

Gunnedah PAC

Madame Chairman and Commissioners Payne and Gilligan.

I am a final year agribusiness student at [REDACTED]. My family farms just outside the exploration area. We have a slightly above medium sized mixed farming operation producing a wide variety of cereal crops and oilseeds. We also run an Angus breeding herd and a wagyu/angus cross herd.

Farmers financial return to community. I wish to refer to the "hidden costs" that are not touted on the glossy brochures or make many ABS Statistics. These are our operating costs. Our operating costs run at approximately \$1.3 Million dollars per annum. This equates to \$454.00 per hectare. We spend at least 95% of this money in the local economy with the remainder being spent in the North West.

Other properties in our district would have similar figures and I believe that irrigator's figures would be far higher than ours. Over a thirty year period clearly then our operating costs for our medium sized farm would equate to around \$39M dollars. I emphasise that this money largely stays in the community. Given that Shenhua has purchased around 20,000 hectares, surely then their return to the community should be in the vicinity of \$195M to the local community? Surely the \$18M community fund and the drip feeding of welfare that has our Councils frothing with glee should be far greater?

Employment: We have two full time employees and provide about 25 part-time jobs. This figure includes professionals such as veterinarians, soil scientists, accountants and agronomists. We also employ tradesman, plumbers, electricians and diesel mechanics and fencing contractors and other family business such as harvest and spray contractors to name a few. There is always a job for unskilled labourers as well. As such we, like every other farmer in the district make a very significant contribution to employment figures and they are from a wide spectrum. These are of necessity, local people. These people become woven into our "family". We not only appreciate their contribution but enjoy their company and look after them. This does not happen in the mining community – where significant job reductions are now happening all over the country.

Social Costs: Since 2007 many of our farmers have had their security of tenure ripped away from them. [REDACTED] yesterday said that he lay in bed at night fearing for his future and his family. This is an experience felt at varying levels by us all. We do not know what the future holds. We cannot make the investments in our properties that we would like and our 'investment' confidence is at an all time low. The overriding critical issue is the impacts identified by various studies to our water supplies. Our water supplies also underpin the value of our properties which in many cases, are also our superannuation.

Community confidence: There is a very real lack of confidence in big corporations to deal with many issues in a sensible fashion. It has always been the farmer who has had to pick up the slack where government fails – we all know farmers in the Hunter Valley who have had to put up with excessive dust and noise pollution, health impacts, depletion to water supplies and devaluation of property.

We have little confidence in the ability of various government departments to address issues such as pollution and spills and enforce these regulations- they are captured by the resource sector companies. A quick google reveals Shenhua's appalling environmental policies. Shenhua's own coal to liquid project in Ordos, Inner Mongolia is one such project. Greenpeace recently collected a litany of clear violations of Chinese law in the use of, and extraction of water and the quantity and disposal

of industrial water. Shenhua's plundering of water at the expense of the local population can be at best described as a 'ruthless water grab.'¹ This caused widespread ecological and social damage including displacement of farmers. Will this be the future of our farmers farming in the nation's premier food bowl?

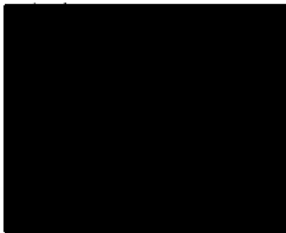
The Chinese have polluted their own waterways, air and farming country. Why should they be allowed to do the same here?

On another note, Shenhua relocation policy of the koalas is nothing short of genocide. Would we be allowed to treat the Panda Bear in such a fashion? I think not.

The social upheaval that will inevitably result from the granting of this project will be intolerable. Not only will we farmers be fighting for our existence but we will attract those brave souls who are defending the Leard State Forest. We believe in a renewable energy future, we believe in a clean and green environment and we believe in the necessity of the Liverpool Plains to produce food, just like the Nile Delta, for thousands of years to come. Please reject this project – our futures rely on it.

Thank You.

Edward Nankivell



¹ <http://www.greenpeace.org/eastasia/Global/eastasia/publications/reports/climate-energy/2013/Thirsty%20Coal%20.pdf>