

26 June, 2014



- Intro
 - My name is John Hamparsum, I'm a second generation farmer and our family farm [REDACTED] is situated 2.4 km north east of the proposed Shenhua open cut pit Number 1.
 - It is important to understand why our family came to live on the Pullaming Plain in order to understand how deeply our family is **opposed** to the possible approval of the Shenhua Water Mark Project.
- How we came to live on the Pullaming Plain
 - During the 1950's my father travelled to various parts of the world looking at different forms of agriculture. During his travels, he came across the black soils of East Texas and he marvelled at the soils, the irrigation and the crops that they could grow there.
 - He recognised in an instant how valuable those soils were and he knew where there were soils as good if not better here in Australia on the Pullaming Plain, an area he had travelled through to get to a property he worked on in his college holidays. Ironically that property is now part of the Maules Creek mine as well.
 - When he returned to Australia he immediately set about buying land on the Pullaming Plain and in 1961 he succeeded in buying our property [REDACTED] where we still are today.
 - My father was a pioneer; he introduced American farming methods to the region, growing Corn, Soybeans, Sorghum, Sunflowers and wheat under irrigation.
 - He always said you could grow babies in these soils and he is pretty close to the truth, There are very few large pockets of these rich self mulching black soils of basalt origin in the world, in fact there are only three places in the world with large tracts of these soils – East Texas , the Ukraine and the Liverpool Plains.
 - The climate, water availability and fertile soils make our area uniquely valuable to feed the future populations of the world and the unacceptable risks that this proposed mine puts on our water resources means that it must not be approved. It is the wrong mine in the wrong place.
- How did the PAC travel here

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- I assume that for your committee to travel here you would have had to either travel over or through the Hunter Valley. You would have to be blind not to see the devastation that mining has caused to that region. A region that once had hundreds of dairies, corn growing farms and grazing properties.
- Here in our valley we also have coal resources that start at Willow Tree and stretch all the way to Walgett. In particular there are coal deposits from Caroon to Narrabri.
- Coal from Breeza to Curlewis, coal from Curlewis to Gunnedah, coal from Gunnedah to Emerald Hill, coal from Emerald hill to Benalabri, from Benalabri to Maules creek it goes on.
- In 1965 a committee similar to yourselves had to consider and eventually approve the Hunter Valley Operations mine, now owned by Rio Tinto and still in operation after numerous extensions.
- I am certain that that committee never considered it would open the floodgates to the sight you would have seen in the Hunter Valley to get to this PAC meeting today.
- The difference today is the benefit of hindsight, we know what happens when a mine is developed, we know how mines skew the science to get their approval, and we know that years down the track that science that they put forward is proven totally incorrect; we know that by then it is too late.
- Once a mine is approved, the infrastructure is put in place and the blasting commences it can't be reversed.
- Burden of responsibility – our legacy
 - You have the unenviable responsibility of advising the Minister of what should be done here. Over next two days you will hear from many people about why this mine should not be approved – I hope that they can convince you with their arguments.
 - The hand is on the lever that can either open the flood gates to mining the Liverpool Plains or close it and protect our food bowl for future generations.
 - You fortunately have the benefit of hindsight and the advice you provide the Minister will determine the legacy that you provide for our children's future.
 - I lie awake at 4 am in the morning thinking, how can the Government even possibly think of releasing this land for mining, I can only pray that in the future I won't be awake because they have approved the mine and I can't sleep because of the noise and knowing what is happening to our land's future.

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On behalf of my daughter, my son, my wife and our extended families, on behalf of other farmers and families on the Liverpool Plains and behalf of the hungry future generations that we will need to feed – I beseech you to give the Minister the right advice and recommend that the Shenhua Watermark project **not** be approved.

Our legacy to future generations is to protect these unique, valuable and productive soils and aquifers, we cannot allow a mine to be built at Watermark.