

Due 12 April 2013

"Brolga,"
Gunnedah.
NSW.

3-4-13.

Submission re: Vickery Coal Mine.

To Whom It May Concern,

We are painfully well aware that nothing we have to say will have any bearing on the approval of this project. We do however absolutely object to the disastrous, even catastrophic position in which we are left as nearby residents, marked as receivers 101 on the maps, for the following reasons.

Blasting.

Our house has already been shaken by blasting operations from Canyon 12 km., Rocleg 7 km., Tarravonga 24 km. on numerous occasions. We absolutely and utterly object, that this is already occurring and note that with 5 & 6 blasts per week from Vickery that our house can be expected to fall to pieces over a 30 year period. This is not a reasonable position for any neighbour to have to contend with. The underlying strata is carrying blasting vibrations our direction and the Vickery forest between us and Tarravonga has offered no protection. Computer modelling of 7,600 blasts in the Hunter Valley cannot be applied here, and we can only expect total disaster from the Vickery project. Despite lodging formal objections Whitehaven does not want to know anything about problems arising from their blasting operations and conveniently dismiss by passing responsibility to Orica who claim no criteria have been exceeded. Due to the distances involved this just cannot be correct. The minimal distance from Vickery pit operations cause us to be fearful of serious damage arising. This is a disastrous position for anybody to be placed in.

With over 8,000 blatt to be expected over the life of the mine it is no wonder we have to come to that conclusion.

Noise and dust

We believe noise levels will be far worse for us than computer modelling predictions above, Fig. 4-17 & 4-18. At the open day in Boggyartin (September 2012) the assumption of wind carrying noise & dust from the southeast to the northwest was disputed. The direction may happen on some occasions but is not the usually prevailing as most of our weather systems come from a generally westerly to generally easterly direction with variations occurring on some occasions, mostly on a seasonal basis. We therefore believe the modelling is fundamentally incorrect and will give more noise than predicted from day 1, and will be worse as the height of the eastern and western emplacements increase.

Visual aspect

It is emerging to observe just how little significance has been placed upon aspect, modification and sensitivity by both Whitehaven and state government planners. We are absolutely aghast at the prospect of staring at another 2 emplacements growing steadily day by day. Having already had the Roebur experience to our north was nothing short of disaster. Words such as catatrophic and disaster are nowhere near strong enough to describe the completely devastating view which we will have from all points on our property, including from the kitchen windows of the house. The completely inadequate description moderate and low for visual sensitivity and modification are completely ludicrous when considering the overall impact of the mining process. We absolutely object to the completely false impression

given by Fig. 4-31. This simulation gives a completely false impression of distance when viewed again from precisely the same location. Mt. Binalong on the left is much closer and larger as are the Vickery hills on the right, given the real view. We believe this to be deliberately "trick" photographic manipulation and misrepresentation which deliberately gives a completely false impression of the eastern and western emplacements as they both will be larger and nearer in real viewing. We absolutely object to the years of ugliness of viewing, noise, dust, lights, 24 hour operation which will occur and for the eastern emplacement on its own is estimated at least to be 7 years. The whole problem becomes further compounded when our nearest point to the Vickery operation is little over 2 km. This close proximity cannot be ignored in the context of rural property operation. Even driving from the front ramp in to the house will have the full view of both emplacements, plus the Rocgen emplacements plus the Kurrembede operation adjoining the Vickery operation, when it also starts in the not too distant future. All of our efforts to try to grow a nice garden and plant trees appear to be completely futile when fundamental landscape change occurs as drastically as the Vickery mine will create.

Land value.

As we have already found 3 years ago after the commencement of the Rocgen mine land near to mining operations is completely unsaleable and as a consequence becomes worth very little. We believe in our own case it can be shown as a direct result we have incurred direct financial losses of at least \$500,000 and possibly as much as \$750,000.

The reason for this can be attributable to the result of fundamental land use change from rural use to mining use, causing a total lack of confidence for those landholders near to those mines. The reason for the lack of confidence for those properties are:- suspicions that water supplies will dry up, health issues, lights, noise, dust, visual ugliness from mining emplacements, blasting, duration of mine life, new mines starting, perpetual operation, total lack or willingness by government to set guidelines on buffer zones, an understandable unwillingness for people to not want to live near to coalmines. The impacts for landholders concerned are catastrophic and local and state governments must address these issues instead of do nothing. All of these issues amount to an ever decreasing land value. Local councils will have to significantly reduce rates and the state government will have to pay compensation to those drastically affected. Neither will be willing to do either, but it is not reasonable for landholders to be continually shafted. The effects from the Vickery mine already add to the existing catastrophic situation even though the mine has not yet commenced operation!

Health issues.

We are greatly concerned at likely health problems caused by our proximity to Vickery, contaminated rainwater supplies caused by fallout from the huge expected increase in vehicles movement plus non stop mining vehicles movement. Night lighting will also cause light pollution and will even prevent astronomical observation. We are forced to sign legally binding

animal health declarations when selling livestock and we do not know what the implications might be upon livestock grazing at a close distance from a major coalmining operation.

Water

Water is always a highly contentious issue and we note there will be a 1 metre drawdown in bore water levels despite being told at the Boggabri information day that there would be no projected change to water levels. Nobody can guarantee that the Vickery mining process will not damage supplies even if the process is not expected to do so. We rely entirely upon underground water supplies, are within the 4 km. zone from the mine, Fig. A-14 C, and will be perpetually on edge regarding water levels due to that close proximity. We need a clear answer before mining starts on what will happen if the mining process does cause supply problems. Will it be yet further financial losses we will be expected to bear if this does occur?

Omissions, real and social costs.

It is clear from information presented in the EIS for Vickery what the projected value of coal is, what the net costs for Whitehaven are, what benefit there is to State and Federal coffers from royalties, taxes and charges, what benefit there is to local towns and what a pitiful comparative earning if it was only rural industry instead. We do not disagree with the stated benefits, however, what is glaringly omitted is the very real and direct costs

for all the surrounding landholders who find their properties are completely unsaleable and the value of their capital asset is worth very little as a direct consequence of mining approval and operation. The social costs are great but are not included as any part of the EIS for Vickers. Despite numerous letters written to the Premier, ministers, Federal and State parliamentarians, numerous visits to see our local member, and letters and visits to our local council nobody is interested in the very serious plight which people are placed into. Starting with the Premier, the people mentioned above can go fuck themselves. It is their duty to govern fairly for all, not just disregard, turn a blind eye and ignore when these major problems are clearly pointed out. All the other financial calculations have been assessed, it is not reasonable to leave out the social costs and consequently treat people so badly affected by these major project developments as completely inconsequential. As a result of this happening we have no confidence whatsoever in the political process and will not make the mistake of voting for the current government or local member a second time. The Premier and ministers cannot be bothered to acknowledge receipt of nor respond to correspondence addressed to them. Real costs and social costs should be addressed in the EIS.

As we are too close to such a major mining development, effectively 100% within the 4 km. zone from the mine, we demand the Minister for Planning do the following:-

1. Send reps. from Planning office to inspect first hand what we will be looking at, over whole property.
2. That Fig. 4-31 be redrawn to show the true size and distance of eastern and western emplacements.
3. That shire rates be reduced to nearly nothing as the value of land is now nearly nothing.
4. Provide trees and fencing materials to provide visual screening from the emplacements and noise / lights.
5. That written assurances be given re. what happens if water supply is damaged, before project commences.
6. That written assurances be given if blasting damages house, structures, or bores, before commencement.

We are not opposed to this life changing project going ahead, we are bitterly opposed to the real damage done to us by the severe changes which have already occurred and will only get worse, and worse, and worse.

Yours faithfully,

W Nicholls,

for WF + SE Nicholls.

Maps 4-30
4-17
4-18.

Fig. 4-31
4-30
A-14C.

7/7.

5.2.2 SUB-REGIONAL SETTING

The visual impacts on viewing locations within the sub-regional setting would vary according to the visual screening provided by intervening vegetation. The impacts of the proposed development on individual areas are described below.

VIEWPOINT 4 – BROLGA

Viewing Location	Adjacent to the sheds/yards approximately 100 m north-west of the property house, and at the northern edge of the home yard around house (Figure 10).
Viewing Distance	4.5 km to the Project (Eastern Emplacement). <i>Approx. 2 km from nearest point to nearest point of mine.</i>
Visual Setting	Sub-regional (distant).
Landscape Setting	<p>The landscape is generally flat and concentrations of denser vegetation occur along roadsides and property or paddock boundaries (Figure 14).</p> <p>This residence, like most in the sub-regional setting, is contained within a "home yard" surrounded by vegetation and farm sheds (Figure 15).</p>
Visual Modification	<p>Visual simulations from adjacent to the sheds approximately 100 m north-west of the house have been developed (Figure 14).</p> <p>The established vegetation and sheds partially screen views out to the surrounding area from the house.</p> <p>Given the distance from the Project, the relatively minimal topographic variation that prevents overlooking and the presence of intervening vegetation, views to the upper surfaces of the emplacements would be possible from a location adjacent to the sheds on the property but they would not be visible in their entirety from the house due to screening effects from the vegetation and sheds. <u>The open cut would not be visible from this location.</u> <i>Open cut would be visible.</i></p> <p>As a result, the overall visual modification level is considered to be low to moderate.</p>
Land Use	Residential/agricultural. <i>Ludicrously false descriptions.</i>
Visual Sensitivity	<u>Moderate</u> (distant sub-regional).
Duration of View	Static.
Potential Visual Impact	<p><u>The moderate visual sensitivity combined with a low to moderate visual modification level, would result in a low to moderate visual impact for most residences in the distant sub-regional setting. This would reduce to low, to very low, once rehabilitation of the waste emplacements has established.</u></p>

Cannot object strongly enough. Whoever sets these guidelines go fuck yourselves. Impact does not stop at house/garden fence or 100m from shed. Whole of property impact not given any consideration; we demand that it is as it is fundamental to land value/capital losses, and reason why properties are so unsalable. We demand our location be reviewed for above impact descriptions. Timeframe vitally significant, 30 yrs. + Shows how little understanding Dept. of Planning has on real affect.

Real view is much bigger and much closer than photograph shows



Existing View



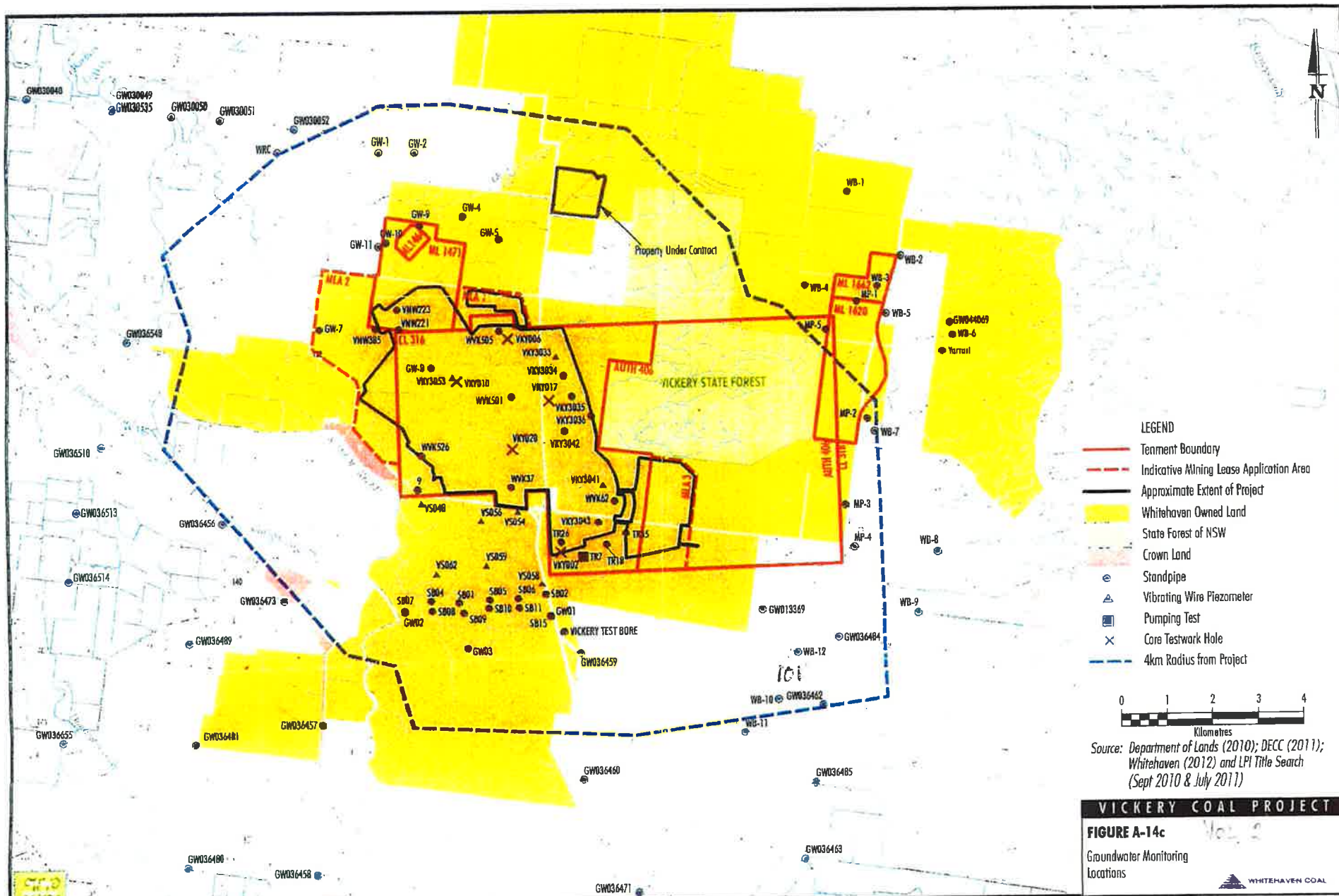
Year 7 Simulation

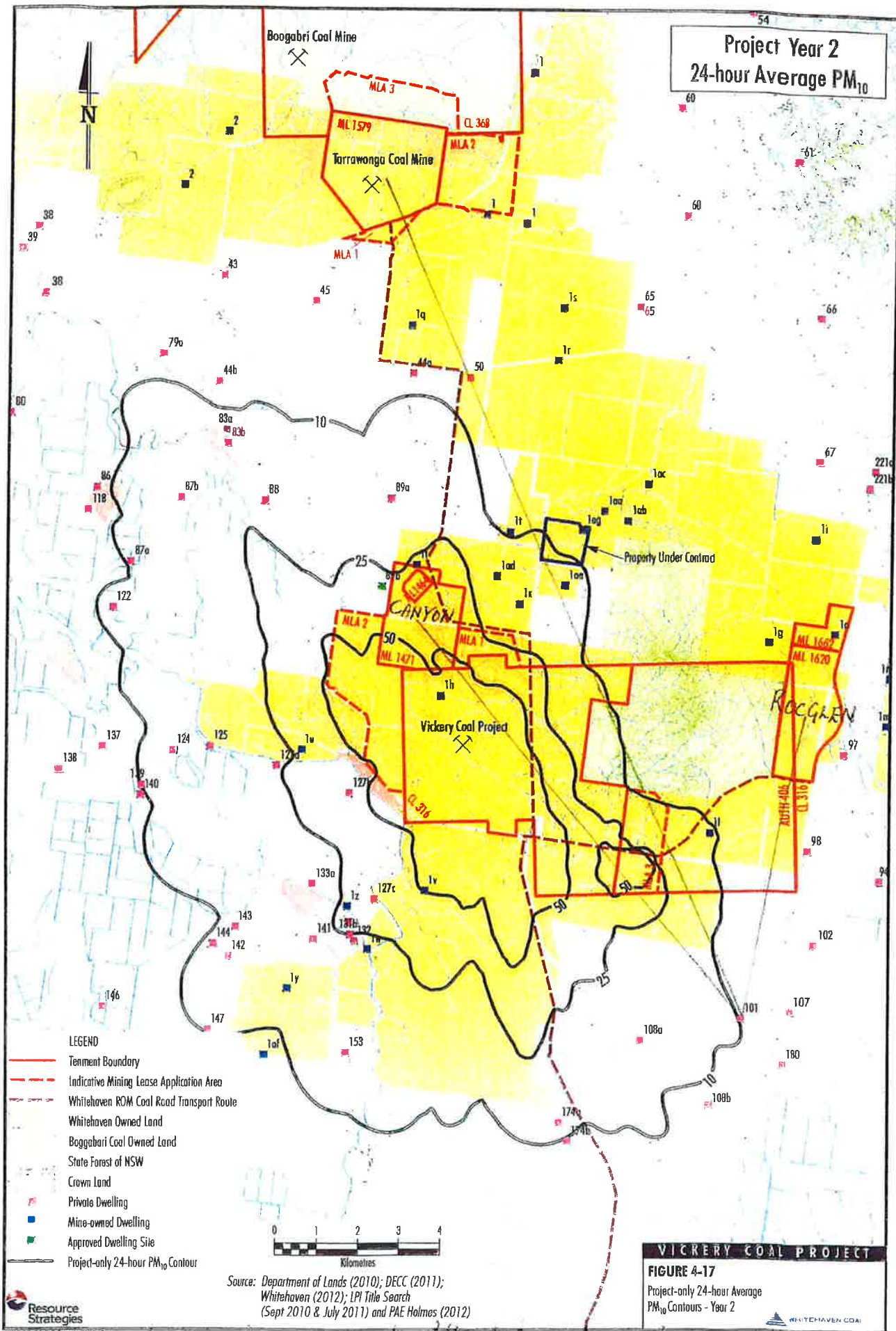


Year 26 Simulation

Notice landscape change visible from every point on this property, all of it ugly

Both emplacements will be much bigger and far more imposing than simulation shows. Not showing 100 metres high





*Pencil lines show previously felt shaking from blasting, at 101.
Tarrawonga 24 km. Canyon 12 km. Rocglen 7 km. approx.*

