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NSW Department of Planning and Environment
Major Projects Branch
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Dear Sir/Madam

PROJECT SUBMISSION – VICKERY COAL MINE EXTENSION
SSD 7480

Liverpool Plains Shire Council (LPSC) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the abovementioned project.

As context, the Liverpool Plains Local Government Area (LGA) is located in the northwest of NSW approximately 45 minutes from the Regional City of Tamworth and directly adjoins the Gunnedah Shire Council local government area (LGA). The local economy is strongly based on Agriculture and the Liverpool Plains is internationally renowned for its productive and fertile soils, being known as Australia's 'food bowl'.

Council has elected to adopt a 'neutral position' towards mining activities within the Region. This approach has been in response to significant ongoing tension in respect of mining and agricultural interests. Notwithstanding this overarching policy position, the Liverpool Plains Shire is physically located between the Hunter Region, Australia's largest regional economy, and the rapidly emerging and swiftly growing economy in the Gunnedah coal fields. The mining sector, therefore, has direct relevance and importance to the local business community, of whom Council advocates for.

Likely impacts on the Liverpool Plains community in relation to this project lie within two (2) primary categories: social and economic. Feedback in respect of these two key areas of interest is provided for the Department's consideration below.

- 1.1 Compliance should be ensured with any business and community support mechanisms detailed in project approval allied Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) and commensurate Social Impact Management Strategies (SIMS).
- 1.2 In respect of 1.1 above, the definition of local procurement should be clearly defined and applied within an appropriate and reasonable geographical context in any local procurement strategies.
- 1.3 It is noted that the project is predicted to require a construction workforce of up to 500 personnel and operational workforce of up to 450 personnel. A local recruitment hierarchy should be developed with preference provided to locally-based candidates. It is noted from the SIA that no significant impact is predicted on the Liverpool Plains LGA, however, appropriate engagement should continue to be undertaken with local government to ensure that pressure is not created on Council's abilities to upskill personnel and achieve desired staff retention rates.

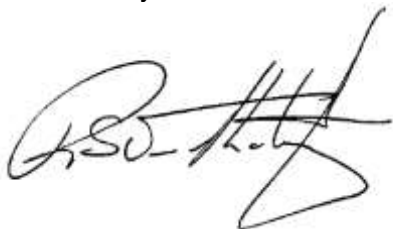
LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL

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- 1.4 Council, in its local experience with directly engaging with the mining sector, has found the operational outcomes to be generally positive. Whitehaven, in its operation of the Werris Creek Coal Mine within the Liverpool Plains local Government Area (LGA) has supported a broad variety of initiatives and events ranging from community-led environmental initiatives to the installation of community infrastructure such as playgrounds and educational training facilities. Local community organisations including service clubs and charities have also been supported. In all major community projects, Council has been actively engaged and partnered with in the process. This collaborative approach has also been underpinned by the contents of Council's adopted Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and a philosophy of 'buying local'. This approach has also ensured that businesses are supported in any local investment opportunities to the highest degree possible.
- 1.5 Increased support and commitment is always sought from the mining sector to buying locally. The benefits to communities and the ability for them to share in prosperity and wealth generated by mining activity can not be understated. Should the project be approved the SIMS should own local procurement policies and support, to the highest degree practicable, the communities that they reside in directly and impinge upon. Examples of local business and service providers in the Liverpool Plains that benefit from this sector includes, but is not limited to, real estate agencies, steel fabrication industries, vehicle and equipment sales and repairs, professional consultancy services, financial professionals, hospitality and food service industries, fuel distribution outlets, and the like.
- 1.6 The mining industry, State and Federal Governments have an obligation to support regional economies by ensuring appropriate digital, air, rail and road connectivity and appropriately funding these critical infrastructure needs. From a cumulative impact perspective, should the project be approved, it is likely that increased pressure will be placed on regional freight 'pinch points' within the Liverpool Plains LGA. These include at Gap Road, Werris Creek and the Werris Creek Road Railway crossing. The Department's attention is drawn in this regard to the contents of the *Namoi Regional Freight Strategy* (Rhelm Consulting, 2018).

If you wish to discuss the contents of this submission further please contact the undersigned or Council's Director of Environmental and Economic Development Services Ms Donna Ausling by phoning this office on 6746 1755, or by emailing lpesc@lpesc.nsw.gov.au.

Yours faithfully



RS (Ron) van Katwyk
GENERAL MANAGER