C/- Philip Spark
22 Garden Street
Tamworth 2340
PHONE/FAX O2-67642245
Mobile 0427642245
Email pdspark@activ8.net.au

To; NSW Planning and Environment Dept

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I write this submission to object to the extension of the approved Vickery Coal Mine including a coal handling and preparation plant (CHPP), train load-out facility and rail spur line.

Having considered the Environmental Impact Statement I have concluded that the approval of this project would be a retrograde step for NSW and the nation.

I find the invitation to make a submission an insult to people who care, knowing that even with months of effort gone into detailed submissions referenced to expert opinions to provide strong evidence it will only be ignored and the mine will go ahead.

I have put that effort into many submissions against mining development and changes of legislation in the past. In each case the concerns of the overwhelming majority of submissions were ignored in favour of the minority who are in support.

The public of NSW and the nation pay their taxes to have government departments protect their interests and the environment. Why can't that happen and let us get on with our lives?

The same goes for Planning Assessment Commission hearings they are nothing more than a rubber stamp to waste the time and money of people who care.

I also object to the very short timeframe given to prepare submissions, 42 days is not long enough.

Apart from those issues my objection is based upon;

- Scientists worldwide have spoken unanimously that no new coal mines should be approved. This proposal should rejected based on its contribution to carbon emissions, and the cost that will have on all aspects of our lives.

- I don't believe further water licences should be granted to mines, as it takes water from the environment and farmers.

- The proximity to the river is too close and will likely impact aquifers that are connected to the river system. Water run-off and potential pollution of the river cannot be considered when "The final vertical alignment of the rail and the sizing of the openings (bridges and culverts) will be determined during the detailed design stage." Could have serious ramifications for flood risks and potential pollution of the river.

- Scientists have condemned the concept of offsetting, see conservation article attached. I don't agree with the regulations that make offsetting easier, see the senate inquiry recommendations into the use of offsets that have never been adopted.

- Whitehaven are not a fit and proper company. There is strong evidence it is a seriously corrupt company who have falsified offset descriptions in the past to get the Maules Creek Mine approval, see the letter to Greg Hunt attached. Their past reputation should come against them, and no further approvals granted. It sickens me the way they claim to be good corporate and community citizens boosting employment and regional economies, knowing that if automation could run mines tomorrow they would sack the staff.

- I don't agree with allowing pollution regulations to be exceeded at any time providing that averages stay within the accepted range. The people in close proximity to Maules Creek have suffered from dust and noise too regularly.

- The economic benefit has been exposed to false, when you consider the long-term cost of increasing carbon emissions, and the damage that robbing people from current employment has on local businesses.

- Also the cost of mine closure is never considered on the regional economy. The supposed benefit is equally negative when people become unemployed and that ripples through to businesses and real estate values.

- I am concerned about the impact of train lines, roads and clearing on the koalas that are known to occur along the Namoi River. I do not believe that any mitigation measures, such as relocation of the local koala population can be viable because any relocating of koalas is known to have a high failure rate. The EIS must consider the cumulative impact of all the mines impacting on Koalas, not just the Vickery extension.

- Trucking and training more coal through Gunnedah can't be good for public health, see and adopt the senate inquiry recommendations below

- The key recommendations that relate to coal are:

- Recommendation 1: The committee recommends that the Australian Government's representative to the Standing Council on Environment and Water support the adoption of the 23 recommendations of the Ambient Air Quality NEPM Review.
- Recommendation 3: The committee recommends that **buffer zones be used to protect populated areas from large point-source emitters.**
- Recommendation 4: The committee recommends that pollution monitoring should accurately capture population exposure for communities and homes proximate to pollution point sources.
- Recommendation 5: The committee recommends that providing monitoring and real-time data of air quality be a condition of environmental approvals issued by the Australian Government unless an operator can demonstrate that air pollution created by the development will not impact upon human health.
- **Recommendation 6: The committee recommends that states and territories require industry to implement covers on all coal wagon fleets.**
- Recommendation 7: The committee recommends that the Commonwealth develop and implement a process for **assessing cumulative impacts of coal mine developments that take into account other mines in the region and their impact on resident health.**
- Recommendation 8: **The committee recommends that health impact assessments be required as part of the assessment process for all new developments.**

- Planning must stop approving whatever will make money in the short term and start to consider the long term wellbeing of future generations and the environment.

Yours sincerely

Philip Spark