

Dear Commissioners,

Now that the Natural Resources Access Regulator has determined to fine Whitehaven Coal for alleged breaches of water laws in failing to divert clean water on their site at Maules Creek, water that was badly needed by the local community during a period of severe drought, I am writing to ask for assurance that you will rule against Whitehaven's application to open a new mine at Boggabri. Whitehaven is a rogue company, a multiple offender against NSW environmental legislation, inadequately punished this far, and should on no account be rewarded with an increase to its activities and its access to more water as they are proposing. Additionally, their plan to create a mine spoil on top of 202 hectares of alluvial aquifer at this mine site is a further illustration, if one was needed, of their willingness to jeopardise precious water resources and systems for the sake of their own profits.

Moreover, Whitehaven's claim that an expansion of their activities in Narrabri would create substantial new jobs in the region is not borne out by the facts since employment will continue to decline as the automation of the mining industry continues. What a new mine at Boggabri will do and has already succeeded in doing is destroy farming land and community in Narrabri, create new health and safety hazards for the local population and further depopulate the area of its agricultural and support workers.

Whilst I am not a local inhabitant I feel solidarity for Narrabri and all rural communities whose livelihoods and interests have been systematically sacrificed by Australian state and federal governments to the coal mining industry. Furthermore, as an Australian citizen I am ashamed of our international reputation in this area.

A number of studies, the most recent by EY professional services, have indicated that, to counterbalance the social and economic effects of Covid 19, now is the time to reboot our economy and repair our land by doing the absolute reverse of opening new coal mines. Instead, these studies support major investment in the planting of trees, removal of weeds, restoration of rivers, wetlands and coastal habitats thus creating over 50,000 new jobs in the process. Along with new jobs in the renewable and recycling industries these are our hope for the future.

I therefore implore you to rule for our land, our communities and our future and refuse this application from an untrustworthy company in an industry in very necessary global decline.

Thank you,

Elaine Valton

it could create 53,000 jobs over four years planting trees, removing weeds and restoring rivers, wetlands and coastal habitats. It is estimated it would reduce welfare costs by about \$620m and increase economic output by about \$5.7bn.

A number of It is the latest of several analyses to have found there is a strong economic case for post-Covid stimulus measures to be designed to also help the environment.

I am therefore writing to express my profound dismay and condemnation of the proposal to grant permission to Whitehaven Coal for another mine at Boggabri and hope your wise decision to fine Whitehaven