

Minister ignores failed Terms of Reference

The MCCC recently received a letter from the Minister for Planning, Brad Hazzard, stating that he would NOT intervene and make the Planning Assessment Commission go back and properly implement the Terms of Reference for the Bogabri and Maules Ck coal projects.

The MCCC has responded by launching an internet campaign targeting NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke, calling on them to step in and save Leard Forest and surrounding farmland from open-cut mining.

[Read More](#)

Take Action!

The MCCC has launched its [new website](#). You can express your thoughts directly to the key decision makers, Barry O'Farrell and Tony Burke about these inappropriate developments via our [Take Action page](#)

After 7 days our campaign is 50% of our target of 250 individual messages to the key decision makers. You've got to be happy with that as the MCCC gets up to speed on a totally new (to us) media space.

More importantly, there have been responses to our campaign from further afield as the plight of the Leard State Forest and the Maules Creek community filters through.



Open cut mining - there are alternatives, just ask the farmers, the doctors, the aboriginal groups, environmentalists and the community!

Community groups plan Health Impact Assessment

The Maules Ck Community Council is working with the University of NSW to develop a community led Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of coal and gas mining in the Gunnedah Basin, and will be developing a steering committee and inviting people to participate.

The North West Alliance will be holding a forum in Gunnedah on the 4th August called "Undermining our Health" which will provide information about the health impacts of coal and gas mining, and will be followed by an art exhibition opening on the same theme. [Press Release](#)

See back page for a more detailed discussion.

[About the HIA Process](#)

[Maules Creek background and Gap Analysis](#)

Coal and Gas Tag Along Tour of the Leard Forest and Pilliga.

A second coal and gas tourist trek to some north western resources hot spots will take place later this month.

[Read More](#)

Maules Creek Coal Project goes round again

Bloomberg are reporting that the Whitehaven Assets including the Maules Creek Project are being pitched to the banks again.

After selling the idea to the original backers, the public in a IPO last year, to Whitehaven itself and now to another group of backers, there is concrete evidence that the Maules Creek community is caught up in a speculative bubble and not a mining boom.

Much of the Whitehaven assets are in the Leard State Forest in northern NSW. This area is subject to environmental protection under the Federal EPBC act. There is community opposition to clearing 5000 Ha of forest for an open cut coal mine which is the home to 390 species, 34 of which are threatened and endangered. The Koala and its habitat is among these.

Approval for the Maules Creek Project has not been granted as it requires both State and Federal consent. By anyone's thinking, clearing a forest for a coal mine is seriously flawed and the project may have to be re-designed as an underground mine. This will change the economics of the project and with a falling coal price plus a 50% share price premium, Whitehaven may just take the profit and buy back in when a proper correction occurs.

Whitehaven shares are down from \$6 to \$3.45 on Friday 13.7.2012.

SMH 16.7.2012

The Maules Creek Community Council (MCCC) was formed on the 25th of July 2010 at a community meeting to address the concerns of residents regarding the coal and gas developments in the local area.

Koala concerns raised with Idemitsu

Three persons dressed as Koalas entered the office of mining company Idemitsu in Brisbane to protest against their plans to destroy Koala habitat with an open-cut coal mine near Boggabri, in north-west NSW. One Koala locked itself to the front door of the office.

At the same time Japanese environment group Kiko Network has visited the offices of Idemitsu in Tokyo and hand delivered a letter, translated into Japanese, asking the President of parent company Idemitsu Kosan to withdraw from the proposed Boggabri mine expansion.

A **map** attached to **the letter** shows areas where Koalas have been sighted or recorded within the footprint of the proposed mine expansion into Leard State Forest.



Health Impact Assessments in the Gunnedah Basin - An Introduction

The MCCC has been in the media regarding our plans for a “community led” Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in which we will be partnering with the Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation (CHETRE) from the UNSW. Their website is www.hiacconnect.edu.au.

Health Impact Assessment is both a technical decision-making tool and process for stakeholder engagement that seeks to maximize benefits and prevent or minimize the negative health consequences of a particular project, policy or plan. This is a refreshing change to the approach of the coal industry and the Dept of Planning which focuses on mitigation, minimum standards, exceptions etc.

CHETRE have a proven methodology for running HIA’s with a number of objectives and milestones used to guide the study and a standardised assessment approach. This structured evidence based process ensures transparency in decision making, which is also refreshing given our recent Namoi Water Study experiences. **This document** outlines the HIA methodology.

The structure for running the HIA is similar to the NWS in that we require;

Scoping Committee. A group of people from across the region to determine the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the study. This includes making decisions about the geographic region to be covered in the assessment, areas of focus, timeframe, resources and what evidence will be gathered. We need to put together a scoping committee of motivated, community people from across the region to form this scoping committee which will have a limited life sitting initially in mid September for half a day and then working with CHETRE to set the ToR.

It is important that this committee reflect our community’s views. It will comprise 9 community members and 1 from CHETRE. This is a community initiative and there are already a range of groups who could provide concerned people to sit on the scoping committee. The Namoi Community Network and the NW Alliance are 2 groups who immediately spring to mind.

Facilitator. CHETRE has agreed to facilitate the HIA scoping workshop and work with the scoping committee to develop the terms of reference.

Stakeholder/Steering Committee. This committee will be formed after the ToR are determined. Ideally there will be people from the original scoping committee plus other professional and experienced community members. We will need a strong chairperson who is experienced in health matters, is well connected, has excellent meeting skills and is seen as independent.

Independent Experts. From time to time experts will be required to put together information to achieve the milestones. E.g. An early stage is to do a health profile of the region. This may require a graduate student, a number of GP’s or a section of Hunter and New England Health.

Sponsors. Bodies to fund the study beyond the original scoping phase. Once the scope is in place we can determine the likely budget. The bigger the scope, the bigger the budget.

At this point we believe that we have a good chance of getting the funding - given the widely held concerns about health impacts. However we believe that rather than get the funding from one source we should get multiple sponsors to ensure that no one group can influence the studies outcome. Options include the NCMA, RDANI, Cotton Australia, Lock the Gate, Hunter and NE Health, Dept of Planning, Corporates (e.g. Graincorp).

We will be using the Health Forum in Gunnedah on the 4th of August to get feedback on these ideas and set the direction for the phase 1 scoping.