

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NSW INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION CALLING FOR THE PROTECTION OF WONNARUA CULTURAL HERITAGE AT THE RAVENSWORTH ESTATE

September 2022

Dear NSW Independent Planning Commission,

Indigenous cultural heritage of Ravensworth Estate and surrounds in the Hunter Valley is threatened by Glencore's Glendell Continued Operations Project.

If an expansion of Glencore's Glendell coal mine proceeds, Ravensworth Homestead would be uprooted and relocated and the lands of the estate mined. Open cut mining would greatly diminish or destroy what should otherwise become a place of truth-telling and reconciliation.

A NSW Premier and Cabinet briefing to the Chair of the Heritage Council advised:

"Ravensworth is a rare and exceptionally intact colonial homestead complex and cultural landscape of state heritage significance that tells the story of shared Aboriginal and European heritage in the Hunter Valley, including early conflict, the development of pastoralism and the convict labour system. It meets all seven criteria for assessing state level significance.

"The Ravensworth area has the strongest documentary evidence of any conflict site across the Hunter Valley, including the event known as the Ravensworth massacre. Although the actual site of the massacre may not be in the immediate vicinity of the homestead, the estate and homestead represent that story of settlement and conflict." (1)

According to Heritage NSW, Registered Aboriginal Parties consider the Ravensworth area to be of high cultural significance and that Glencore's proposed coal expansion's *"direct and indirect impacts will further contribute to the cumulative impacts and loss of Aboriginal cultural heritage values and sites in the local area and the region."* (2)

It's madness to allow Australia's biggest coal miner to destroy a place that the independent Heritage Council of NSW says is of *"exceptional importance"*.(3)

Robert Lester and Scott Franks from Plains Clan of the Wonnarua People demand that their Country and Cultural Heritage be saved from Glencore's damaging coal mine.

"It is part of Aboriginal lore that everyone, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, should work together to ensure that we look after the land for future generations to come."

We urge you to refuse consent for the Glendell coal expansion and instead to recommend that Ravensworth Estate and surrounds are recognised and protected to facilitate truth telling, healing and reconciliation.

<p>Robert Lester Chairman, Plains Clan of the Wonnarua People</p>	<p>Professor Tim Flannery Climate Councillor, scientist, writer and 2007 Australian of the Year</p>
<p>Scott Franks Plains Clan of the Wonnarua People</p>	<p>Clover Moore Lord Mayor of Sydney</p>
<p>Alex Greenwich MP Independent Member for Sydney</p>	<p>Larissa Baldwin Widjabul Wia-bul Woman, GetUp CEO</p>
<p>Julien Vincent Executive Director, Market Forces and 2022 winner of the Goldman Environment Prize (the "Green Nobel Prize")</p>	<p>Emeritus Professor Lyndall Ryan Leader of the team behind the Colonial Frontier Massacres Map which documents Aboriginal massacres that occurred during the spread of pastoral settlement in Australia</p>
<p>Doug Heslop Visual artist (work incl. 'Wonnarua Massacre. 1826') and direct descendant of Benjamin Singleton (founder of Singleton)</p>	<p>Brynn O'Brien Executive Director, Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility</p>
<p>Thea Ormerod President, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change</p>	<p>Justin Field MLC Independent Member of the NSW Legislative Council</p>
<p>Ellen Roberts National Co-Director, Lock the Gate Alliance</p>	<p>Emma Hurst MLC Animal Justice Party, NSW Legislative Council</p>
<p>Sue Higginson MLC Greens Member of the NSW Legislative Council</p>	<p>Mark Pearson MLC Animal Justice Party, NSW Legislative Council</p>
<p>Rev. Hon. Fred Nile MLC Member of the NSW Legislative Council</p>	<p>Sally Kennedy Lane Cove Coal and Gas Watch</p>

1. NSW Premier and Cabinet, briefing to the Chair of the NSW Heritage Council, 22 Feb 2021. A copy of this Briefing Note - obtained via the GIPA Act - was provided to the Commission by Lock the Gate on 8 March 2022, https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/resources/pac/media/files/pac/projects/2022/02/glendell-continued-operations-project-ssd-9349/public-submissions/general-public-submissions/220308-lock-the-gate-alliance_redacted.pdf
2. Dr Samantha Higgs, Senior Team Leader, Aboriginal Heritage Regulation Branch - North, Heritage NSW, 30 October 2020, <https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/prweb/PRRestService/mp/01/getContent?AttachRef=SSD-9349%2120201210T225315.374%20GMT>
3. HERITAGE COUNCIL OF NSW, MEETING MINUTES – 498, 2 March 2022, <https://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/assets/HC-2Mar22-Meeting-Minutes-CONFIRMED-v2.pdf>