

**Maules Creek Branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW**

24 October 2018

Mr Steve O'Donoghue,  
Mining & Extractive Industries  
Major Development Assessment  
Department of Planning  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Steve,

**Re: Vickery Extension Coal Project**  
**Project Application Number: 16\_7480**

Please find enclosed a submission by the Maules Creek Branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW regarding the Environmental Assessment by Whitehaven Coal prepared as part of the above mentioned Project Application.

The Environmental Assessment involves a major expansion of the existing mining approval for the Vickery coal mine which will have a cumulative impact on the existing coal impacted districts of Boggabri and Maules Creek.

The Maules Creek Branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW argue that this project should be rejected. We ask that the State Government demonstrate to the community that they support the long-term environmental survival of the region and our planet. That they make decisions based on the application of the precautionary principal in practice. That the environment in which we live and work and the food security we supply are valued.

Due to the environmental performance of the proponent and its impacts on the area of Maules Creek, the Independent Panel on Climate Change report urging that coal be phased out due to its impact on climate, and, due to the potential impacts of a large pit next to the Namoi River and the surrounding rich agricultural land, **we object to the project proposal.**

**This is exactly the sort of project that should never be developed.**

Yours sincerely

**Maules Creek Branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW**

## **SUBMISSION Vickery Extension Coal Project Application Number: 16\_7480**

### **Maules Creek Branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW**

The Vickery mine extension Environmental Impact Assessment **should be rejected**.

We object to the extension of the Vickery Coal mine. Our submission, while not being complete as time is short and as members of the North West NSW community, we have had many challenges during this exhibition period. Ironically much of this is driven by largely unacknowledged environmental and social impacts from local mining.

We object because -

1. This project is in the wrong place for the health of the environment and the community.
2. The impacts from the Maules Creek mine have demonstrated a company who consider the Indigenous and near community and environmental impacts they create as not being actual impacts- either community concerns are refuted outright or if noted in the Annual Review and different from modeled impacts are considered to be merely administrative in nature- i.e. on paper- therefore they do not have any real or actual problems to fix- just paper work issues. E.g. solution include get a Project Modification or apply for a new, unknown water licence after approval, adaptively manage. These things might work for mining, but don't work for community or environment. This is unacceptable and makes those impacted living in an unstable and unsustainable environment.
3. The impacts on water, are unacceptable. Water is a huge issue and the EIS information clearly shows that the case for mining close to the Namoi has been lost. I do not have confidence that the Namoi River is safe from severe damage if this mine proceeds, and fear that water quality and downstream flows will be damaged to the detriment of downstream users. Adding to the already excessive Greenhouse Gas impacts would be a failure of government planning and against the Paris Agreement. We must not develop these resources, but save them for future times and generations- say if Australia enters an ice-age. We are looking at a climate bomb. Our global environment and the NSW economy need a transition. We need to be carbon neutral. This mine proposal is not assisting in this goal. It is reckless in light of current information on climate change. The IPCC report and countries the world over praise the uptake of roof top solar in Australia and explicitly remind the Australian population that they must reduce emissions. The existing North West NSW population should not be forced to wear the shame attached to being a big greenhouse gas emitter driven by fossil fuel mining- and now expansion.
4. The actual, (not documented social impacts) are not worth this mine's approval. The opportunity to have a community led Gunnedah Health Impacts Assessment has

been rejected by government and another project like this within this area is unacceptable without this baseline data.

5. Loss of farm land and farming families. This is a huge loss and has been undervalued and swept aside by the multinational jobs rhetoric. Farmers and their families want to engage in food security. Workers and government department workers want a job, not a coal job. Community want to spend time working in a productive space rather than in non-paying community compliance roles just to survive. Further Automation of vehicles with Hitache has been flagged. Therefore the cost to the workforce in approving this project is detrimental to our region.
6. The impacts of noise, the personal social impacts, the dust and frankly- community driven compliance and the provision of community feedback.
7. The culture of mining creates timewasting for community members. We would not like to see another community suffer.
8. It is clear that the Vickery EIS Assessment is unable to prosecute its own case for this development and the information provided within in many cases is misleading at best. The Road Transport Assessment uses survey data collected in 2012 which is outdated. It predates the establishment of the Maules Creek coal mine, the extension of the Boggabri and Tarrawonga mines.
9. The impacts on prime koala habitat, including the area where the rail loop is a reason to reject this project. Koalas in the area are healthy. This is important. Impacts on the Koala have also been understated because of insufficient consideration of impacts upon the full extent of suitable habitat within the Approved Mine area. Like other cumulative impacts, the effects on koala habitat have been dealt with poorly in the EIS. There does not seem to be any limit of the extent of impact being considered and matters in relation to landscape impacts have not been considered adequately.
10. The government support for sustainable mining does not exist and is unaffordable. The money would be better spent on schools and hospitals not overpasses and fixing coal mining generated health issues- that did not exist in the region premining. The recent history of mining in the at Maules Creek has established that there will never be adequate supervision of such large developments.
11. The NSW Planning system has the requirement for ecologically sustainable development and key, being the precautionary principle. It is time to fully implement this principle and reject this mine. The development must in reality not just on paper must not destroy the environment.
12. It is clear that the Vickery EIS Assessment is unable to prosecute its own case for this development and the information provided within in many cases is misleading at best. The Road Transport Assessment uses survey data collected in 2012 which is outdated. It predates the establishment of the Maules Creek coal mine, the extension of the Boggabri and Tarrawonga mines.
13. The transport is only one area of many where the work is inaccurate and as for the case of the Maules Creek mine, misinformation for whatever reason- has set a precedent of an EIS with misinformation that has resulted in a mining approval that has led to environmental and community harm.

14. The EIS work while voluminous is unable to accurately present current information and on this bases (after many years with which the proponent could have prepared the document) must be rejected without further option. It is a waste of our collective lives and children's future.

The Maules Creek Branch of the CWA of NSW recommend that the Vickery mine extension Environmental Impact Assessment **should be rejected**.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Regards

**Maules Creek Branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW**

