

Shenhua Watermark PAC points to raise 26.6.14

Juanita Hamparsum, [REDACTED]

1. Good Afternoon & Thanks for the opportunity.
2. Juanita Hamparsum – I work on ^{our intensive irrigation} the family farm with my brother John which is situated on the Pullaming Plain next to Shenhua's Eastern Pit. ^{our entire farm is SAL} I am a chartered accountant and came back from Sydney to do the financial and administrative work for the family enterprises in 1998. I am also a professional director and currently sit on the board of CSD, Chair of the GAB CC and Cotton Innovation Network.
3. However today I will only make a reference to our families written submission lodged back in March as there are some important concerns I would like to highlight in person, not on paper.
4. Firstly I urge caution on the economic benefits that are promoted for this project. On the balance sheet of the state of NSW we have mineral assets and water assets both of which should be utilised and managed for the benefit of the State. The tricky part however is to ensure that by developing one asset it does not hinder nor harm the benefit of the other asset.
 - a. It is the responsibility of the NSW government to ensure that they get the balance right in exploiting these assets for the people of NSW. This is good governance.
 - b. In the case of the Shenhua project I believe the balance is wrong as the development of the coal assets will have a detrimental impact on the water assets. Coal is a short term temporary asset which, once developed is exhausted forever. Water is a long term permanent asset which will consistently provide economic benefits and life for the people of NSW in perpetuity.
 - c. This short term verses long term decision is crucial. In the case of the Namoi Valley with its unique agricultural productivity and abundant water reserves, why would you exploit the coal assets and permanently damage the economic returns that could be made from the water assets?
 - d. I believe that coal assets should be utilised ^{only} where there is a balance but in this case **it is the wrong mine in the wrong place.**
5. Do not be mesmerised by the promises of a quick dollar. The Shenhua project is essentially putting at risk one of the most priceless assets on earth – water. When explorers look for new areas to live in – they look for water not coal in order to survive.
6. There is not enough science for the PAC to make a decision with certainty that they ~~will~~ ^{proponent will} not harm our precious aquifers. I would like the PAC to stop and consider that approving this project is akin to playing with the devil. Eventually you will get burnt however there will not be enough water left to put the fire out and control the damage. If the right decisions are made now, we don't have to get burnt.

7. One of the main fears I have with the Shenhua project is that the dollars being used to justify this project will not last forever. The impacts and effects of the decision to approve this project however will live beyond my lifetime and yours.
8. It is these decisions that will be the legacy we provide for the future generations, not the dollars. This legacy should be seriously considered as the examples of how other valleys have been systematically destroyed by mining are numerous. We should learn from these examples and make better decisions. This is the legacy you as the PAC can provide for our future generations.
9. Unfortunately, if this mine is approved then our neighbour will no longer be farmers who we have a lot in common with, who we share innovative farming ideas with, who we support in times of difficulty and who come running when a fire breaks out or someone in the family is in need. This agricultural community which we love and enjoy will be changed to an industrial landscape.
10. The mining neighbour will not only have no interest in who we are and what we do, they will impinge on every aspect of our life. The industrial din of the mines, the rumble of the trucks, the banging of rocks slamming into haulers, the screeching of metal train wheels on tracks, the intrusive glow of the lights at night, the incessant layer of dust that permeates the home and chokes the crops and the shaking and boom of the regular blasting will be relentless, a 24/7 show. *deafening*
11. I do not want to live in an industrial landscape, I love our agricultural one. The sad thing is that this land use change is beyond my control but its impacts are real, invasive and relentless.
12. Not only will my home be irreversibly altered by the change to an industrial landscape the scale of which I still struggle to comprehend, but it will freeze our investment in our farm and limit the growth opportunities for our business and our children. The Eastern Pit will only be 900m away from our aquifer, this is ridiculously close and as I said before is playing with fire, especially when the science is not there to adequately explain the connectivity factors between the project area and the aquifers.
13. For many years I have loved, prospered and protected this beautiful land, it has given me my sense of place and is my home. I was a key player and instrumental in fighting for the sustainability of our water resources when the water sharing plans were developed.
14. The government used to have a policy to 'mine' our water resources but thankfully they recognised the value of the aquifers to the people of NSW and changed that policy to one of 'sustainable' management. Whilst this meant that we lost 70% of our groundwater licence and it was a painful transition, it was something we never argued against as all the irrigators recognised that the aquifers needed to be preserved for future generations.
15. Again I stress to the PAC if the government recognised the value of our aquifers back then, they need to ~~do~~ reinforce it again now. Get the *State Asset* balance right and protect our water, our agricultural landscape and **recognise that this is the wrong mine in the wrong place.**