

This submission is opposed to the Whitehaven Coal Vickery Coal Project SSD 7480.

I earnestly urge that the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Vickery Extension Project (SD_7480) **be rejected**. Over the past 45 years I have come to appreciate the value of the region around Boggabri as a school teacher escorting student excursions and as a member of the wider community concerned at the destruction of irreplaceable native habitat and threats to our climate, water and soil posed by the environmentally destructive and economically retrograde reliance on fossil fuel sponsored by our current State and Federal Governments. I am particularly concerned for the on-going viability of the Boggabri community, the incompatibility of the development with existing land-use and the complete disregard for intergenerational equity, cumulative impacts and the precautionary principle shown by the proponent.

It would seem appropriate that the 'extension' be **considered a new, rather than extended, proposal** including as it does a new coal railway; a rail load out facility; a new Coal Handling and Processing Plant; a second bridge over the Namoi River and a new bore field with an additional 10 bores. From conversation with the community I understand that many of these changes to the Vickery project have been presented with little or, as is the case with the new borefield, **no consultation** at all. I further understand that there has been a **lack of consultation with the traditional custodians** within the Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council boundaries.

Boggabri is obviously in decline, a situation which an extended Vickery mine with its Drive-in, Drive-out employees can only exacerbate. On my last visit more shops and another of the three hotels in town were shut- the promised prosperity has been an illusion. The sale of over 70 farms to coal mines in the region has caused a decline in the long-term resident population and local volunteer services are struggling as a result. Anxiety over the threat of loss of livelihood is apparent. The promises of economic stimulation to communities such as Boggabri by Whitehaven, and other mining companies, simply do not eventuate.

The incompatibility of mining and recent historical land-use is self-evident; the area adjacent to the proposed mine extension is strategic agricultural land- the impacts of water and air pollution will inevitably impact on crops grown there.

One of the areas of study for the student groups travelling to the area is **the Great Artesian Basin and surface and underground water interdependencies**. It must be of concern that no modelling has been provided for the movement of surface water (in times of flood) after the construction of the proposed 14 km rail spur and no details its construction. The proximity of the pits to the edge of the Namoi's alluvial aquifer is also of concern. The **Precautionary Principle** must come into play- unless water security can be guaranteed by the proponent the application should be rejected.

The horrifying loss of Native habitat, evident even to the most casual visitor, will be increased further by the planned extension. Prime koala habitat is threatened by the extension of Vickery mine and the impacts (and cumulative impacts) of habitat loss have been understated in the EIA. Koalas are listed as an endangered species under NSW and Commonwealth legislation. In addition, offsets are not apparent for the Mixed Sedgeland

community nor the River Red Gum community which will be lost should the extension project be approved.

I have noticed the increasing **burden on the Kamlaro Highway of mining and mine-related traffic**. The Road Transport Assessment uses survey data which is out-dated as it predates the establishment of the Maules Creek coal mine and the extension of the Boggabri and Tarrawonga mines. Road transport has grown noticeably with mine workers, transportation of heavy plant and equipment and increased road haulage of coal. The current cumulative impacts of all relevant mines and their use of the Highway must be assessed accurately prior to approval being granted and a private haul road and highway overpass should be built prior to any work commencing on the Vickery Coal Mine.

Noise and its insidious effects on the neighbouring community has long been a concern of community members. The Noise Impact Assessment lacks an All Years Worst Case Scenario, fails to include key noise producing infrastructure in its modelling and makes the unlikely claim that the 10 MTPA mine will be quieter than the 4.5 MTPA mine approved in 2015.

I deplore the **lack of regard for intergenerational equity** inherent in the proposal; it is unconscionable that we will leave our children a gaping void and a desecrated landscape simply to effect economies of scale for a company which has no social licence for its operations.