

Farms



Water and irrigation will be heavily impacted by coal mining in the Leard.

Whitehaven Coal and Idemitsu have secured over 50% of high security water allocations. This means over half the water will go to mines – instead of other important uses in times of drought.

The use of water for washing coal and spraying roads to keep dust down, is predicted to cause a 10m drop in hard rock aquifers, and a drop of at least 2m in the alluvial aquifer levels. This decrease could be too much for many farms to continue.

Mining activities can release many naturally occurring heavy metals and poisons to be released and can contaminate the aquifers. This puts the groundwater at risk of being unusable for farming and irrigation purposes.

As the roads are graded with rubble and waste from the coal mining it is feared by locals and ecologists alike that the water running below the surface will be contaminated with damaging chemicals.

This fight was started by local farmers, and many have heeded their call for help and traveled hundreds of kilometres at their own personal cost to help.

Community

The health of the community and cost of living in the local area will face serious impacts from increased coal mining.



The Maules Creek mine will emit over 18,000 tonnes of coal dust in the mining process. That does not take into account the dust created during the transport of the coal all the way to Newcastle for export.

Coal dust is linked to serious respiratory illnesses and has been linked to increased levels of childhood asthma. Tens of thousands of people die worldwide every year of illnesses linked with coal.

A recent study found that rental prices in coal mining towns can soar almost 400% over a ten year period. This and other cost of living impacts can cause a two tiered society – whereby those who work on the mine on high wages can afford all they like, whilst others go without.

Often, small businesses cannot compete with the high wages found on the mine-sites, and staff shortages occur leading to business closures.

The effects of coal harm communities at every stage. Places as far as Newcastle and even communities in China and India (where the coal is likely to be exported to) will suffer.

Culture and Diversity

The Gomeroi people, the traditional owners of the Leard, are facing the destruction of sacred burial sites and places of great cultural significance to them.

Already, several sites have been destroyed leading to much pain and grief within their community.

The Australian constitution gives citizens the right to practice their religion or culture. However, Whitehaven Coal have locked the Gomeroi people out of the forest, and away from many of their sacred sites – denying them the right to practice their culture freely.

The Leard Forest Alliance is a group of farmers, environmentalists and others that are working together to stop coal mining in the Leard. The Alliance have signed a Protection Treaty with the Gomeroi. This outlines a mutual understanding that the Leard needs to be protected.

The campaign has seen farmers, scientists, school teachers, medical doctors, veterinarians, students and even a 92 year old World War 2 veteran arrested taking direct action to stop work in coal mines in the Leard.



All of these people have come at their own expense, and take time away from their work to take part in the campaign.

Climate Change & Pollution

Many people are traveling to the Leard Blockade because they are worried about the Maules Creek mine's contribution to human induced climate change.

Burning of coal for electricity production contributes to 42% of Australia's green house gas emissions, this is not including the emissions from vehicles and machinery used in extracting the coal and processing it.

When burnt, the coal from the proposed Maules Creek mine will emit as much carbon as New Zealand's entire energy sector's yearly output.

Fly ash from burning coal is also a major contributor to polluting our air and waterways. Since coal contains trace levels of arsenic, barium, beryllium, boron, cadmium, chromium, thallium, selenium, molybdenum and mercury, its ash will continue to contain these traces and therefore cannot be dumped or stored where rainwater can leach the metals and move them to aquifers.



92 year old WWII veteran Bill Ryan traveled from Sydney to take action against the mine. He came at his own expense, and was arrested and charged.

Why Direct Action?

The Maules Creek Community Council formed in 2010 to oppose the expansion of the existing coal mining operations in the local area.

When the Maules Creek project was approved in 2010, all legal and political avenues were explored to try stop the mine. These were unsuccessful and all other options have been exhausted.

Now in the tradition of Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jnr, we are using Non Violent Direct Action to stop and delay work on the mine.

Whilst these activities may seem scary at first, participants take great care in ensuring that all police, workers and protesters' safety is ensured when undertaking direct action.

If you are interested in finding out more about non violent direct action, the campaign or wish to join the fight, then please contact Front Line Action on Coal.

Front Line Action on Coal

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Phone: 0490 064 139

Maules Creek Community Council

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Pat, 24, from Melbourne, ties up machinery to halt

work on the mine.

Coal Mining in the Leard State Forest

Coal mines, such as Whitehaven Coal's Maules Creek and Tarrawonga mines, as well as Idemitsu's Boggabri mines are not only a threat to the natural beauty of the Leard State Forest, but also have a negative effect on farms, community, culture and the climate.



Once the forest is cleared for mining, it will never be the same again.

Whitehaven Coal are about to start clearing the forest. This winter clearing means that hibernating species will be unable to flee to any suitable alternative areas of habitat. Most will be killed, asleep in their homes.

The Maules Creek project has been plagued by investigations into dodgy processes and linked with corrupt activities since it was first started. Key players in the approval of the mine have and are still fronting ICAC (Independent Commission Against Corruption) in NSW. Until these clouds of corruption allegations have been cleared, the mine project needs to be halted.