

PAC Meeting.

Shenhua Watermark Coal Project.

Harry Carter.

Good afternoon Planning Assessment Commission Panel and Community,

I grew up on our family farm at [REDACTED] where I very quickly developed a love and respect for the land, although as a child I didn't appreciate just how unique and productive this part of the country is. I went to boarding school in Sydney where I met other boys from farming backgrounds from across NSW. It was here in the heart of Sydney that I started to realise just how lucky I was to come from the reliable and productive Liverpool Plains, mates from farms at Coonamble and Walget would tell stories of how season after season had gone against them and times were tough, yields were down and stock were poor. Although the seasons come and go here at Pine Ridge I could see that we were somewhat sheltered from the huge struggles these mates and their families were having purely due to our location on the Liverpool Plains. The Liverpool Plains could continue to produce food for our nation even in these tougher years.

After school I completed formal education in agriculture, studying a Bachelor of Business (Farm Management) at a specialised agricultural college in [REDACTED]. While I was in [REDACTED] it really hit home just how precious the Liverpool Plains is. I saw this first hand many key food producing districts through in depth farm and agribusiness study tours through Victoria (including Gippsland, the Western District, The Wimmera and Mallee), through NSW (including the Riverina, Hay Plain and Wagga Wagga areas) and overseas in New Zealand and China. On these tours we had to do in depth business analysis's including the productivity of the district and the seasonal risks. It was these reports that highlight just how unique and productive the Liverpool Plains is, average yields are higher and seasonal risks are much lower. The Liverpool Plains has the ability to consistently produce large amounts of food year in and year out. By comparison most of these food producing areas can only produce one crop per year (winter cropping), they have half the average yield, and on occasion through climatic conditions miss a crop all together. The Liverpool Plains produce two crops per year, higher average yield, and in my living memory (and that of many older people in the room) have never missed a crop.

That the Liverpool Plains is high performing and reliable agricultural land is not just my opinion, but well known among agricultural circles. At Ag college I was surrounded by young, enthusiastic, and educated people from all states and territories in Australia, all with a great passion and knowledge of agricultural. They all know of the Liverpool Plains, and acknowledge how unique, productive and reliable it is. Regularly in conversations we would be talking about conditions at our respective homes, if I ever dared to mention that things were dry at home, or yield was down on average I would be responded with a unanimous "as if, you're from the Liverpool Plains". Everyone knows just how productive the Liverpool Plains is, and even if things were down on average here, there was no sympathy as the Liverpool Plains still out performs all other areas in Australia.

The thought that anyone, any company or any government, would risk destroying such well known highly productive food producing land is ludicrous!

I am a young, ambitious, educated farmer. I have set myself up, ready and willing, to help Australian agriculture take on the responsibility of producing food for our nation. It is well known that this is an uphill battle, with the requirement to double food production by 2050, whilst dealing with the effects of a changing climate. The proposal of mining the Liverpool Plains directly threatens our ability to produce food for our nation. The Shenhua Watermark Coal Project (and others) will destroy this unique, highly productive agricultural land permanently. And I don't mean years in the future, I am talking about for generations here and now. The proposed Run Of Mine (ROM) for the Shenhua Watermark Coal Project is 30 years. I am currently 24 years old, in 30 years I will be 54. The average age of an Australian farmer is approx. 54! By the time I have merely reach the AVERAGE age for a farmer this mine has the potential to have been and gone, destroying the productivity of the Liverpool Plains permanently, and I will still be here trying to fulfil my responsibility of sustainably feeding Australia.

In closing, I strongly urge the panel to take their responsibility of assessing the Shenhua Watermark proposal and making recommendations to the minister very seriously, for if they get it wrong it will be known in my lifetime that they were the panel that made Australia starve.