

Submission to IPC re: Vickery coal mine project

I wish to register my strong objection to the proposed Vickery coal mine for the following reasons:

- It's called an "extension" but is in fact a new mine in the productive farming district of Boggabri, with a new rail connection that will cross the Namoi River and its floodplain.
- The mine site includes the historic "Kurrumbede" property, said to be the inspiration to Dorothea MacKeller's poem "My Country". Vibration from mine blasting will harm the homestead.
- Narrabri Council has formally objected to the project, due to its social impacts on the Boggabri district, already reeling from the depopulation of farms by Whitehaven's nearby Maules Creek coal mine.
- It would mine 168 million tonnes of coal, at a rate of up to 10 million tonnes per year. One third of it will be thermal coal and will be burned for electricity overseas. Altogether, if it goes ahead, this mine will add 370 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere.
- The most troubling aspect of the mine is its lack of water. Even the Department of Planning admits it might run out of water in dry times. To feed its thirst for water, Whitehaven's nearby Maules Creek coal mine has already taken water illegally, outbid local farmers for water at auction and built pipelines from nearby farms to divert farming water for mining.
- Building another water hungry coal mine in the parched Namoi is a terrible idea.
- Furthermore, Whitehaven proposes to pile mine spoil on top of 202 hectares of the Namoi alluvial aquifer, a plan the Department of Planning Industry and Environment's own Water Division has stated it does not support because the presence of acid forming materials in the spoil will mean heavy metals could leach into the aquifer below.

The proponent's short term financial gains and dubious quotes employment benefits are far outweighed by the deleterious community economic, societal, environmental effects which may be irreversible and continue for decades to come effecting future generations. Given all of the above and assuming an ethical commitment to meeting Australia's CO2 reduction targets this project should not be approved.