

As a resident of Emerald Hill and as a Landholder affected by the proposed Extension, I object to approval being given to the Vickery Coal Mine, which in their submission to NSW Planning and Environment includes provision for a coal handling and preparation plant (CHPP), a train load-out facility and rail spur line.

1. I've lived most of my life in Emerald Hill and own property only a couple of Km upstream from the proposed Rail Line Spur which I believe, in a large flood will be inundated with higher flood levels because of the proposed embankment that Whitehaven (Vickery) intend to raise to transport Coal along. While their submission does seem to imply that pylons would be used on their own property Kurrembeed, to the east of the Kamilaroi Highway and closer to the Namoi River, the proposal suggests a rail spur line to the west of an undisclosed height made of pushed up soil and or gravel I assume. This if allowed to be built would act predominantly as a levy bank of a number of Kilometres long across the western side of a significantly large river the Namoi, thus holding the water back and interrupting the natural flow of flood water from the south-east to the north-west. This will affecting the flood hight on our property and other properties around, not even taking to account the flow of the water we would have unnecessary hardship with cattle, cropping, sheds, home, irrigation, and infrastructure. My father and his father before him have lived at Emerald Hill and farmed on the property that I am maintaining will be adversely and unduly affected, (if this proposal goes ahead), for more than 120 years. I and my family have a lot of local knowledge about how the flood waters behave in significant flood events. While Whitehaven Vickery Coal mine have employed the services of one or more hydrologists and had the input of the Flood Plain Management Authority their advice and modelling is only as good as the data that they are able to obtain and enter. When there are significant rain events in the catchments of the Namoi, Mooki, and Peel these water heights can be measured, but such local water as comes down from the Colygrah Creek, and Dead man's gully are not factored in. I personally have seen flooding that damaged fences and property in 1971 and 1973 to name two floods in our area. My father, who is still alive, remembers that 1955 flood as he witnessed it from the village of Emerald hill. As the clouds had cleared when the water hit our area, he said he could see across the open ground of the flood plain almost 5km towards the Namoi river, He said in the distance there was 'a thin silvery line', which it turned out was a wave! As it came it spread out across the flood plain, and within about 10 minutes the whole plain was covered in a deluge of brown mud debris and water, reaching almost into the village of Emerald Hill itself. The resulting damage and seeing aftermath left a lasting effect on him, as many of our family's sheep were swept to their deaths, or else carried far away. He said when they could eventually get down to the farm that is closer to the river and near the site of the Vickery proposed rail spur, whole fences half a mile long and more were torn out of the ground and opened up like 'huge gates' such was the speed and ferocity of the water. The paddocks that were cultivated at the time, had the top soil ripped off them only leaving the impression of little scratch marks where and implement previously used had reached the seed bed. Water traveling this fast hitting an earth embankment such as is being proposed, will, I suspect, do a number of detrimental things to the environment and farms around it. If there are significant rainfall events not only in the Namoi Catchment,

but at the same time in the Mooki and Peel, and if, as has happened in the past, Colygraph Creek, and Dead Man's Gull all receive rain in the order of 200 or 300mm then it's likely that the rail spur if built will be washed away. The water will rise higher than the higher than predicted modelling, since those models were basically modelled on levels of the Namoi itself, not the composite impact of water coming from surround tributaries also, even if the water doesn't burst over the proposed bank and cause sever erosion to prime agricultural land downstream it will inundate us more, and it will certainly raise the river level for farmers to the east and south as the flood waters try to wash around the proposed structure.

At a public meeting held at Emerald Hill on Oct the 19th no description was able to be given by the Whitehaven (Vickery) representative for what kind of bank would be built, how many culverts it would incorporate, and on the submitted proposal itself the maps are so general and of such a small dimensions to be next to useless. Also the path of the proposed rail spur line is described as 'indicative' and the turns would appear impractically tight for trains to use at any speed above that of loading, which makes me think that more consultation needs to happen.

2. The advice given at the public meeting at Emerald Hill (9th Oct 2018) in regards to ground water usage was that when Whitehaven needed water for the washery and could not get it from its own recycled water, and started their own ground water pumps (for which they do have licences) that farmers might likely experience a drop in their own water supply and bores 'by about 2 Meters' While for an some irrigation farms pumping from many aquifers, this may not be significant given that most stock and domestic bores are more shallow this may we mean that many people in our area have to go to the expense of redrilling down to lower water supplies.

Environmentally This drop of 'about 2 meters' would also put undue stress on many trees that may die across the Gunnedah basin due to no longer being able to access water in the natural higher natural aquifers, and could potentially mean that some of those natural aquifers are forever lost.

3. The social Impact on our community also needs to be taken into account with these sorts of proposals fostering a 'them' verses 'us' situation where some farmers are viewed (rightly or wrongly) as being compensated for being affected and others feeling that the effect on them is almost as significant believing that their concerns are not being listened to.

A move to push the existing open cut southwards towards Gunnedah (and southwest towards Emerald Hill) means that many peoples quality of life will be impacted. Consideration needs to be given to the composite effect of having this project and the proposed Shenwah project both occurring concurrently.

4. Not-withstanding Whitehaven's approach of liaising with 'affected' landholders and producing a targeted impact document related to those properties, the whole monolith of reams of paper of EIS and NSW planning and Environment and

Whitehaven's response was so weighty and long, and filled with jargon that often it tended towards useless and generalised 'motherhood' statements that sifting your way through to the actual proposal as distinct from details which were irrelevant made many in our community, myself included, feel frustrated to say the least. Not enough specific facts and figures were in the proposal related to the loading facility and spur line for any level of government to pass if it in any form had it come from a private individual, I can't see how the proposal should be approved when there is such a lack of detail as to dimensions of structures, materials used, width of footprint, speed of trains around turns, number, size and position of culverts etc, to name just a few.

5. I realise that yes many jobs might be created if this were to proceed, yes NSW State Government would financially benefit, but not withstanding those things, I would urge your department to disallow the Vickery Extension project for the reasons I've given above. And so I formally object.

Sincerely,
Lyle Sims