

**Whitehaven Vickery Extension Project.  
Independent Planning Commission Hearing.**

**Gunnedah Town Hall**

**5<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**Good morning Commissioners. My name is Robert Hooke. I am a Councillor and Deputy Mayor of the Gunnedah Shire Council and wish to address this hearing representing Council.**

**Council acknowledges the Vickery Extension Project Preliminary Issues Report prepared by the Department and that matters raised by Council in its submission will be considered as a part of the Department's detailed assessment of the project and that additional consideration will be provided by the proponent, where appropriate, to form this assessment.**

**Council's submission, subsequent to the EIS for the Vickery Extension Project. did not raise any objection to the development proposal. The matters raised in the submission have regard to further investigation or additional information to be provided by the proponent prior to determining the development. Council looks forward to these matters being satisfactorily addressed and will not waste the Commissioner's, or other attendees, time in reiterating these points.**

**Council welcomes this development, as per any other development, which complies with State and Federal legislative requirements and aligns with Gunnedah Shire Council's strategic planning requirements and policies. Council recognises the potential economic and social benefits that a development of this nature would bring.**

**While Council recognises the benefits of such a development, it also holds concerns in addition to those noted in its Submission with respect to the impact of the Project on availability of affordable housing within the Shire and the supply and training of appropriately skilled labour. Council seeks the commitment of both the State Government and Whitehaven in collaborating to find solutions for these issues. We do not wish to see the benefits of this development outweighed by detrimental effects on the community and other existing and future industries. With careful social planning this development can build a stronger economy for the region and leave a lasting positive legacy for future generations.**

**Agriculture and the extractive industry have long been the drivers of this region's economy. As we all know the farming sector is currently experiencing a severe and prolonged drought. The mining sector is playing a significant part in sustaining the economic viability of this region.**

**Currently Whitehaven employs approximately 1660 people, including contractors, of which 75% live within the region. Of those, 46% or 568 Full Time Equivalents live in the Gunnedah LGA. 11% are Aboriginal. Council also recognises the voluntary contributions that Whitehaven makes to this community with total donations for the 2018 calendar year being \$420,000.**

**Finally, as referred to in Council's Submission, Council wishes to highlight its request that the determination of this development proposal should not be completed until such time as an agreed Voluntary Planning Agreement between Gunnedah Shire Council and the developer is completed. This is to ensure that both parties are encouraged to genuinely work towards an appropriate outcome.**

**ENDS**