



Contact: Andrew Hope

4 February 2019

**PROJECT SUBMISSION – VICKERY COAL MINE EXTENSION**

Liverpool Plains Shire Council (LPSC) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the abovementioned project.

I wish to declare this submission is made as Mayor of the LPSC and not in my role as the managing director of Country Mile Signs.

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As context, the Liverpool Plains Local Government Area (LGA) is located in the northwest of NSW approximately 45 minutes from the Regional City of Tamworth and directly adjoins the Gunnedah Shire Council local government area (LGA). It should also be noted the project is not within our LGA.

Council has an adopted position towards mining activities within our Shire. This position is the council supports all industry within the shire providing the environment and in particular the rich plains and underground water is protected. This approach has been in response to significant ongoing tension in respect of mining and agricultural interests. Notwithstanding this overarching policy position, the Liverpool Plains Shire is physically located between the Hunter Region, Australia's largest regional economy, and the rapidly emerging and swiftly growing economy in the Gunnedah coal fields. The mining sector, therefore, has direct relevance and importance to the local business community, of whom Council advocates for.

Likely impacts on the Liverpool Plains community in relation to this project lie within two (2) primary categories: social and economic.

Economic is based on local procurement should be clearly defined and applied within an appropriate and reasonable geographical context in any local procurement strategies.

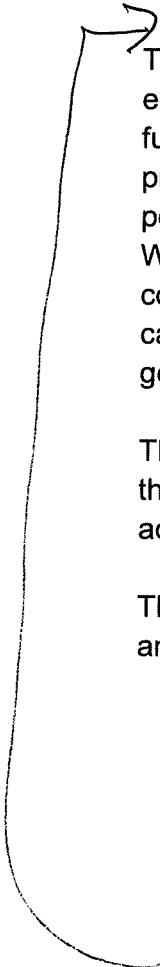
Social it is noted that the project is predicted to require a construction workforce of up to 500 personnel and operational workforce of up to 450 personnel. A local recruitment hierarchy should be developed with preference provided to locally-based candidates. It is noted from the Social Impact Assessment that no significant impact is predicted on the Liverpool Plains LGA, however, appropriate engagement should continue to be undertaken with local government to ensure that pressure is not created on Council's abilities to upskill personnel and achieve desired staff retention rates.

Council, in its local experience with directly engaging with the mining sector, has found the operational outcomes to be generally positive. Whitehaven, in its operation of the Werris Creek Coal Mine within the Liverpool Plains local Government Area (LGA) has supported a broad variety of initiatives and events ranging from community-led environmental initiatives to the installation of community infrastructure such as playgrounds and educational training facilities. Local community organisations including service clubs and charities have also been supported. In all major community projects, Council has been actively engaged and partnered with in the process. This collaborative approach has also been underpinned by the contents of



Council's adopted Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and a philosophy of 'buying local'. This approach has also ensured that businesses are supported in any local investment opportunities to the highest degree possible.

Increased support and commitment is always sought from the mining sector to buying locally. The benefits to communities and the ability for them to share in prosperity and wealth generated by mining activity can not be understated. Should the project be approved the Social Impact Management Strategy should own local procurement policies and support, to the highest degree practicable, the communities that they reside in directly and impinge upon. Examples of local business and service providers in the Liverpool Plains that benefit from this sector includes, but is not limited to, real estate agencies, steel fabrication industries, vehicle and equipment sales and repairs, professional consultancy services, financial professionals, hospitality and food service industries, fuel distribution outlets, and the like.



The mining industry, State and Federal Governments have an obligation to support regional economies by ensuring appropriate digital, air, rail and road connectivity and appropriately funding these critical infrastructure needs. From a cumulative impact perspective, should the project be approved, it is likely that increased pressure will be placed on regional freight 'pinch points' within the Liverpool Plains LGA. These include at Gap Road, Werris Creek and the Werris Creek Road Railway crossing. The Department's attention is drawn in this regard to the contents of the *Namoi Regional Freight Strategy (Rhelm Consulting, 2018)*. We believe this can be done through fairer distribution of the royalties for regions money collected by the state government with a commitment to fund all affected shires with the infrastructure required.

The project is generally supported by Council on the basis that it meets all of the regulatory guidelines and environmental criteria. An appropriate balance must always be achieved.

The corresponding economic benefits to the regional community are likely to be very positive and the project has the capacity to increase economic diversity across the entire Region.

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