

## **INQUIRY INTO BENEFICIAL AND PRODUCTIVE POST- MINING LAND USE**

**Organisation:** Malabar Resources

**Date Received:** 25 June 2024

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**Standing Committee on State Development**

**Inquiry into beneficial and productive post mining land use**

Parliament House

Macquarie Street

Sydney NSW 2000

Via online lodgement

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/lodge-a-submission.aspx?pk=3046>

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission to the Standing Committee on State Development for consideration as part of the inquiry into beneficial and productive post mining land use.

We appreciate that the NSW Government is dedicating time and resources to beneficial post mining land use. We see great opportunities to provide economic benefits and better overall environmental outcomes now and into the future. In our case, we are progressing large scale renewables alongside our mining activities. We neighbour the Liddell Power Station, so benefit from proximity to an existing substantial transmission network.

**About Malabar**

Malabar Resources is an independent, Australian, diversified resources company based in the Hunter Valley. We look forward to working with the NSW Government to continue to grow NSW's mining sector and regional employment opportunities.

We have made a decision, to develop a sustainable long-term business through the use of innovative and less intrusive underground mining methods focusing on metallurgical coal, developing large scale renewable energy projects, and rehabilitating previously mined areas for sustainable activities including agricultural production. We own rural land, which supports local agricultural enterprises, including cattle, cropping, and the Merton Estate Vineyard.

We have three key projects in the Upper Hunter that form the basis of our diversified portfolio:

- **Maxwell Underground Mine** – We have commenced production at this mine, with the first coal train departing for the Port of Newcastle in June 2023. The mine produces high quality coal with at least 75% capable of being used in the making of steel. Once the mine is fully operational, the mine is expected to deliver more than 400 full-time jobs and more than \$70 million in wages to the local economy each year. The mine is projected to generate \$2.2 billion in mining royalties for the people of NSW over its initial 26 years of operation. You may have seen the launch of our recent campaign to attract a further 200+ employees.
- **Maxwell Solar Farm** – This solar farm is located in the designated Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone. Stage 1 of the solar farm has been approved for 25 megawatt (MW) and is located on over 105 hectares of rehabilitated land and will generate enough energy to power over 10,000 homes.

- **Edderton Solar Farm (350MW plus BESS)** – We have partnered with global power generation company, EDF Renewables, to develop a significant 350MW solar power and energy storage projects in the Hunter region. This is sufficient for at least 130,000 homes (equal to all the homes in Muswellbrook, Singleton, Upper Hunter and Newcastle). The full EIS is being prepared and further information can be found at [eddertonsolarfarm.com.au](http://eddertonsolarfarm.com.au).

Malabar is unique as we are developing; 1) an underground mine, 2) a solar farm over a small portion of a rehabilitated open cut, and 3) a solar farm on non-mining/agricultural land. We are well experienced in the complexity of overlapping regulation. We look forward to continuing to build these projects and contributing to the growth of the NSW economy.

Additionally, Malabar Resources proudly supports a range of local community groups and organisations.

### ***Maxwell Solar Farm***

We are in advanced discussions with the NSW Resource Regulator to navigate the conflicting and complex regulatory framework for our consented farm on an existing mining lease. The two areas are;

1. Work Health and Safety (WHS Act) and
2. Post mining land use with conflicting consents.

### WHS

As our mining leases relate to coal, the standard of electrical equipment and electrical closures make it impractical to build as there are no solar components available globally that meet the standard applied to the coal industry. Given the Maxwell Solar Farm is at least 5 kilometres from the actual mining activity we are very confident of a workable solution.

### Conflicting Consents

We purchased a project where open cut mining had taken place from approximately 1983 until 2016. The original consent conditions date back many years. We have substantially rehabilitated that old mine. This matter relates to a historical consent that requires restoration of some land to pastoral land or woodland and a modern consent we received in 2020 for a solar farm on a small portion (less than 1/8<sup>th</sup>) of the rehabilitated area. Again, we are working through potential solutions with the NSW Resource Regulator and MEG.

### **Conclusion**

Developing the Maxwell Solar Farm on rehabilitated land has proven to be a challenge. Solar developments are low margin enterprises and additional time and costs can quickly erode those slim returns and render them uneconomic to develop. Contemporising regulatory requirements that historically seek to return mining land to traditional uses presents an opportunity for this Parliamentary Committee.

In closing, Malabar's experience is unique, having recently repurposed a closed open cut mine to an underground mine and commenced the development of two renewable energy projects. Malabar

looks forward to the Inquiry delivering practical suggestions to facilitate beneficial and productive post mining land use in the Hunter Valley into the future.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on or at

Yours sincerely,

Wayne Seabrook  
**Chair – Malabar Resources Ltd**