

**From:** [Keelah Lam](#)  
**To:** [IPCN Enquiries Mailbox](#)  
**Cc:** [Keelah Lam](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Submission for IPC re Vickery Extension Project  
**Date:** Thursday, 9 July 2020 6:07:53 PM

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Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Keelah Lam <[keelah@lam.net.au](mailto:keelah@lam.net.au)>  
**Subject:** Submission for IPC re Vickery Extension Project  
**Date:** 9 July 2020 at 5:54:07 pm AEST  
**To:** [ProductivityFeedback@treasury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ProductivityFeedback@treasury.nsw.gov.au)  
**Cc:** Keelah Lam <[keelah@lam.net.au](mailto:keelah@lam.net.au)>

To Whom It May Concern

I **OBJECT** to the Whitehaven Extension Project Mine, a massive coal mine which will be one of the largest in NSW and which would be a future massive lifeless moonscape on our land.

**JOBS:** Jobs, 'for generations to come', are the main reason that, mostly, mine workers support it. Localised jobs ARE most important when we come out of this covid19 economy-crippling crisis. But as is well known, mining is progressively replacing manpower with massive computerised machinery.

(It's staggering to see this machinery used in large developments in urban and city areas, tearing their way through ancient rocks, with no concern about water- courses and the effect on neighbours and the environment.)

Mining jobs are becoming fewer and fewer.

It's also known that Whitehaven workers do not live in Boggabri. At Maules Creek its workforce is increasingly recruited from interstate , with many drive-in, drive-out workers. People with special skills are brought in.

Whitehaven stood against the building of a childcare centre in Boggabri which could support the recruitment of young working families.

We have witnessed Whitehaven Coal distribute \$1.5Billion pure profit in 3 years alone, but despite this, its workers are reputed to be among the lowest paid mine workers and it plays hard-ball to avoid its obligations. For example, we have witnessed how Whitehaven drags local owners through hell to avoid its obligations rather than acquire pollution affected properties, a shameful and cruel way to treat its landowner neighbours.

**ECONOMY:** Coal is fast becoming a stranded asset.

Who will pay for rehabilitation of the pits when the bonds are known to be insufficient?

Whilst the amount of energy needed to extract the coal is increasing due to the massive heavy machinery, the demand all over the world for energy from coal, along with the traditional jobs in coal mining, is rapidly decreasing.

Renewable energy, wind and solar, and ever more efficient batteries are used by smaller communities not connected to the grid, and large wind and solar power stations supply base load to the main grid, which is now far cheaper than coal fired power stations.

With investment into R&D, wave power along the coastal regions, and micro water turbines offer free energy to riverside properties while the promise of hydrogen is fast looking up.

**CLIMATE:** The recent terrifying widespread bushfires are the true sign that the rampant use of fossil fuels has lead to ever increasing world-wide high temperatures, decreased

rainfall and ever more violent storms. It is vital to transition as quickly as possible from all forms of fossil fuels.

That includes incineration of waste to energy. On Earth we must learn to close the loop and live with zero waste.

**WATER:** The mine area is rich black soil, and was prime agricultural land, the food bowl for our densely populated cities on the coastal fringe.

That was until the coal mines took over whereas in previous generations coal mining was on a very small scale.

Climate change has made farmers more reliant on river, alluvial aquifer and even the pristine ancient waters of the Great Artesian Basin.

Farmers' bore water is now capped and expensive.

The Vickery mine requires and is permitted to use vast quantities of precious water.

Why does coal need water? To WASH the coal.

The Department of Planning admits there IS a shortage of water.

As recently as last December the Namoi River and the Namoi flood plain had dried up.

While the Namoi was dry and nearby Walgett people didn't even have drinking water for humans and had to depend on water being trucked in for them

Whitehaven bought out 10000 acres of farms and water entitlements. They outbid local farmers at water auctions, by a large margin.

They diverted that nearby farm water by pipelines constructed without planning consent.

It's unclear how much water Whitehaven has illegally pumped from the alluvial aquifer and from the Gunnedah/Oxley deep waters whose capacity is not yet understood.

And you will remember the downstream drought- driven terrifying fish kill of 10s of thousands of Murray River cod, some huge, 100 years old.

**WASTE:** The toxic salt laden polluted water from washing the coal needs to be disposed of. It is to be stored in ponds/dams on the sides of the Namoi River.

The proposal to pile acid forming mine spoil containing heavy metals on top of the alluvial aquifer is VERY RISKY as it will leach into the Namoi River.

The Department of Planning Water Division opposes this, but the plan has been deemed acceptable.

And there is a real risk of toxic sludge spills from those ponds/dams into the world richest agricultural farming soil and onto the flood plain and Namoi River.

It is not possible for citizen scientists to get access to test the methane emitting sludge water for toxins as the land on both sides is owned by Whitehaven.

Because the conditions are too weak Whitehaven won't reveal cumulative measurement of heavy metals salts and toxins released into the Namoi River when the Keepit Dam discharges water into the Namoi River, which then continues its toxic flow to the great Murray Darling River system, where all farms townships and nature depend on its water being clean, and on to the river mouth in South Australia

**TRAIN TRACKS:** Whitehaven is known to mix inferior coal with better quality coal.

This is one reason why the company plans a rail spar around the valley to facilitate this process.

The proposed pylons for the train tracks to cart the coal all the way to the coast will cut across the Namoi flood plain and is certain to disturb and hinder the natural flow and absorption and storage of water which is so important for feeding the flood plain aquifer.

**FARMERS:** Farmers are not happy. They are scared of the cumulative effect of the take over of farms - including famous Dorothy Mackellar's historic farmstead.

There is a high negative social impact on Boggabri productive farming district's community who have chosen NOT to sell their farms to Whitehaven. They suffer the thick coal dust in their lungs and water supply.

They suffer the blasting and coal dust, injurious to human lungs and plants coated with

coal dust, unable to properly photosynthesise.

Whitehaven show that they feel they're above the law. They have a shameful record of breaches, being fined last year \$38000 for illegal blasting, one of many breaches. They dumped toxic waste containing barium and aluminium into the Narrabri tip.

**NATURE:** Following the devastating bushfires earlier this year most Australians are very concerned about the survival of our natural heritage.

The Whitehaven bushland adjoining the Vickery State Forest and the riparian corridor have been dramatically cleared, but remnant bushland still supports a precious koala population, nationally on the brink of extinction, amongst other native wildlife.

Whatever is left unscathed **MUST** be preserved and the woodlands extended to avoid losing what little is left.

Whitehaven claims they will rehabilitate the ravaged mine site's final land use to assist biodiversity conservation outcomes, and woodland connections after 25 years of moonscaping our land.

We know the former bush regeneration contract is no longer in action.

Please, show us any mine site in NSW which has truly been successfully rehabilitated to contain all its precious original features in nature?

And we all know like for like offsets are not possible.

Mining companies are renowned for sending profits offshore and claiming they have not sufficient funds for rehabilitation.

**LANDRIGHTS:** Has any respect or attention been afforded to the Gomoroi people, the traditional owners of the land?

The recent blatant Rio Tinto example of disrespect towards the value of indigenous culture is echoed by Whitehaven's off-hand mention of Aboriginal Sacred Sites.

Black lives Do matter, but not to mining companies.

**CONCLUSION:** The Vickery Mine Project Extension is an outdated desperate attempt to make dirty quick bucks while they can by bleeding our precious rich agricultural farmlands dry, and water resources dry with the futile promise of jobs.

The promise of future long lasting jobs to save us now from the economic effects of COVID 19 pandemic is **NOT** in evaporating dig it up and burn it mining jobs.

Real 21st century jobs are the promise of relocalised green jobs in renewable energy, service jobs, in reforestation, in education and health, internet upgrading, work from home, and farming to name a few.

The Indian Cree Saying goes: 'Only when the last tree has died and the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realise we cannot eat money'.

There are **NO JOBS ON A DEAD PLANET**.

Our children and all future beings depend on your IPC panel to make the best long term decision.

**PLEASE** refuse this application by Whitehaven.

Thank you in anticipation of your wise refusal of Whitehaven's application.

Yours faithfully,  
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