

28 June 2022

Hon. Madeleine King MP  
Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia  
PO Box 6022  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

By email: [Madeleine.King.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Madeleine.King.MP@aph.gov.au)

Dear Minister

I am writing to personally congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia, and to wish you every success in these roles.

Whitehaven Coal looks forward to working with you to support Australia's natural resources industries and regional communities as we strive for a prosperous future for our nation.

As Australia recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, mining will continue to play a vital role in our economy and in the lives of people living in regional and rural areas. It not only generates long-term jobs and investment, but also promotes innovation and sustainability and helps to build economic resilience in regional communities where mining, agriculture and other industries co-exist.

This letter offers a brief overview of our operations and the coal sector's importance to a strong national economy, and outlines how we can work together to meet the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

I would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to provide you with a more detailed briefing.

### About Whitehaven

Whitehaven Coal is an ASX-listed mining company with operations concentrated in the Gunnedah Basin in North West NSW. We produce high quality metallurgical and thermal coal for export to advanced and developing economies across North and South East Asia.

We are the single largest private sector employer in North West NSW, supporting over 2,500 direct jobs and spending around \$350m with locally-based businesses every year. We believe local communities should be the main beneficiaries of our presence. Over the past five years alone, Whitehaven has directly invested more than \$2.1 billion in North West NSW via salaries, payments to suppliers, community donations and sponsorships, and voluntary contributions to councils. Alongside this we have also contributed \$1.27 billion in taxes and royalties to governments, which plays an important role in enabling investment in the infrastructure and services Australia needs.

Of our approximately 2,500-strong workforce about 75 per cent live permanently in the local communities around our operations. We do not support a FIFO workforce – we are deeply embedded in the community and committed to ensuring the economic and other benefits of our presence are seen and felt locally.

We are especially proud of the partnership we have formed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people connected to the land where we operate. We are one of the leading employers of First Australians, with around 9% of our workforce identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Our third [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) outlines our commitment to contributing to intergenerational change, including through our well-recognised employment strategy and initiatives in the areas of early childhood education and support, schooling, skills development, and sport.

### Our projects

We operate four mines: three open cut and one underground, including our largest mine, Maules Creek, which has been in operation since 2015. Our operating assets are complemented by two high-quality, near-term development assets, being Vickery, near Gunnedah, and Winchester South, in Queensland's Bowen Basin.

Our Vickery Extension Project, which received Federal approval in September 2021, represents a further \$800 million investment in the North West NSW economy that will generate 500 construction jobs and 450 production jobs.

The NSW Independent Planning Commission also recently approved the Narrabri Stage 3 Extension Project, which will ensure the continuation of 500 skilled jobs for a further decade and deliver \$317m of direct wages into the local community to 2044.

### **The coal sector**

At a national level, coal is a cornerstone industry built on the efforts of hard-working Australians, the majority of whom live in regional areas. We are proud to represent a sector that consistently ranks in the top three largest export earners in Australia. The coal industry employs around 50,000 people directly, with a further 100,000 indirect jobs located predominantly throughout regional New South Wales and Queensland.

Coal is a key part of the global energy complex, accounting for around 35% of energy supply. Whitehaven's coal is highly sought-after for its unique properties, including the fact it delivers among the lowest carbon emissions per tonne of coal consumed in the seaborne trade. Increasingly, countries in our region are looking to high quality coal as a critical component of the energy and industrial mix because it does not force them to choose between their economic aspirations and their carbon emissions reduction obligations.

High-quality Australian coal used in combination with advanced generation technology is helping to power our export customer countries more efficiently. All of Whitehaven's customer countries are signatories to the Paris Agreement or have enacted domestic policies consistent with the ambition to hold global warming to 2-degrees or lower, compared to pre-industrial levels.

### **Our exports are paying down Australia's pandemic debt**

In the lead-up to the election it was pleasing to see bipartisan acknowledgement that coal has been, and will remain, fundamental to our national prosperity for many years to come.

Demand for our product is strong and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, even in a more carbon constrained world. The March 2022 edition of the Australian Government's Resources and Energy Quarterly (REQ) found that soaring demand and high prices for Australian coal have been a key contributor to Australia's record export earnings. The REQ notes that with international coal prices at record levels, combined coal exports earnings for 2021-22 will rise to about \$110 billion.

In Australia, these revenue streams will be central to paying down national debt incurred during the pandemic and helping the Albanese Government to invest in the initiatives needed to support a strong Australia.

### **Sustainability and addressing the challenges of climate change**

We are committed to sustainable development across our business, operations and community; it underpins everything we do and the role we play in helping regional communities grow and prosper. Our annual [Sustainability Report](#) communicates our performance in these areas.

We acknowledge we must all play a role in addressing the challenges posed by climate change, including reducing carbon emissions.

For Whitehaven, this includes participating in reporting regimes such as the Task Force of Climate Related Financial Disclosures and investing in Carbon Capture and Storage and other technologies that have the potential to radically alter how we support energy security while, at the same time, safeguarding the environment for future generations.

We also contribute through exporting our premium-quality coal for use in new high-efficiency, low-emissions (HELE) power stations across Asia – helping to support our customer countries' emission reduction objectives.

This will continue to be a balancing act, working to meet our CO2 emissions reduction ambitions while ensuring coal can continue to play its part in power generation, steel-making and various industrial processes fundamental to continued human progress and economic development.

Ongoing policy clarity around emissions reduction initiatives will be important not only to Whitehaven, but the broader resources sector. We look forward to working closely with the Government and participating in consultation ahead of any further policy design and implementation, such as the proposed refinements to the Safeguard Mechanism.

### Conclusion

I would like to congratulate you once again on your appointment as Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia.

As noted above, I would also like to take this opportunity to formally request a meeting to provide you with a more detailed briefing about our company and the role our sector can play in contributing to a prosperous future for Australia.

To progress this invitation, or should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Whitehaven's Executive General Manager – Corporate, Government & Community Affairs, Michael van Maanen, on **s22** or [mvanmaanen@whitehavencoal.com.au](mailto:mvanmaanen@whitehavencoal.com.au).

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely

**s22**

Paul Flynn  
**Manging Director and Chief Executive Officer**