

Maules Creek Country Women's Association of NSW objects to Vickery Mine Extension (SSD-7480-Mod-1) and ask that the Modification is rejected.

The Modification, if approved by Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) would allow the following changes to Development Consent (SSD 7480):

A new road and road entry/exit point, an increase in the Whitehaven Coal water pipelines across our region, accumulating more water, a new cement works, expanding the legacy of mining by creating another tyre waste dump, additional road haulage and still no highway overpass and more final landform changes. Mod 1 will expand its existing adverse impacts to the environment and the community. Food production and the viability of the region to support food security must be the priority in the context of the uncertain impacts from global warming. Our members do not support this mine expansion.

Special waste, tyres including Off The Road tyres

Recommend: We object to tyre burial and ask the Department to reject this application for tyre disposal via burial in the embankments.

This Mod raises more questions than it answers. Information gaps exist, such as how many tyres will be buried in the embankment? Will tyres be put in any other places? Where are those places? Offsite burial, the void or pit? How will the community have confidence that the tyres are only those generated on site, will only new tyres be worn down, or will the lack of clarity enable old, half used tyres to be brought from other mine sites therefore potentially a greater number of tyres could be buried. Also, what is the origin of the tyres being buried and what is their chemistry? Will banned chemicals and toxins leachate from the buried tyres? What evidence is there of the safety of the practice to water resources, the aquifers themselves and the water dependent ecosystems?

What evidence is there of the safety of tyre burial to human health from leachate into the connected water resources? What evidence is there of the safety of the tyre burial on water quality, soils, food production in medium and long term and the cumulative impact of the practice considering the number of (10) coal mine sites in the region?

We are and have been concerned about this practice for a long time and made submissions to the government and raised public awareness about this issue. Members of the general public are well aware that they are doing the right thing and paying a fee to have their tyres disposed of ethically and are perplexed by the allowance of this massive environmental impact that could be avoided. We ask the Department to reject this Mod 1 request.

Trucks on the road to Gunnedah

Recommend: Without a built Kamilaroi Road overpass, reject this Mod 1 request. We are concerned that a life will be lost with such intensification of traffic, cumulative to the risk of the extended hours (Tarrawonga Mod 10). The overpass of the Kamilaroi Highway is necessary to protect the lives of road users and the drivers themselves. This is a long running concern. But one we are certain will be ignored regardless.

Taking and storing groundwater from farms and adding to the Whitehaven coal pipeline plan

Recommend: No further water be allocated to mining in this primarily farming- food and fibre region. The region is vulnerable to climate and global warming and existing regional drawdown from mining.

DPHI approving the expansion of water take from Zone 4 that is already known to be overallocated is risky for the water source and unjustified. There is too much uncertainty from mines including those in planning. Already cumulative modelling is uncertain and there are three mine expansions – that are not signed off on by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee. The pipelines between the mines should not be approved. The sustainability and security of our food producing region should not be at risk from expanding mine water take, from a project that has already been modelled and claimed it already has adequate water. It is concerning that the Vickery Mine is using this Mod 1 to monopolise and control more water beyond need in this circumstance.

For the reasons stated above, we ask that the DPHI determine to deny Mod 1.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Maules Creek Branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW
19/9/24.