Dear Ms Hawkeswood,

Re: Boggabri Coal Mine: Modification 7

has grave reservations concerning Boggabri Coal's application to modify the conditions of its Approval 09\_0182. It is our considered opinion that both the nature and impact of the Modification (known as Boggabri Coal Mine: Modification 7) require further investigation.



#### The nature of Modification 7

draws attention to the inaccurate description contained in the Environmental Assessment of the Modification as 'administrative'. The Modification is complex with five parts, and while some of the matters referred to are minor or administrative, others will have significant impact on the community and environment (particularly with regard to offsets, transport of coal by road, drilling and exploration activities and management of biodiversity).

#### Offsets

considers that additional information should be made available by the Proponent to the Department of Planning regarding the mechanism proposed for securing the required offsets. The request by Boggabri Coal to modify condition 47(a) of its consent to extend the time limit to register offsets (which were to have been registered by December 2014) and to decrease the specificity of offset provision is disturbing. Acceptance of this aspect of the Modification would create a precedent unacceptable to the community however welcomed by mining companies; one which would completely undermine an already struggling and unviable system of biodiversity offsets in NSW.

### Transport of coal by road

considers that additional information should be made available by the Proponent to the Department of Planning regarding its proposal for transportation of coal by road. The proposal contains no limit on the frequency of the proposed transportation by road and no indication of destination. Further explanation should also be sought by the Department as

to the purpose that would require the sample size of 60 tonnes referred to in the proposal. Also of concern is the failure to consider cumulative impacts created by a concurrent modification and assessment for the adjacent Tarrawonga Coal Mine.

## **Drilling and exploration activities**

considers that additional information should be made available by the Proponent to the Department of Planning regarding its drilling and exploration activities. This additional information should be expected to include details of the location, intensity and volume of the proposed activities, including the clearing of vegetation.

# Management of biodiversity

that the proposal threatens the existence of the East-West Biodiversity Corridor which is required to be preserved under the EPBC approval and is vital for the biodiversity protection for the Critically Endangered Ecological Community which is intended by the Commonwealth approval. The Precautionary Principle requires that this corridor of Critically Endangered White Box Grassy Woodland be preserved; it is simply impossible to replace. Management of Koala habitat, similarly, requires the continued existence of this corridor.

urges the DPE Secretary to require the additional information referred to in this letter before the application is treated as being complete and ready for assessment. We further urge that any modification to the existing NSW Approval for Boggabri Coal Mine (PA 09-0182) be presented in a transparent manner for timely public consideration.