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MEDIA RELEASE**

MINER'S CHIEF CONCERNED ABOUT LIES

The NSW Minerals Council (NSWMC) has expressed disbelief at misinformation circulated by the Caroon Coal Action Group (CCAG) in relation to a meeting between its CEO, Dr Nikki Williams, and CCAG representative Mr Tim Duddy.

Dr Williams said she had agreed in late August to a request from the Action Group's Tim Duddy to a private meeting when she visits Gunnedah next week to speak at the Gunnedah Coal Conference.

"I was therefore surprised and disappointed to learn that the Caroon Coal Action Group has circulated a printed document to the Gunnedah community claiming I had refused their requests for a meeting. The claim in that document is, quite simply, false."

"The Caroon Coal Action Group has every right to promote its protest rally, but it is inflammatory for them to escalate community antagonism towards the mining industry by making false claims and misrepresenting me", said Dr Williams.

Dr Williams said that "going to metaphorical war was no way to achieve the best possible outcomes for the community and the agricultural and mining sectors which are so fundamental to the prosperity and future of the region. Objective contributions to the debate, and adopting a cooperative rather than polarised stance by all stakeholders, are the only way to achieve sound policy and progress for all involved".

Dr Williams said the mining industry is the most heavily regulated industry in NSW and the industry takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously.

"Environmental regulatory processes are exhaustive and independently assessed by a minimum of four Government Departments, including the Departments of Planning, Environment and Climate Change, Primary Industries and Water and Energy. Thorough community consultation and extensive environmental assessment are not only required by law, it's also good corporate practice," said Dr Williams.

Dr Williams re-iterated that mining and agriculture can and do co-exist for the benefit of the broader community and that she was confident that this would be no different in the Gunnedah region.

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