

\* We ~~are~~ are not the Aunrebin Basin.  
We are the Namoi Valley, a living, productive land blessed  
with underground H<sub>2</sub>O + the Namoi Ave and it deserves  
to be respected + protected.

24

Hello,

Welcome to Boggabri and thank you for the opportunity  
to voice my concerns over the proposed Whitehaven Vickery  
Expansion Project and for including our community in the  
process.

My name is Julie Heiler and I have elected to speak today  
because of my deep concern over the future of our valley and  
this community. I come freely with no conflict of or pecuniary  
interest, I am independent of any political or environmental party,  
and truly believe the opinions I express.

We, my family strongly object to approval of the Vickery  
Extension Project and strongly urge that after proper, genuine  
and realistic consideration is given this project will be rejected.

I am a partner in a family farming enterprise 10km NEast of  
Boggabri on the Namoi River, ~~our~~ district has lost over 70 family  
owned farms and we are one of the two or three remaining on our  
side of the river. We are as the crow flies 4-5 km from  
Tarrawonga, 4-5 kms from Bogg Coal and 7-8 km from Mantles Creek  
and in the zone of affection with Boggabri coal.

I am a Community Rep on the Tarrawonga CEC. ~~for over~~ ~~approx~~  
since 2012 and have always made the effort to have my personal  
issues at the door and deal with community concerns as required.

I do not consider myself anti mining but will not deny that if  
I wake tomorrow and it was as pre mining I would be more  
than happy but the reality is mining is now part of our life,  
we need to acknowledge the benefits of their contributions  
but also try and find middle ground, that will only be possible  
if all parties are open to compromise, co-operation, respect and  
accountability. My experience with Boggabri coal and Tarrawonga  
has demonstrated. This is achievable but I find Whitehaven  
Mantles Creek to lack any attempt or show an interest in  
having a mutually respectful or productive working ~~experience~~  
partners.

We are no longer as naive or gullible as individuals, or as a community. It is now obvious that it is easier for a mining company to gain approval for a mine with a small footprint and social impact. Once approved and the infrastructure is in place and a workforce is employed, then it is highly likely that any modification or extension will be approved.

My fear is the Vickery project has been approved, now the Vickery Expansion approval is pending once established will they proceed with another extension to see the project back on the banks of the Namoi River. There needs to be a written guarantee by both Whitehaven and the DPI this will never be a possibility or even a consideration before the present sought approval is granted.

I believe you need to understand a little history.

Whitehaven was a local home grown company, The principals, Keith Ross and Chris Burgess believed and practised Community consultation and interaction. Their handshake meant something and they dealt with the issues.

Canyon was a small mine run by an experienced and respected pit manager with a local Boggabri/Gunnedah workforce earning a good environmental and safety record. It was an accepted part of our landscape and our community.

The general acceptance and community support for Boggabri coal and Torrington developments was due to our experience with Canyon and the trust we had in Whitehaven that they acted in good faith with open and transparent processes.

And for the next few years Agriculture, the community and mining coexisted dealing with the issues as they arose.

Then around 10 years ago Whitehaven we knew changed hands, was floated on the stockmarket and it was becoming apparent that profits and production was a higher priority than Community consultation and respect.

The approval of Maules Creek Mine and the subsequent development in addition to the modifications and extension of the original mines changed the whole dynamics of our valley and we began to experience the cumulative impacts of the BTM complex, many of which are not acceptable or conducive of good health and mental well being. The modelling of the individual mines did not and does not reflect the extent of the negative impacts of noise, dust blasting and changes to our flood patterns and water resources, on neighbouring landholders or the negative social impacts at a community level.

No consideration has been given to effects of continual dust on our crops which one would assume would interfere with the photosynthesis process - leading to lower yields. Cotton crops that do not maintain their brightness are downgraded and the grower pays a penalty.

The effect of Dust on our Community's health and the increased costs to our health care.

The resistance of the Govt to instal a real time dust monitor in Boggabri as part of the Namoi Regional Air Monitoring Network, <sup>this</sup> is hard to understand as Boggabri is in closest proximity to the mining complex and it was common sense to have one installed prior to Maules Creek giving us a base line to work.. although a little late it should be mandatory if Vek Extension is granted approval. The govt reaps the financial gains + royalties from our region but cannot fund this equipment. One would think they have a duty of care to All not just those in higher populated areas.

The increased incidents of pneumonia, sinus and eye irritations and asthma are the responsibility of the govt to investigate not the community to prove. Individual projects can no longer be assessed in isolation, that ship has sailed. The impacts are cumulative when mines are developed in close proximity.

Currently there are no cumulative impact guidelines in NSW. This seems strange due to number of mines in NSW and their close proximity to each other and their impacted communities. This has been evident for how many years and why has it not been addressed before now.

"Modelling. What company is going to use modelling that does not positively support their development?" As the mines expand their footprint the lines on the maps of affectation never seem to change. We have two properties basically next door to each other one is affected for dust and noise by modelling. The reality is both are affected. Modelling for the borefields of Bigg Coal predicted a 2 metre draw down on "Reno" which has lost H<sub>2</sub>O but it was "Brighton" not identified that ~~lost~~ went from 2 1/2 metres to 2 1/2 ~~metres~~ inches at the end of March last year. Last month our irrigation cycle of 8 days took 18 days from our production bore, syphons back from 38m to now 22, pumps cut back from 1800 revs to 1250 because they were cavitating sucking air. This is a direct result of High Production Bore on Victoria Park pumping 24/7 since Jan 2018. ~~the~~ The one on Cooboolah since Feb 2018 but thankfully it has had breakdowns. Yes the drought has contributed but the house bore had a history of 85 years and was losing H<sub>2</sub>O and there has been many droughts in that period. We should not be expected to subsidize the mines production. They have a blind belief that our underground H<sub>2</sub>O has infinite reserves and if they have a licence to it there for the taking. The B.M. water strategy plan states for Moom with an assured supply of high security licence of 3000 m<sup>3</sup> day from the Namoi that it will be unlikely to be a shortfall for operational purposes. B.M. + Terragongal may however experience shortfalls. Reality is you can't take H<sub>2</sub>O from an empty river supported by a dam at 0.5%.

Shouldn't someone be thinking of a Contingency Plan or scaling back production. Mining is just as dependant on H<sub>2</sub>O as agriculture we can't produce but they can't operate within their approval!

We are not the Hunter Valley, yes our coal reserves are rich but our climate, soils and forms are those of an inland river system. The once mighty Hunter River, carries a higher volume of H<sub>2</sub>O, is more drought resistant and flows to the sea. Our Namoi River provides H<sub>2</sub>O for domestic and stock, agriculture towns and now mining on its long journey to

Wolget to join the Bowen system. Water that is essential for life. The Namoi has been a part of Australia's landscape for thousands of years, obviously its path would have changed and it would have supported more wetland areas, it is of cultural and spiritual significance to the indigenous peoples and it is the flow of life for all these ~~reter~~ communities and individuals reliant on it.

We don't own the river, we are the caretakers, many downstream from us do not have the luxury of groundwater the Namoi is there only H<sub>2</sub>O source. What right does Whitehaven and the Govt have to jeopardise the life of this river. For short term gain. This river is State significant and its damage or loss would have longer lasting and far reaching affects for future generations and the economy. ~~an~~ and this far outweighs the short term benefit of a development of 25yrs span.

We need to plan for the long term sustainability and survival of our river systems and the communities they sustain not put them at risk.

I don't believe our valley can sustain another major coal development, or expansion without compromising what is already existing.

The changes to our floodplain ~~and also~~ especially the landforms + ~~sp~~ of the mines has change the traditional water flows and perhaps the recharge ability of our aquifers. The water no longer flows across the plain soaking in to replenish the underground streams, it is now directed in channels and flows with a high velocity. Our creeks are ephemeral and not adapted for this created H<sub>2</sub>O flow changes.

The shallow aquifers are highly connected to the river system and also highly dependant on surface H<sub>2</sub>O flows. This has not been identified by modelling but appears likely that the aquifers will not be recharged as they have for hundreds of years.

The Social Impacts. Community engagement was poor. The community stakeholders meeting was attended by myself, Bagg HACC, James Beilow Bagg Bus + Community, Liz Werboys Director of Nursing MPS and two carbo's who ~~hiz~~ invited on the way. I was given one day notice and the services organisations and groups were not included. I believe they interviewed

the school principal and John Shaw after. One that was held in Annedich was attended only by Mitchem Neave and a Whitehaven rep. Hardly a reflection of community views and opinions but a reflection of Whitehavens poor community consultation and community engagement. There were many issues unaddressed.

The modelled social and economic benefits of the now established mines have not been ~~realised~~ realised but the understated impacts of dust, noise, increased rentals lack of available accommodation, loss of 70+ working families + production, loss of amenity, volunteer and identity are a reality. Many issues remain unresolved so until such time they are addressed the approval of another development will only compound the problems already existing.

The well being of residents, the enhancement, protection and sustainability of our community and environment and intergenerational equity should be the primary focus when evaluating this project. The vision needs to be for the long term not the short term.

Social licence to operate over 18 months ago our community decided that they no longer considered Whitehaven to be given the social licence to operate. Whitehaven MCC. inability to be accountable or accept responsibility was major factor in this decision. MCC. environmental record and safety record is also a concern. For the 3 months prior to Christmas last year there was I believe 4 major accidents involving dump trucks, service vehicles and even a digger off the high wall. What is the point of giving employment if it puts their lives at risk.

Whitehavens changing their name of the victory extension in July last year so they didn't have to declare their environmental record was rather obvious and did not erase the environmental offences they have earned but to me it demonstrated their lack of integrity and their inability to be held accountable.

Paul Flynn Whitehaven's CEO comments at the Shareholders meeting last year when asked why the mine was reclassified from level 2 to the highest level 3. was disappointing and offensive and demonstrated once again Whitehaven's inability to take responsibility and to hold accountable.

'We were asked to perform an audit onsite for noise and dust because of a lot of complaints from nearby the mine, who was in the acquisition zone as many of you know has been seeking to extract a very large price for his land'.

His inference re the E.P.A. role has eroded the trust of the community and questions the way the EPA potentially handles our complaints and concerns. It also had a demoralising effect on those employed by the EPA. For Mr Flynn's information the fines were justly deserved.

If Mr Flynn's comments reflect the sentiments & attitudes of many in general why do community reps waste their time they give freely to attend CCC meetings.

~~We as a community~~ do not expect an extractive industry not to create noise or dust, but we do expect our concerns and complaints be given respect and to be addressed.

I have made complaints re MCE dust issues and I have nothing to gain.

At the August meeting of the Bigg Bus.

Brian Cole gave a presentation on the Project when I question the size of the mine and water usage I was told Whitehaven does not need your permission for this mine, I don't care.

Yes he is right Whitehaven doesn't need my permission but they need to acknowledge my right to ask questions and expect answers. This is their responsibility, part of their community engagement, part of the social licence which they don't feel they require.

Errol Dwyer Site ad adj. my land - <sup>excessives are</sup> ~~then as mine related~~  
RFS in 86 years, when volume, <sup>Contract</sup> <sup>links</sup>  
How can that be factored in on market value <sup>no counts</sup>

In concluding I do not feel there is enough detail or information in the EIS to make informed decisions. I do not feel it is appropriate to make it up as you go especially in relation to the rail deeps, overpass and floodplain and I wonder why the DPI accepted this EIS as complete and meeting previous standards of other projects?

I would also respectfully suggest that this process be postponed, until this drought has broken, we have evidence our aquifers have recharged as in the past. The river needs a chance to recover and its ecosystem regain their vitality and health. We also need a guaranteed supply of water in kept and this may take a long time. A drought usually breaks with thunderstorm and flooding but our depleted resources will require copious falls of rain both in our catchments and locally.

This Vickery Extension Project is heavily reliant on the Namoi river not only for production but also to commence the development. The reality is this is no available, the health of our Namoi is comprised and should be the significant focus for its recovery should be paramount not making the decision to put its survival at risk.

I'm sure Whitehaven would be happy to support this recommendation especially considering they would not want to disappoint or disillusion all those people from Melbourne, and Sydney and beyond who believe they have impressive track record of extensive consultation and had won community support. Their reputation of true custodians being responsive and accountable community members held by those who made submissions of support will be verified. Thankyou Whitehaven

I'm also certain that the DPI would prefer that the allegations against them and the cloud of untrust hanging over them before any further projects are approved, so that regardless of any decision the public can have full confidence and faith in the due process.

This postponement of this process will demonstrate that both Whitehaven and the DPI operate in and strives to meet the highest of ethical standards.