

## Speaker 10

Good Morning,

I'm Errol Darley and currently live with my wife on our property adjacent to the proposed rail spur, which is proposed to be 450m, 700m from our dwelling and 250m from a proposed dwelling. I have lived on the flood plain for 35 years occupied property on both sides of the Werris Creek to Mungindi rail line, lived on the river and now midway on the flood plain. I strongly object to this proposal.

I have experienced major flooding of the Namoi River in January 1984, July 1998 and November 2000 and also 14 minor floods in this time. This experience of flooding of the Namoi and tributaries gives me the knowledge and experience to never build a structure across the flood plain. In addition to the details in my earlier submission, I present the extreme rainfall in the Rangari Creek catchment during January 1971 flooding. A wet catchment receiving 78mm over 9 days in mid-January, 155mm towards the end of January and then 93mm on the 31<sup>st</sup> January. No wonder the tributary was 12km wide. But this is the tributary the modellers assumed wouldn't peak at the same time as the Namoi and amazingly was agreed to when peer reviewed! So, what is the standard and value of these Whitehaven funded reports produced with the intent to provide the information to get the extension approved? The proponent will pay to get a model to show "no effect" and if approved by all the experts and those that decide on this application will be long gone by the next flood event which us locals will have to deal with.

The independent expert on flooding and the Independent Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and large Coal Mining Development has requested more information on the construction of the rail line, has this been provided? I have requested the same since September only to be told there is no map. NO map for a 150 million project? On the 6 December a Whitehaven representative said, "elevate the section of the rail spur to the West of the Namoi River all on piers" Also on the same day the modeller is still talking embankments, "with 100% blockages through here". Then acknowledges that Whitehaven have committed to removing the embankment sections. Then whilst talking with Gunnedah Shire Council, 13 days later they are still talking about "pylons built in

certain locations”, and comment of, “just for clarity, if we don’t know exactly how the rail spurs are going to be built”.

What is this situation, what is the Plan? The transcript shows that the commissioners are looking at some kind of map. Does it show pylons, culverts, embankments? Why aren’t we shown it? It’s so they can change it if approval is granted. The proponent needs to produce the detail. Will details change as there are staff changes at Whitehaven? Can we believe what is said if that person no longer works for Whitehaven? A sensitive area is where the spur joins the main line. These are comments with WHC and the Planning Department “to the embankment Section that’s on the –the rail, the –the Northern – north - - Western rail which would connect into”. This according to the indicative map is where the rail spur will meet the Northern line. Any construction here, as the train has to do 120-degree turn, will have an extreme effect on the water passing through the Collygra Creek Culvert, flooding the five properties to the West. These landholders were not initially notified of the proposed development. This is where 200m of rail line was washed away in the 1974 flood.

We are concerned about the possible contamination of groundwater due to the pile driving of the pylons used in the rail spur construction. Will any chemicals be used, will the pylon be steel or coated contaminating the ground water? Details need to be provided who is responsible if contamination occurs. And our major concern is the continuation of the reliability of the aquifer for domestic and irrigation purposes. Will the mine construction reduce recharge and will ground water flow to the lowest point, the mine as has happened at Werris Creek Mine? There are farmers along Taylors Lane near Werris Creek that have no water and the mine has excess water where they have now installed a centre pivot just to get rid of the excess. Scientists tell us to expect more frequent and more extreme rainfall events. This is what is happening in North Queensland, particularly as we speak. Other recent extreme flooding has occurred at Toowoomba and downstream Grantham, Dungog and the Brisbane flood. You can view these extreme events simply by watching YouTube. To interfere with the flood plain by building a rail line directly across it is just a foolish idea!

If this proposal goes ahead and the model is proven to be wrong by reality, who is responsibility? What if the mine has new owners or name change to limit compensation?

Talks with Whitehaven on 6<sup>th</sup> December only briefly mention the noise impacts on our property, and you, commissioners were told impacts are within the regulatory guidelines. This is a blatant lie, as I have recorded the sound levels 450m away from the rail main line on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2018 at 9:08pm reading of 68, 69, 70 decibels were recorded much above the sleep disturbance level of 52 decibels. How will the proponent reduce the levels to not affect us? Then on 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 7am sound levels of 40, 41, 42 decibels were recorded at our house five kilometres from the mainline. This is the level the proponent has modelled for the proposed rail spur, 700 metres away from our existing residence. Once again who is responsible?

What is the real value of the EIS when so little of the relevant essential data is omitted? For example: has the promised 'Noise Management Plan' been presented for review? This seems to be the trend with developers.... example, the fencing of the Gunnedah Solar farm, Water Impacts in the Bylon Valley, Flight paths over the Blue Mountains associated with the Badgery Creek Airport and the water study for the Shenwah Mine, this is an obvious tactic so the details can be made up after the approval is granted.

The classic example of this is the road transportation of coal by Whitehaven from Tarrawonga and Rockglen mine to the Gunnedah CHPP. 3.5m tonnes is approved but they apply for a 'modification' for 4m tonnes. This is approved by the Planning Department, despite the requirement that Whitehaven have to build an overpass if 3.5m tonnes is exceeded. Whitehaven continually tell us how great the Vickery Extension project is, as it gets trucks off the road. They didn't seem to mind putting more trucks on the road when it suits. Who is in control of this mine? If they are so concerned about trucks on the road why aren't all suppliers railed to the mine site, particular fuel? They have a number of trains arrive from Newcastle daily, direct to the mine .Whitehaven just says one thing then does the other!

And then the commissioners, talking to GSC aren't told that the approval of 3.5 tonnes is exceeded. The transcript says, "you wouldn't want to see it exceeded"

'Correct' no mention, 49 days after the notification was advertised that the rules had been changed. Whilst it may not be GSC responsibility to inform Commissioners of Whitehaven's road tonnage limits, they do have an agreement with Whitehaven for road maintenance and this increase in tonnage should have been discussed. And this is the second year in a row that this has happened!

The mines influence on groundwater is of grave concern. Has base levels of groundwater been established and are these observation bores situated where they won't be conveniently destroyed as the mine expands. Will rail line pylons and the associated aquifer particle interference reduce the flow of ground water that I depend upon?

Now if this nightmare happens, I question the ability of the EPA to monitor the environmental impacts this mine causes. I have no trouble with the staff, but to try and service all of the North West of the State from Armidale is impossible. So, I offer to cooperate with the EPA to build a facility on my property with an existing building entitlement, 250m from the rail line, close to the CHPP and mine so the mine can be correctly monitored. They will then understand how the mine impacts on people's lives as it has at Werris Creek and Maules Creek.

We come to a stalemate, the modellers will always come up with a model to suit and I believe I know about the possible flooding effects. But the one thing most people know is that the proposed site for the rail spur is in a terrible place and shouldn't even be considered as there is an alternative to the North.

Consider what has happened in Townsville over night with more rain forecasted for today. Another 180mm, which fell mostly over the Ross River Dam. Townsville has had a year's rainfall in only 1 week and the dam is now fully open with unprecedented flooding to the city. Do Whitehaven models consider this? A cyclone down the East coast, an upper atmosphere trough can result in excessive rainfall like this.

Thank You!