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## MEDIA RELEASE

### BICKHAM COAL MINE WATER STUDY FINALISED

Bickham Coal Company today said it would lodge its key water study with the New South Wales Department of Planning this week, as a precursor to its proposed open-cut mine being considered for comprehensive assessment.

Finalised by some of Australia's leading water and environmental experts, the Water Resource Assessment and Draft Water Management Plan show that the 36 million tonne mine near Murrurundi will have negligible impacts on local waterways.

Building on exhaustive monitoring, modelling, technical analyses and assessments conducted since 2002, the water study is arguably the most rigorous environmental examination undertaken for any mining proposal in Australia.

Multiple government stakeholders including the Department of Environment and Climate Change, the Department of Water and Energy and Upper Hunter Shire Council have been briefed on the water study.

Subject to Department of Planning review, Bickham is asking that the study be placed on public exhibition in the near future, enabling community consultations to be taken to another level.

The study shows that:

- At no stage in the 25-year life of the mine - or after completion of mining - will water flow from the Pages River to the mine
- The mine will affect Pages River stream base flows by less than 0.2 percent on average
- The mine will affect water flows to the Kingdon Ponds by less than 0.25 percent on average
- There will be negligible effects on the Cameron's Gorge ecosystem further downstream

To ensure that the long-term health of the Pages River is beyond doubt, Bickham Coal will commit to adding supplementary base flows from ground water bores to replace the minor river water losses.

Some small post-mining river water losses will be mitigated by Bickham relinquishing part of its water licence.

A comprehensive, independent and ongoing monitoring program with regular and stringent reviews is proposed to keep track of all water issues.

“You would struggle to find a mining project anywhere in Australia that has been as thoroughly scrutinised and analysed as the Bickham proposal,” Bickham Coal Director John Richards said.

“Given that we’ve reduced the initial mine proposal by 25 percent, shifted the mine boundaries to a minimum of 150 metres from the Pages River, eliminated below-river excavation within 300 metres of the river and gone above and beyond in terms of scientific studies, we have done everything to prove the environmental credentials of this project.

“Let’s not also forget that more than 100 local jobs are up for offer, on a project that could generate more than three billion dollars in export revenue.”

Aquaterra Senior Hydrogeologist and Bickham consultant Peter Dundon agreed that the level of environmental assessment ahead of formal government assessment was extensive.

“The work has been thorough to say the least,” Mr Dundon said.

“We believe the facts show that the proposed mine could go ahead without causing environmental impacts of consequence.”

Bickham said it would be obliged to allow the Department of Planning to consider the submitted material.

“The Department has asked us for a detailed water study ahead of this proposal being considered as a Major Project of State Significance, and we are delivering,” John Richards said.

“We are in the hands of the Department, and anticipate that the material will be exhibited publicly in the near future.”

Further information:

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