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Presentation to IPC re-Vickery Extension Mine Tuesday December 18,2018

Good day members of the IPC

*50 yr resident, 22 yr Ctr + 4 as Mayor 2012-16*

Gunnedah Shire has had significant mining <sup>200</sup>ACTIVITY in our area for well over years and , consequently, many of our residents are aware of the effects of such activity in the community in terms of economic, environmental and social impacts.

Furthermore, I would suggest that the majority of our residents are receptive to mining with the caveat that such support is dependent upon mining applications having gone through a rigorous, scientifically based approval process.

This was certainly the position of the council that I had the privilege to lead as Mayor between 2012-16 when I was required to attend a Murray Darling Association Conference at Boorooga to defend Shenhua's right to progress their development application to develop the Watermark mine and later to attend a meeting of our Sister city, Lane Cove, when there was a similar motion being proposed opposing the Watermark application.

Therefore, I come to this IPC hearing today with a record of supporting mining in our Shire but believe that this should not presume that we should accept such development at any cost or without the rigorous, scientifically based investigation mentioned earlier and this project raises some issues for people such as myself as I will now elaborate.

I should firstly add that I have read most, if not all , of the material on the IPC website and was particularly interested in the first briefing of the then members of the IPC by <sup>DJB reps</sup> Mark Young and Stephen O'Donoghue where the officers appeared to present the mine as merely an extension of the original approved Vickery mine when in fact it is a new application with an extra 44 million tonne of coal to be produced and a production rate of 10 mt per yr versus the 4.5 mt originally proposed with an area nearly double the size ( 490 hectares as opposed to 250 hectares).

To me the key issues include:

- 1) The proposed new rail spur.

Mr Young suggests the proponent has chosen the proposed route for 3 reasons being:

- a) The company doesn't own the land on the possible northern route
- b) The northern route would involve joint venture partners
- c) The economic cost of the northern route would be higher in terms of operations,etc.

I am pleased that Mr Young has suggested and I quote from the transcript " the northern line needs further consideration in the assessment. Further justification from the company.

I would suggest that the northern route is far more politically locally acceptable then pursuing the present proposal but if that is the companies preference they should address the issues raised in Ms Erin Asken (from WMA) report on the impact of water on the railline.

I was pleased to see that Prof Willgoose also highlighted this when he states:

"Well, it really depends on the structures they use. If its viaducts , then that's true, but if they use culverts -and she (ms Asken) comments about not having enough information about where the viaducts are going to be and where the culverts are-with the culverts there are potentially down stream impacts as well"

To which Mr Young responded : Sure, sure" and went on to say: " "we need details about the design exactly along the lines that you (Prof Willgoose) have just indicated"

Prof Willgoose continued: " Yes, I mean , they are engineering details but they have to be sorted out at some stage, I think"

To which Mr Young agreed;Yes"

And Prof Willgoose continued: "you know, given the concern they need to be sorted out now."

I TOTALLY AGREE WITH PROFESSOR WILLGOOSE, HOW CAN ANY APPROVAL BE CONTEMPLATED WITHOUT THE TOTAL ENGINEERING DESIGN FOR THE PROPOSAL AS THIS RAIL SPUR IS PROPOSED TO GO ACROSS FLOOD PLAINS CROSSING SOME KILOMETRES AND HAS THE POTENTIAL TO EFFECT MANY-BOTH UPSTREAM AND DOWNSTREAM.

*as highlighted by Janet Watt + Errol Darley + Geoff Hood*

## 2) Water Impacts

I won't go into further detail on this complex issue apart to say that in times of supreme drought such as we are experiencing now, with Keepit Dam at 0'4% for example and many people carting water, etc, the issue of water as a precious resource is highlighted and we should have the evidence from the scientific experts t.o assure us that what is being proposed is in fact the likely , if not guaranteed outcome

## 3) Bio-diversity Off-sets

This option appears on the surface to be a reasonable recognition and compensation for the destruction of native vegetation but previous experience of this option by the Shenhua and Whitehaven mines in our and neighboring shires has highlighted some problems which need to be addressed such as the management of these areas and the following issues:

- a) Bush fire control measures such as maintenance of road/tracks
- b) maintenance of bores to provide water for fire control
- c) Feral animal management
- d) The loss of rate income for local councils (eg. Warrumbungles Council) on the land purchased for bio-diversity offsets such that one shire area is adversely effected for events happening in another LGA
- 4) Rehabilitation

There has been a significant improvement in the process of re-hab as demonstrated by mines presently operating in our area but I believe more should be targeted for a return to some agricultural purposes post-mining - *as suggested by Narrabri Shires submission*

## 5) Cumulative Impacts of Mining

On p.54 of the Transcript Mr Young states:" social impacts of the project and mining in general. There is some level of concern in the community about the cumulative impacts of mining".

This is certainly the case and it is demonstrated in a number of ways including:

- a) A two speed economy with those on fixed incomes and benefits competing with those on significantly higher incomes. This is demonstrated by the availability of affordable housing which is very limited. GSC was recently approached by members of the Police assoc seeking to have ratepayers supply subsidized housing in order to attract police officers to our

*lack of  
clarity in  
the design*

community and discourage officers choosing to reside in Tamworth where accommodation is cheaper.

6) Impartiality of the DPE's Assessment report

*& ENERGY*  
As a Association of Mining Related Councils appointed delegate to the Resources Advisory Forum set up by DPE Secretary, Carolyn McNally, in order to provide advice and feedback on the various reviews of Planning policies taking place over the last three years, I was particularly concerned to read the Lisa Corbyn Report after having pursued a copy of the Report from the DPE for months. The Report was very critical of the DPE Assessment report process and her conclusions demonstrated clearly different perceptions between the Mining Industry proponents to that of community and environmental groups.

a) The former (ie industry reps) considered the assessment reports to be impartial and appropriate

b) community and environmental groups consider such assessments to be far from impartial and often ignore community issues whilst actively facilitating approvals and possibly biasing IPC decisions

c) Govt decision makers need to more accurately reflect and undertake the research and analysis of both the positive and negative impacts (not just the economic impacts) of mining proposals *ie regulatory capture*

d) councils and their communities need to be given far more respect and attention during the approval process.

*for significant improvements*  
Ms Corbyn had some 15 recommendations (and very few positives to say about the present process) for implementation and RAF members were told in November <sup>2018</sup> by DPE <sup>Deputy</sup> Assistant secretary, Marcus Ray, that all 15 had been accepted and would be implemented—we have seen little change to date and await with baited breath so in the meantime I hope that the commission questions the DPE advice very carefully and seeks independent analysis where considered pertinent and analyses all community submissions such that our community can have increased confidence in the process.

I hope that we can say such at the end of this process.

*Nick  
Kaldor  
Report.*