

Maules Creek Continuation Project - EIS submission

8 August 2025

I **object** to this development on grounds that include those outlined in this brief submission. Due to personal time constraints, my submission focuses on impacts to the Swift Parrot population together with a brief statement on climate change.

Swift Parrot

This project will clear over 500 hectares of key foraging habitat for the Swift Parrot, despite only ~500 of them remaining in the wild, and will push the species closer to extinction. This is a key site for Swift Parrots and must not be put at risk.



Original Swift Parrot art by N Clyde (July 2025) entitled 'Help!'

Greenhouse gas emissions and the Maules Creek Continuation Project

1. Our atmosphere has already warmed by 1.3°C.
2. Earth's carbon budget for 1.5C has as few as two - three years left before it will be exhausted.
3. The Climate Council has advised that current global climate policies will result in **2.2°C to 3.4°C** of warming.¹
4. Two decades ago, tipping points were predicted at 5°C, now **1.1°C is thought to be the threshold** for moderate risk of irreversible changes (IPCC 2018, 2019).
5. The situation is dire. This is why organisations like The Climate Council (July 2025) are recommending that Australia reach net zero by 2035.
6. Rather than closing Maules Creek in 2034, Whitehaven Coal wants to extend the mine's operations to 2044, which in the context of the current state of climate science, is reckless, irresponsible and clearly not in the public interest.
7. This Project would produce coal that would be responsible for ~238.4 Mt CO₂-e in Scope 3 emissions. There will be no room left in the carbon budget for these emissions in the atmosphere when Whitehaven seeks to mine this coal. Whitehaven Coal is not able to provide any assurance to NSW DPHI or the NSW IPC that 100% of Scope 3 emissions attributable to the combustion of product coal from this project would be captured and stored in CCS projects in perpetuity, therefore these emissions cannot be permitted.
8. In regard to the Project's Scope 1 emissions and NSW's emissions trajectory,, as Minister Sharpe, NSW DCCEEW, the NSW Net Zero Commission and the NSW Productivity and Equality Commission have all noted, NSW is not on track to meet any of its legislated targets. This project would add ~340,000 t CO₂-e to the 11.6 Mt CO₂-e emissions gaps currently projected for 2035. If NSW DPHI - as author of the Assessment Report for this project - is concerned about meeting GHG targets, then it is not enough to blithely state that the Scope 1 emissions for this project have been or will be 'accounted for' in emissions projections. These projections consistently predict that NSW will fail to meet GHG targets. NSW DPHI must make decisions and recommendations which are - at a minimum - consistent with meeting these targets.
9. **Every fraction of a degree matters ...**
10. What does it mean for New South Wales if NSW DPHI continues to recommend that new high-emitting coal projects are approved?

The following is an extract from the recent DAMSHEG vs Mach Energy, NSW Supreme Court judgement, which quotes former Chief Scientist for Australia, Professor Penny Sackett:

¹ Climate Council, July 2025, [Stronger Target. Safer Future: Why Australia's 2035 Climate Target Matters](#)

[169] *Well, we've had record drought followed by record fires, followed by record floods in three years. 47 per cent of all local extinctions in the world are now caused by climate change, that's at 1.2 degrees of warming. At 1.5 only 0.3 degrees Celsius more which is virtually inevitable by the late 2030s. What used to be once-in-30-year heatwaves will occur every three years and that very hot summer of 2019/2020 will be an average summer. At two degrees [of warming], should we reach that, you can expect 50-degree summer days in Sydney, essentially all of the world's coral reefs will be destroyed, and 13 per cent of the earth's surface will undergo a complete ecosystem transformation. And if we should possibly reach three degrees or more, which I only mention because that is where world and Australian inaction is taking us now, the New South Wales run-off water that feeds agriculture and streams will be reduced by 45 to 60 per cent in many areas."*²

[170] ***"In Professor Sackett's view, unabated climate change is likely to be the greatest overall threat to the environment and people of NSW because it is comprehensively dangerous, global, fundamental, rapid, compounding, self-reinforcing, has delayed effects and, in some cases, including effects currently underway, is irreversible."***

In summary, the Maules Creek Continuation Project is: a) not compatible with current climate change law and policy settings in NSW; and b) would exacerbate extinction risk for the Swift Parrot, therefore it must be refused consent.

² Court of Appeal, Supreme Court, New South Wales, 24 July 2025, Denman, Aberdeen Muswellbrook Scone Healthy Environment Group Inc v MACH Energy Australia Pty Ltd [169]