

Mr. David Martin



The Commissioners.

NSW Independent Planning Commission

Re: The Whitehaven Vickery Coal open cut mine proposal, Boggabri.

Dear Commissioners.

I write to most strongly object to this proposed open cut coal mine.

I have been an avid bird watcher and atlasser monitoring the species and distribution of our native birds over New South Wales for the last 45 years. I have travelled to many country towns and stayed on many country properties, most of them being historic.

Due to the drought and the escalating over clearing of the remaining native timber and habitat vegetation, many of our native birds species are rapidly declining in variety and numbers. Much destruction is done by big overseas companies buying and amalgamating small farms, clearing for large broad acre farming, thereby removing the remaining habitat necessary for our unique species of birds to migrate and breed. Bird study groups are monitoring specific regions called Key Bird Areas (KBA's) in country NSW for this very reason. Some country towns are visibly going broke as the generations of farmers and graziers leave the districts. The companies have their own contractors and staff, very rarely supporting the district. These sentiments are most forcibly and often expressed by many of the local inhabitants. The Grenfell district is just one example. It is so sad to see and is avoidable.

The big coal mine companies are contributing grossly to this affect by permanently destroying the habitat for our native animals and the landscape on a big scale. The Leard State Forest, once was an excellent bird and animal area, is now greatly reduced in size by the adjacent huge open cut mine and is almost destroyed. Another very sad loss would be the Vickery State Forest and the surrounding flood plain habitat.

I list many other reasons why approval to this proposal should not be given :

- The loss of prime agricultural land. The district is a very productive farming area with old homesteads and farming land, which includes the historic heritage 'Kurrumbede' property, which will be harmed by mine blasting, set in a beautiful landscape flood plain, this being wonderfully expressed by Dorothea MacKeller's poem 'My Country'.
- The beautiful scenic surrounding landscape together with its timbered areas will inarguably be destroyed. The Namoi Boggabri/ Gunnedah region is one of the most scenic regions of rural NSW and a delight to travel through. No matter how well hidden, mine developments such as this proposal are an ugly blight.

- Narrabri Council has formally objected to the project due to the social impacts on the Boggabri district.

- It is understood that 168 mega tonnes of coal at a rate of 10 mega tonnes per year are proposed to be mined, this means that 370 mega tonnes of greenhouse gas emission will be released into the atmosphere.
- The Dept. Planning admits that the mine might run out of water in dry times. The nearby Maule's Creek mine has already taken water illegally. Local farmers have been outbid for water at auction, and pipelines have been built from nearby farms against their will to divert water for mining.
- Building another water consuming mine in the Namoi region is environmentally insensitive.
- Mine spoil from the Whitehaven mine is to be deposited on 202 hectares of the Namoi alluvial aquifer which will allow acid forming materials in the spoil to leach into the aquifer below. This plan has been unsupported by the Dept. Planning, Industry and Environment.
- Future expansion is inevitably planned by most mining companies once approval is given. These huge open cut areas remain forever as a blight on the landscape, and are impossible to restore to the original habitat despite promised attempts. Many remain for ever as huge holes in the ground.

What a terrible legacy to leave behind for future generations.

Please help this beautiful flood plain region to remain intact and not allowed to be destroyed by this open cut mine and its resultant infrastructure.

Yours sincerely.



David Martin

27/06/2020