Firstly, I do not object to mining as a whole and am a strong believer of diversity in our region and local economies. But I am strongly against the approval of a mine situated just 450m from the Namoi River. If something goes wrong with this project it will be the river and downstream water communities that will pay the price. This is not an extension, this is a greenfield site. Although Whitehaven Coal have approval for a much smaller mine, they never intended to proceed with it. Instead it was just a foot in the door for this mega mine.

They do not have enough water for this mine. The Department of Planning (DPIE) admits this in their assessment. Whitehaven were scrambling for water with its existing mines last year. They propose a borefield with a transect of 10 bores in the Namoi alluvium approx 6km from Boggabri town water bores. Our research shows that last year they would have needed 3300ML more than their current licence entitlements from this source. The presence of Whitehaven and others in the water market has already seen other water users priced out of the market and eroded the productivity and profitability of a key agricultural region.

When rainfall exceeds just 38mm over 5 days, the Mine will be allowed to release water from sediment dams directly into the Namoi River. Farmers are not allowed to release water from their farms back into the river for fear of contamination yet it will be okay for a mine to release water into the Namoi? This can not possibly be allowed to happen while ensuring the integrity of the water in the river.

Mining has reached saturation point around Boggabri. Existing mines have already bought out nearly 80 farms in the district. The Narrabri Shire Council has formally objected to the mine, believing that it is not in the community’s interest. The mine will leave a final void lake that will, in perpetuity, be filled from groundwater seepage eventually becoming more saline than seawater.

The proposal includes a railway line that traverses some 14 kms across the Namoi floodplain which to date has no structural design. Yet, the DPIE has determined it will have no impact on flooding in the region. The mine includes an overburden dump 200 ha in size over the Namoi Alluvium that DPIE’s own water division does not support because of fears it will leech toxic contaminants into the aquifer.  

**I do not support the Vickery Mine extension.**