

LETTERS

* Newcastle

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Protest bus load doesn't speak for locals



As a company, Whitehaven Coal supports freedom of speech and the right to peaceful legal protest. We also support and comply with the state and federal planning processes and the stringent environmental conditions placed on our operations.

We support and value the safety of our workforce and the integrity of our management and employees.

We do not support or condone: trespassing; misrepresentation; public menace; the unnecessary demands on police resources when dealing with illegal protests; or the impact of protests on innocent third parties, including the 30 or more casual truck haulage contractors who were stood

down for the day when protesters blocked the entrance to Whitehaven's Tarrawonga mine on Monday.

We also take exception to the claims by hardline climate change activists that they "represent the local community".

Thousands of people were invited to last weekend's Leard State Forest Listen Up Festival. Greens NSW senator Lee Rhiannon stated yesterday that the festival attracted more than 60 people, with a bus load coming from Sydney and a crew also coming from northern NSW.

Do 60 people, many of them from outside the region, represent the many and varied views of the Boggabri,

Narrabri and Gunnedah communities?

Whitehaven employs almost 10 times that number of people in the local community, with a workforce of more than 600 – 75 per cent of whom live and participate in the local community.

We support the views and the livelihood of our workforce and on behalf of them I ask that members of the community call or contact us directly with any concerns, comments, questions or positive feedback about our operations.

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Tony Haggarty, Whitehaven Coal
Sydney, NSW