

PAC GIVES TINKLER THE GREEN LIGHT FOR 'ILLOGICAL' MINE

The Planning Assessment Commission has recommended approval for the Maules Ck coal mine, the second open-cut proposal in the Leard State Forest, despite the Minister for Planning describing the proposal as 'illogical' at the public forum on Land Use Plans in Gunnedah on Tuesday.

"This is an appalling decision by the Planning Assessment Commission and it spells disaster for Leard State Forest and neighbouring landholders around Maules Ck" said Carmel Flint, spokesperson for the Northern Inland Council for the Environment.

"This decision exposes the draft Land Use Plans released by the NSW Government for what they are - toothless documents that do nothing to protect the environment or communities.

"The Plan maps Leard State Forest as a Tier 1 biodiversity area that cannot sustain any further significant loss but the Planning Assessment Commission has agreed to that forest being destroyed.

"Even the Minister had to acknowledge at the Gunnedah public forum on Tuesday that the proposed mine was 'illogical', but the Planning Assessment has ignored logic to rubber stamp this mine.

"The mining industry is rolling like a juggernaut over our landscapes and our communities. Nothing is sacred - not even a nationally endangered ecosystem in prime condition is enough to put the brakes on this industry.

"The recommendations by the Planning Assessment Commission today take us one giant step closer to becoming the next Hunter Valley.

"The entrenched health problems, the fouling of water and air, the disruption of communities and the destruction of the environment are all set to be replicated now in the Gunnedah Basin.

"Just this year in the north-west we've already seen miners fined for sloppy practices, polluted water discharged into creek systems, and coal dust appearing on rooves in Narrabri.

"We are still waiting to hear the results of an investigation which commenced in January into donations made by Nathan Tinkler to the National Party that were not disclosed when his Aston Resources Maules Ck mine application was submitted.

Photos: Recent aerial photos from the Boggabri mine show current clearing of endangered ecological communities and water filling open-cut pits after rain.

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