaean community have not been taken into account in the Department of Planning Assessment report.

Some of you have never have heard of Madaeans before. We are a very small group of about 60 000 people globally who used to live in the south of Iraq and Iran. Nowadays, we live in more than 20 countries, worldwide. In Australia, more than 10 000 live in the Western Suburbs, mainly in Fairfield and Liverpool.

Every Sunday, members of our society come to Wallacia and Penrith to be Baptised in the Nepean River.



Aerial view of where Madaeans baptise in the Upper Nepean River, Blaxland Crossing Bridge.

Baptism is a sacred, frequent observance. We continue to practice baptism in clean, running water as did our teacher, John the Baptist, 2000 years ago.

Until a few weeks ago, some of our people were baptising in the Georges River. Due to mosquito health warnings they have been forbidden and as a result, the numbers of Madaeans coming to the Nepean River have almost doubled so this river is now even more vital for our community well-being.

We, the Mandaean community, reject the cemetery proposal because it seriously risks contamination of the river here and further downstream, along the Lower Nepean-Hawkesbury Rivers.

We need a clean river, not a polluted one. Running water is living water, it is a fundamental resource of life. Running water is the life.

We ask that authorities responsible for this project listen to the will of the people of this area and respect our needs which have not been taken into account in Assessment report.

Thank you for your attention.