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ACTIVISTS SCALE COAL-CRUSHING PLANT AT BOGGABRI COAL MINE

Two activists have scaled the coal-crushing plant at the Boggabri Coal Mine and are currently suspended about 20m above the ground with a banner saying 'Stop the Coal Rush: Protect Health, Water, Climate'.

The NSW Government has recently approved a fourfold expansion of the Boggabri Coal Mine and last week the NSW Planning Department recommended approval for the adjoining Maules Ck Coal Project, east of Narrabri.

The two mines form part of an open-cut coal complex planned for Leard State Forest and surrounding farmland and the Boggabri mine is the first major mine approved by the NSW Coalition Government in the Gunnedah Basin.

The mines will clear 5,000 hectares of bushland, extract 23 million tonnes of coal per annum and the coal when burnt will emit over 50 million tonnes of greenhouse gases each year.

"Expanding open-cut coal mining poses a severe threat to human health and the environment" said Phil Spark, farmer and spokesperson for the Northern Inland Council for the Environment.

"The NSW Government is pushing full steam ahead to convert the Gunnedah Basin into a gigantic industrial mining zone just like the Hunter Valley.

"It is clear that the lessons of the past have not been learnt because detailed cumulative impact assessments have not been conducted and the human health risks have not been properly assessed.

"The approval of the Boggabri Mine and the recommendation in favour of the Maules Ck Mine show that the NSW planning system is broken and that even the most precious environmental assets are not safe from the mining boom.

"The NSW Government has deliberately removed the rights of community groups to mount legal challenges against these damaging coal mines leaving people with little option but to pursue peaceful protest" he said.

For comment or high resolution images or video: Phil Spark 0427 642245