

OBJECTION

My name is Johanna Evans. I am from NSW and have friends & family in the area that will be impacted by this mine.

The timeframe which has been given in which to respond is too short. 90 days would have been more appropriate given the scope of the extension and the volume of material which needs to be reviewed.

I am incredibly concerned about the short time frame that has been given to impacted people in which to respond to this during bad drought. Whitehaven intends to significantly alter for the worse their lives and businesses and the department appears to be facilitating this. This is abhorrent. My comment may be unscientific and based on emotion but it is entirely relevant in that statistics show an increase in rural mental health issues such as suicide and depression are on the increase. Placing undue pressure on these communities is irresponsible.

I am aware that representations have been made to the department by members of parliament and prominent community groups to increase the timeframe of valid submissions to 90 days to enable full, careful and proper evaluation of this extension.

I completely reject and oppose this extension. It should not be approved. The area is a key farming area and already hosts an existing primary industry which relies upon groundwater that Whitehaven cannot but impact.

The Vickery mine extension Environmental Impact Assessment **should be rejected**. It has numerous risks associated with it, including but not limited to:

- Proximity to the Namoi River, utter madness to put a coal mine next to a river?
- Risks to the Koala, the Vickery mine will be situated on known koala habitat.
- Noise Impacts, the EIS fails to include a comprehensive assessment of infrastructure its modelling
- Coal & Railway Loop, the EIS lacks surface water modelling. The community has been living under the assumption that there would be no Namoi River crossing associated with this project, since Whitehaven Coal was advised the Commonwealth of the Environment that a river crossing would not be acceptable under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The coal railway is one of the most serious concerns about this Vickery project.

- Not a "fit and proper person"

The Chief Executive officer of Whitehaven Coal, Mr Paul Flynn, does not have the "character, honesty and integrity" to satisfy s 83(g) "fit and proper person" test of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act. Here is the relevant legislation:

45 Matters to be taken into consideration in licensing functions

In exercising its functions under this Chapter, the appropriate regulatory authority is required to take into consideration such of the following matters as are of relevance:

...

(f) whether the person concerned is a fit and proper person,

Note.

See section 83 for provisions relating to the determination of whether a person is a fit and proper person for the purposes of this section.

83 Fit and proper persons

...

(g) if the person is a body corporate, whether, in the opinion of the appropriate regulatory authority, a director or other person concerned in the management of the body corporate is of good repute, having regard to character, honesty and integrity,

At the company's 2017 Annual General meeting the CEO responded to questions about the Maules Creek high-risk rating, telling shareholders that the Level 3 risk rating was the result of complaints from just one nearby

landowner who wanted more for his land, which was an untruth. The Level 3 risk rating was due to a history of noise exceedances and pollution problems. The CEO's statement was false, and has been denied by the NSW EPA. I believe that this makes the CEO not a "fit and proper person" within the definition of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 to hold an Environmental Protection Licence as a Director of Whitehaven Coal, of which Maules Creek Coal Pty Ltd is a subsidiary. As a result, Whitehaven Coal should not be granted approval for the Vickery Coal Mine Extension.

In addition, the history of non-compliance of the Maules Creek coal mine, the fact that Whitehaven has had a Mandatory Noise Audit at Maules Creek Coal mine, and a Pollution Reduction Program at the Gunnedah Coal Handling and Processing Plant, I believe that NSW cannot afford to take the risk.

- IPCC report, we simply cannot afford any new coal mines if we are to offer our children a future.
- Water trigger, This EIA does not provide an adequate amount of detail to enable decision-makers at the State or Commonwealth level to properly assess the likely impacts of the mine, and the railway, on the Namoi River, and the surrounding surface-water and groundwater.
- Social impacts, the social fabric of Boggabri has already been eroded by the other nearby coal mines, another mine in the vicinity of this town which will reportedly be using automated equipment in its mines will not provide the jobs & employment necessary to allow this town to thrive.