

My name is Lisa Norman, I live on [REDACTED] which runs onto the Southern Mining Area.

I wish to place on the record that I strongly oppose the Shenhua Watermark Coal Project.

It beggars belief that a Government would grant an exploration licence for coal in such an important food area as the Liverpool Plains. With its rich black soils and unique groundwater systems, it is one of the most fertile and productive farming areas in Australia that consistently produces yields that are 40% above the national average.

The fact that this licence was granted by a Minister MacDonald also gives us something to think about.

I do not believe that mining and agriculture on the Liverpool Plains can co-exist. Co-existence sounds like such a harmonious arrangement, working alongside with no ill effects from one to the other. When I read through some of the assessments that have been done on the project and I read such words and phrases as mitigate, rehabilitate, compensate, drawdown, connectivity, increased salinity, cumulative impacts, significant long term risk, it backs up what I already believe to be true. That mining and agriculture on the Liverpool Plains cannot co-exist.

Is co-existence allowing carcinogenic coal dust laden with heavy metals such as lead, arsenic and mercury to blow all over our beautiful crops and pastures.

Is co-existence allowing the drawdown of aquifers that have supplied communities and farming businesses for hundreds of years.

Is co-existence where you leave an open void that will continue to seep salt and be a huge salinity burden for thousands of years to come.

I certainly DO NOT call this co-existence and I think the vast majority of Australians wouldn't either!

The Shenhua Watermark Coal Project is just one of three projects proposed in this area. The cumulative effects of these projects needs to be assessed fully and I do not believe any of these projects should go ahead until the proper outcomes of having such large scale projects in such proximity has been fully measured.

To compromise all that this area has to offer - the risk is just too great!

We have seen what has happened in the Hunter Valley. My greatest fear is that the same will happen to the Liverpool Plains. In one of the early Energy Magazines is the quote that goes something like this "that if you put a 50 cent piece on a dinner plate, the Hunter Valley would be the 50 cent piece and the Gunnedah Basin would be the dinner plate." A scary thought."

What does the future hold for our children and grandchildren when we are intent on digging up our finite resources at the expense of food producing land.

What does the future hold when we are happy to compromise this food producing land to export this resource and not even use it for our own energy needs.

What does the future hold for our community if we are forced to endure higher rates of chronic heart, respiratory and kidney disease.

I would like to quote from the Our Land, Our Water, Our Future website which pretty much summed it up for me. "Mining companies talk about money a lot, but we're losing the things that are priceless, clear air, clean water and land to grow clean, healthy food. It's our kids future."

Ten, Twenty, Thirty years down the track it is too late to say - "Oops! We got it wrong!"

Thankyou for giving me the opportunity to speak.