

SUBMISSION OBJECTING TO THE NARRABRI UNDERGROUND MINE STAGE 3 EXTENSION PROJECT (SSD10269)

I object to the Narrabri Underground Mine Stage 3 Extension.

No new coal mines or coal mine extensions should be constructed from now on if the world is to maintain a liveable temperature rise from 1.5 degrees Celsius to 2 degrees Celsius . The project will not only impact those of us who live in North Western NSW , it will have adverse impacts on our entire planet.

Fatih Birol, the IEA's executive director and one of the world's foremost energy economists, said” if governments are serious about the climate crisis, there can be no new investments in oil, gas or coal from now, from this year.”(Guardian, Fiona Harvey 18th February 2022.) Climate scientists working in Australia, Professor Will Steffen and Professor Lesley Hughes have also said that there should be no new coal mines or coal mine extensions because the production of more green house gases (GHG) will cause catastrophic rises in temperatures. Their statements can be verified in webinars, videos, and in scientific publications.

GHG already produced are sending many climate dependent systems to a tipping point where irreversible change will occur unless GHG production ceases.

More production of GHG will disrupt the equilibrium of earth systems for example, global ocean temperatures were the hottest on record last year in 2021. The last 5 years were the 5 hottest years of global ocean temperature recorded since 1955.(Cheng ,et al “Another Record : Ocean Warming continues through 2021 despite La Nina conditions, Guardian, Oliver Milman, 11th January 2022.) Ocean temperature is one of the drivers of the earth's weather systems. Hotter temperatures adversely affect ocean ecosystems which has many unwanted results including the seemingly trivial fact that there will be less marine food available for human consumption.

Many climate scientists including Professor Penny Sackett have said that a 30% reduction in GHG emissions is needed to limit global warming by 2 degrees C, and a 55% reduction in GHG emissions is needed to limit global warming by 1.5 degrees C.

Whitehaven Coal's 2021 Sustainability Report shows that GHG emitted per tonne of coal mined is rising. Figures in the report are FY 2016 0.057 FY 2019 0.070 FY 2020 0.077 . The Narrabri Mine 2020 Annual Review shows under the heading :Scope 1 emissions : that Scope 1 emissions have increased by 483, 690tCO₂-e from the 2018-19NGERS reporting period to the 2019-2020 reporting period. A report also states under the heading : 6.5.3 Proposed Improvement Measures that “ no additional measures are to be implemented for fugitive emissions during the reporting period “.This is incompatible with maintaining a world with a liveable temperature, and it seems to me that there are no laws, Federal or State ,which can prevent Whitehaven's Narrabri mine from releasing fugitive emissions. This mine must be stopped.

The Narrabri Underground Mine Extension Project will extend the existing mine's life by 13 years to 2024 and will produce an extra 110 tonnes of coal and 34 million tonnes of GHG locally and a further

456 million tonnes when the coal is burnt. This is incompatible with NSW's targets of a 50% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. The mine must be rejected.

This project is particularly problematic because methane has to be removed before the coal can be extracted. Methane is 84 times more potent than CO₂ as a green house gas for twenty years after it has been produced.

The Department, DPIE, admits that it has no clear idea whether it is possible or not for Whitehaven to mitigate and reduce these emissions. Nevertheless the Department requires the proponent to construct extensive ventilation infrastructure which will result in the clearance of 600 hectares of land . 440 hectares of this land is woodland which provides habitat for the Eastern pygmy possum, Black striped wallaby and the Pilliga mouse which are threatened species and the Koala which was declared an endangered species on 12th February 2022. Australia cannot afford to loose any more native species.

The mine will be adjacent to the Narrabri gas project where the implications of uncontrollable bush fires have been discussed by many including Greg Mullins, Climate Councillor and member of the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action. The danger of further fugitive emissions from this mine extension is too apocalyptic to contemplate. This mine must be rejected.

This mine extension, like the Narrabri Gas Project, is associated with the GABA,(Great Artesian Basin,) the greatest underground water source in Australia and its waters are essential for human consumption, stock consumption and fodder production . This area is also one of the few recharge areas of the GABA. The GABA cannot be tampered with , it is too important.

The Gomeroi people of this area have looked after this area of the GABA for thousands of years and it is sacred to them. There are other sacred sites and items of cultural significance. There are scar trees , rock carvings , scattered artifacts and two grinding groove stones. One of these stones has 48 individual grinding grooves. These sites will be lost as a result of subsidence and cracking caused by the mining carried out underneath them.

This mining process includes water extraction which causes drawdown. At least 9 bores , which are essential for watering stock , will be affected by groundwater drawdown that is worse than the impact criteria of NSW's Aquifer Interference Policy. One farmer/agronomist whose farmland is a neighbour of the mine extension has cattle and cropping and supports 5 households, knows that this mine will affect at least 1 bore . It appears that the mine proponent has not been able to provide a solution to this issue.

Coal mining requires large quantities of groundwater and Whitehaven underestimates the amount of water its mines in this area require eg Whitehaven unlawfully took 1,000ML of water at its Maules Creek mine between 2016 and 2019. During much of this time households like mine were using 100 litres per person per day. People in the north west of NSW remember this well , the fine was only \$200,000. Which is no deterrent.

“ The Namoi region is one of the most highly used groundwater regions in NSW, therefore there us limited spare capacity available” (Draft New England North West Regional Plan 2041 p 51) . This mine's need for water would be destructive to this region.

This mine will adversely impact food and fibre production in this very fertile area of NSW.(see fig 3 Agriculture and forestry p26 Draft New England North West Regional Plan 2041).Australia and the world will continue to need the food and fibre produced in this region. This temporary mine will put this production in jeopardy.

It was reported in the Northern Daily Leader 19th February that the proponent of this mine predicted that “objecting farmers will learn to live with the project”. This is so wrong.

Whitehaven's survey showed how unacceptable this mining project is to local people. The majority of locals have said that Whitehaven is a poor neighbour, that coal mining is damaging social cohesion, the natural environment and the future of the region. Those of us outside the immediate area also do not want this mine as arable land, wildlife habitat and water are too valuable to loose.

Please reject this mine.

Yours sincerely

Robyn Bird