

**From:** [James Barlow](#)  
**To:** [IPCN Enquiries Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** Objection Vickery extension  
**Date:** Wednesday, 8 July 2020 8:18:46 AM

---

Commissions , my name is James barlow member of the Boggabri farming and community group owner/ manager of the property Mirrabinda 127 a,b,c. Which some of you visited.

The only one that has acquisition rights and no limits applied to my farm. Despite all the local rumours I have not sold to whitehaven coal.

As I said in my last presentation I have no intention of selling my families land and water at this point in my life and no one should be forced to. That my family and myself have spent more than 50 years growing and making it the successful sustainable agribusiness it is today. I would not replace it in this district.

Only myself my fellow neighbours and mine affected people really understand the torment we have suffered over several years. If only our critics could walk in our shoes. We only fight to protect our community, livelihoods and the land we cherish so dearly.

Nobody wants to live next to a coal mine! If you placed this proposal next to Gunnedah everyone would be up in arms.

My point is just because we are a few doesn't mean our lives don't matter. For years now that is exactly how we have felt.

So much wasted time with the DPIE, listened to but ignored. There is much wrong with the process that has lead us to this point today. If the process is wrong I fear the outcomes could be disastrous.

So I continue to fight for what I believe is most important and do what I can to convince you the ipc of the many reasons why this mine should not be approved.

#### Environment

As we all know this mine is located extremely close to the namoi river. I recognise our governments desire for wealth and jobs which is mirrored all the way to the bottom, especially by my local council Gunnedah. I'm not against mining and recognise its place at the moment in our society, but world sentiment is changing rapidly! with the long term sustainability of coal sketchy at best. . (Banks evidence)

So with that in mind you the ipc have the huge responsibility of deciding if this really is the most intelligent location for a large greenfield mine with associated infrastructure in 2020.

We have seen how vulnerable and sensitive civilisation is in recent months with covid 19 bringing the world to its knees. Just prior to this epidemic we had witnessed a record drought in most of Australia, and let's not forget the devastating bushfires only last year, hotter and drier than we have ever seen before.. As farmers we are seeing the changes first hand on the ground. As the environment is our life!, our livelihoods! It will only get harder to grow crops in extreme weather patterns that is a fact. Our crops! everyone's food!

Climate change isn't a debate any more government's all around the world recognise the serious implications on humanity if we continue on this trajectory of fossil fuel consumption. Why add to the firestorm with a brand new mega mine on the banks of the namoi river. Blind Freddy could see even if we were desperate that it should be a complete no go zone. Yet we are not desperate as we have existing mining that is further away from our river and our people. Mines that are extending, keeping people in jobs sustaining a part of our community into the future. At some point a line in the sand must be drawn where the imbalance in a community and the detriments out way the benefits. This is exactly what will happen if this mine is approved. Narrabri council recognise this. Whilst Gunnedah continues to be blinded by short term vision and personal wealth. This divide is representative of the huge divide in the community surrounding this mine.

Gunnedah is thriving and will continue to thrive without this mine, remembering there is an approval for a smaller more sustainable less intrusive mine ready to go.

The DPIE recommends approval yet has failed to Address flaws in the proposal that factions of its department are not supportive of.

An Overburden dump 200ha in size over the namoi alluvium with the potential to leach toxic contaminants into our underground water.

Still no design on a railway that spans a massive 14km across the floodplain that the DPIE deems will have no

impact on flooding, without a design I'm am perplexed at how this conclusion is made.

To many koalas hold little significance in the grand scheme of things when it comes to state significant projects. To me they are a symbol of the state and health of our environment. A report came out recently as we have heard, forecasting the extinction of koalas by 2050 if our government keeps approving projects that threaten their habitats.

There are so many more koalas around this mine then stated in the EIS. How do I know, because I live here and I see them on a regular basis. Gunnedah is, as it proclaims koala capital of the world, so many koalas reside along the river especially in dry times. It's time we start protecting some of our natural assets from projects that are just simply in the wrong place.

#### Economics

Some will argue that the price of coal is similar to commodity prices, that it experiences ups and downs across a period of time. Like food if something is deemed unhealthy or bad for you people tend to move away from that particular product, as farmers we diversify and grow the products that there is a demand for. I was taught by my father and is common business knowledge, that you must manage risk and never put all your eggs in one basket never plant the whole farm to one crop. Unfortunately for whitehaven this is exactly what they are doing with no strategy of diversification in the foreseeable future, only coal! very high risk.

Everyone knows coal is bad, unhealthy for the planet whether they chose to admit or not, it's scientific fact and common sense. So with that said, it's only a matter of time when the world will stop consuming it for the sake of the world's health as a whole. The long term sustainability is just not there for the coal industry. Our communities will be placed at a higher long term economic risk if projects like these are approved then collapse.

#### Water

It is our most precious resource, with scientific evidence of longer hotter climatic conditions. Water is the single biggest issue surrounding this mine. Whilst the company holds significant river licences, in recent times we have seen that it can't be relied on as a consistent source of water. I understand this well as I also own river water and in times of dry I adapt operations or stop. People will lose jobs in mining in this situation! The notion of jobs is false security in times where availability of water is non-existent. This became evident only last year with the frantic purchase of land and water to keep operations running at Maules creek, investigations by Enra for theft of water, are serious allegations given all the sensitivity surrounding water state wide in recent times. It's not sustainable for the proponent to continue to pay well over the market dollars for zone 4 underground water. Essentially taking more and more water away from food production in this extremely productive valley.

So in closing it's obvious why I don't want this mine to proceed no one wants to live next to a coal mine! Particularly one that is fraught with so much risk to our environment, livelihoods and economy. This process has taken a huge toll on myself and many of my fellow community members. Yet the last 6 years has changed my outlook on the whole world as a collective. What doesn't break you really does make you stronger. That money is only money and the pursuit of it can do long term damage in some cases.

Legacy is the most important thing!! like my grandfather handing the farm to my father and my father to me. Being passed down in a better more sustainable environmentally friendly state than it was before. I dream of one day passing my legacy to my daughter but that future looks very hazy and very noisy if this mine is approved.

It's the same as the planet it's our responsibility as humans to pass it on to our children and so on in a better state than we found it. It's imperative we make decisions that protect the long term sustainability of earth which in turn protects all civilisation long after we are gone.

. It's hard I know, finding the balance between economics and health, health of our communities, health of our environment. Just like covid 19 if our government had favoured economy many more people would have died. It's obvious our government favours coal, who could forget our current prime minister waving a piece of coal around like a cigarette saying its good for you. Our job your job commissioners is to push back, we must find a better balance. Striking that balance is crucial in providing our children with a legacy we can be proud of, approving this mine is a step backwards for our children and humanity. Thank you

James Barlow  
Mirrabinda Pty Ltd

M: 0427 434471

Sent from my iPad