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## **PAC REPORT ON BOGGABRI MINE FAILS COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT**

The Northern Inland Council for the Environment has described the report by the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) on the Boggabri Coal Project, which was released late last week, as an incredible disappointment.

The report recommended that the Boggabri Coal Mine expansion proposed for north of Boggabri in Leard State Forest, should be approved.

"The review by the Planning Assessment Commission has been an abject failure - it has failed both the community and the environment by recommending that the Boggabri mine should be approved" said Carmel Flint, spokesperson with the Northern Inland Council for the Environment.

"This mine expansion will clear over 1,385 of bushland, including 646 hectares of an endangered community - it will destroy this unique habitat and replace it with a massive open-cut coal pit.

"We are astonished that the Planning Assessment Commission could conclude that the extensive destruction of Leard State Forest, the largest remnant of vegetation on the Liverpool Plains, would not have a significant impact on the environment.

"This report makes a mockery of the NSW planning laws - it confirms that coal miners can destroy habitat for threatened species like the Koala and Barking Owl with impunity and that environmental regulations are completely inadequate to protect our iconic natural areas.

"The Boggabri Coal mine will, along with adjoining mines, turn a precious remnant of bushland into a dustbowl that will collectively dump an estimated 18,000 tonnes of dust per year on neighbouring farms.

"Just last week the Boggabri Coal mine got permission to release 700ML of water from its open-cut pit into the Namoi River. An expanded mine would represent an even greater threat to our waterways.

"If this mine expansion goes ahead, it will cause irreparable harm to the local communities of Maules Creek and surrounds - their health, economy and well-being will be threatened and they will find themselves living in the middle of an industrial zone.

"Opposition to the Boggabri Coal Mine will not end here. There are still two decisions that must be made before this mine can go ahead - one by Federal Minister Tony Burke and one by another Planning Assessment Commission (yet to be constituted) in NSW.

"We are calling on the remaining decision-makers to reject this environmentally damaging project" she said.

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