

Media Release 7th May 2012

## **PLANNING DEPARTMENT GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO BOGGABRI COAL MINE**

The Maules Creek Community Council and Northern Inland Council for the Environment have responded with grave disappointment to news that the NSW Department of Planning has recommended that the Boggabri Coal Mine expansion should be approved.

A second Planning Assessment Commission, headed by Neil Shepherd, has now been asked by the Minister for Planning to make a final decision on the Boggabri mine proposal.

The story of the Laird families fight against the coal mines in Leard State Forest and surrounding farmland was the subject of a special Sydney Morning Herald [story](#) on Saturday 5th May.

"We're very disappointed by the news that the proposed Boggabri mine expansion has been given the green light by the NSW Department of Planning" said Phil Laird, spokesperson for the Maules Ck Community Council.

"We face mining of our flood-proof access road, destruction of much of our local forest, and tonnes and tonnes of mine dust landing on our families and our good farming country.

"The biggest impact is on our community which has already been decimated by the miners buying up land for both the zone of affectation and for offsets.

"We are now calling on the Minister for Planning and the new Planning Assessment Commission to give us an assurance that they will hold public meetings when they consider this project.

"The impacts on our lives and our future is so great that the least they can do is give us an opportunity to have our voices heard" he said.

"At the Gunnedah Forum on the Strategic Land Use Plans the NSW Planning Minister admitted that it was illogical to have open-cut coal mines in a Tier 1 Biodiversity Area like Leard State Forest" said Carmel Flint, spokesperson with the Northern Inland Council for the Environment.

"Yet the Planning Department seems to think it is okay to destroy a unique biodiversity asset for an open-cut coal mine.

"The Boggabri and Maules Ck mines are being rushed through before either the Namoi Water Study or the cumulative risk assessment of mining in the Namoi Catchment are completed.

"We're calling on both state and federal governments to step in and delay the any decisions on the projects until these important scientific studies are completed" she said.

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