My name is Andrew Garratt, I have recently joined Whitehaven Coal as General Manager Community Engagement. I have four children and up until earlier this year have been based in Albury NSW.

My perspective is quite a different one from many other speakers, it’s from the lens of a new employee, who was seeking a new employer.

My story is about why I chose Whitehaven Coal, why I chose to relocate to this region and why I proudly wear the Whitehaven badge.

So what was it about Whitehaven Coal that was attractive to me?

A 20 year veteran in community relations, who in the interests of my love for communities, has established tourist mining trails, festivals, events, playgrounds, kindergartens, accident and emergency facilities, kept rescue helicopters in the air, built health precincts, trade training centres, supported business communities during the GFC and made sure regional airlines stayed in the air, that sea farers felt welcomed and those who have no one have someone who cares.

I am a man of strong principles, I believe in working openly, honestly and cooperatively and I like to leave a positive legacy in the communities that I have served.

What were the Whitehaven foundation pillars, their culture, the way they work, that was attractive to me?

Could they meet my high expectations?

* In Safety in all operations
* In Social and environmental responsibility
* In Continuous improvement
* In Operational excellence and sustainable growth
* In Openness with customers and partners
* In Professionalism and integrity
* In the way they spoke to their people and did the management team walk the talk?

**What was the product?**

* High-quality thermal and metallurgical coal,
* Contributing to our regional and national economy

**What about their community investment? Very important to me.**

* **$1.5B** invested in the North West NSW economy in past 5 years
* **$12M** in salaries to indigenous workforce annually
* **75%** of workforce locally based
* **Approaching 10%** in Aboriginal employment across the group
* **$334M** spent with local suppliers annually
* **$515,000** in local donations annually

**What about their environmental credentials?**

* A comprehensive approach to environmental management
* Rehabilitating and restoring of disturbed areas

**What about health and safety?**

* Every single member of our workforce should expect to be able to come home safely to their families and loved ones at the end of each day.

Then the question for me, how could I contribute, what difference could I make, could my family make? Would they listen to me?

And after 5 months, the answer is YES

This is the Company that I have chosen to hang my hat on, it’s the company that I would like to think will be here when my four children are ready for employment opportunities and is why I believe that the Vickery Project should be approved to ensure an extension to Whitehaven’s positive legacy through the great North West of NSW.

I respect that there has been a range of views about Whitehaven Coal from the first day and half of this hearing, but my experience has been a very positive one.