

AC Wannan and PM Winter



7 April 2013

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing regarding the Vickery Coal Environmental Impact Statement – Executive Summary and the Vickery Project Environmental Impact Statement. I have also had a meeting at “Colstoun” with Tim Muldoon, from Whitehaven, November 8th 2012 and discussed many issues related to the construction of Vickery South Mine. I will refer to the data found in these documents which are the reasons for my concerns.

I own the property “Colstoun”, directly to the south of the proposed Vickery South coal mine project. “Colstoun” is approximately 500 metres from the mine infrastructure site. I have the following concerns regarding this development and its effect on my enterprise:

1. The mine infrastructure area is situated very close to a significant flood way, Stratford Creek. Although this issue was discussed with Tim Muldoon I cannot see any assessment of this issue in the current reports and how it will affect flood flows in the creek. The plan is to alter the floodway on the north side of Stratford Creek. If bunding protection of this new mine site goes ahead as proposed I believe it will cause inundation to my property as at present flood water can currently flow over the Bluevale road unobstructed to the Namoi River.
2. According to the plans submitted, the MIA will be subject to inundation. Plans to place flood bunds for flood protection have been proposed (refer page ES8 - Attachment A). Due to the flat contour of this area (see contour lines in Figure ES1 – Attachment B) this diversion of water on the north side of the flood way will adversely affect my farm land and any crops that are being grown. This change in water flow may affect as much as 400 hectares should water be obstructed in its flow westwards by the proposed new alignment of the Bluevale road.
3. The proposed rerouting of the Bluevale Road (See Figure ES2 - Attachment C) will further exacerbate the water diversion issue by changing the path of small runoff flows during large rainfall events.
4. We note that in the *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas* paper (page 34 - Attachment D) the total suspended particulate matter calculations are based on Hunter Valley weather data and soil types. This is highly inappropriate given the significant differences in soil types and rainfall between the two sites. A new assessment needs to be undertaken using local data that is likely to be accurate and reliable for this site.
5. In Appendix D, the air quality averages are based on only five years data collected at mine sites, but not from unmined areas. Longer term data from the EPA Tamworth would make for a better pre-mining baseline with which to compare.

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6. Further to Air Quality calculations - it is also of concern that the study has excluded the MIA and the Eastern Emplacement from their dust distribution models even though these areas will produce dust. Even with existing inadequate data it is clear from the map that my property is just on the edge of this 50 ug line (See Attachment E).
7. Noise and Blasting – this issue already impacts on us from the Rock Glen mine which is over 8 km away. I reside in an older stone dwelling which is already being adversely impacted by this mine. I constantly experience the noise from blasting and feel the earth move on these occasions. Hence the loss of quiet enjoyment time. Cracks have appeared in the walls of this building. There seems little doubt that I will be more greatly affected by this new mine which is on my doorstep. I am already affected by the Bluevale Road mine traffic noise. This will be increased substantially with the opening of another mine. We will also incur the constant noise of heavy earth moving machinery at close proximity.
8. Groundwater – I have bores to the south of the project which are being used to supply water for stock and domestic purposes. I am very concerned for the security and quality of this ground water. If it were to be affected in any way, the consequences would be disastrous for my business. Guarantees cannot and will not be given for water security, only estimates. This leaves me with many risks to my future livelihood. These issues have not been adequately addressed by the proponents EIS.

It appears that a range of environmental issues remain inadequately considered in the EIS and indeed some of the data used to assess impacts is inappropriate. It seems most likely that the real impacts of this proposal will be more seriously adverse than the current document suggests.

It seems likely that this project will adversely affect my business by changes in flooding, loss of ground water resources, loss of air quality and increased vibration. These will cause loss of income and potentially health effects.

Many of these changes will affect us and future owners of this land forever. Is it possible to provide compensation for this into the future? Current circumstances suggest that this is unlikely. I would submit that mining areas have enforced exclusion zones so that they do not have adverse effects to all pre-existing neighbouring businesses.

In summary, I feel that the models for flood inundation, air quality and noise have errors or shortcomings which appear to advantage Whitehaven Coal but disadvantage surrounding landholders. Much of this work is inaccurate and the real impacts need to be re-assessed using accurate local data which respects and appropriately values the pre-existing land uses businesses in the area that have been undertaken for over a 100 years. The proposed mining activities have the potential to destroy the long term agricultural sustainability of the local area.

Submission made by Anthony Wannan “Colstoun” Gunnedah