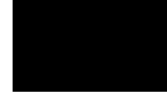


SHENHUA WATERMARK COAL PTY LIMITED
PLANNING ASSESSMENT COMMISSION (PAC)

26TH JUNE 2014

Prue Green



Chair and Panel

“The Shenhua Watermark project is confined to the ranges”. This is a statement from the then Minister for Mineral Resources Ian MacDonald to Lee Rhiannon during Questions without Notice on the 27th October 2009.

This statement confirms the lack of assessment and investigation by the Minister, on behalf of his Government, when granting approval of the Shenhua Watermark exploration licence.

The ranges that Ian MacDonald referred to are ridges and these ridges play an extremely important role with surface water, ground water and infrastructure. I am not an expert in water, soils, economics or the legal process, however over these two days you will hear from many experts on the relevance and importance of these ridges to the black soil plains.

I have lived in both rural and metropolitan areas so understand rural life and the appeal of living in a small community like Breeza. I am a farmer’s daughter so I understand a farmer’s connection to the land. Over the past four years I have spent many hours with the Breeza residents and local landholder’s so I see the uncertainty and frustration they have and are experiencing with this development that has been imposed on them.

When you google Liverpool Plains you find comments like:

- the Liverpool Plains boasts some of the best and most productive agricultural land in the country*
- our national food-bowl*
- one of the prime agricultural regions of New South Wales*

We must take all precautions to ensure that the Liverpool Plains productivity is not put at risk.

In 2012 Shenhua Watermark presented the State Government with their Environmental Impact Statement that they had spent three years completing. The State Government accepted the application and placed it on exhibition early 2013 seeking public comment.

Earth Systems identified a number of concerns regarding the adequacy of the groundwater modelling submitted with the mine application. Earth Systems commented in their report that there were gaps, unclear assumptions, inadequate assessment and uncertainty with the data. Many other submissions received by the Government made similar comments regarding the data put forward by the Proponent.

In May 2013 the Federal Independent Expert Scientific Committee reviewed the Shenhua mining proposal and also identified concerns relating to the EIS. Statements made by the IESC in their report included:

- the number of scenarios modelled for groundwater and water balance modelling decreased confidence in the outputs from these models*
- potential impacts on water resources is not comprehensive*
- the proponent has not addressed cumulative impacts on water quality, surface water flow and hard rock groundwater*
- the cost-benefit analysis is not comprehensive*
- the final void and seepage from backfilled pits present potentially significant long-term environmental hazards which have not been adequately addressed*

The Government accepted and published the Shenhua application without adequate assessment and investigation inviting the community to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars employing their own consultants to ground truth the claims of the proponent. The IESC report was not made available to the public until May 2014 12 months after the report was prepared.

The proponent should be given one opportunity and if they present an inadequate proposal the application should be denied with no second and third chance allowing the proponent the opportunity to continually amend their proposal from work completed by and paid for by others. It is no surprise that the community has little faith in the process.

We are now at the final stage with the Government approving the application with strict conditions. Once again I feel this Government has inadequately assessed the Proponent's Response to Submissions and does not understand the risks and the impacts to the Liverpool Plains viability.

When our future generation's google or whatever medium they may use we must guarantee they don't see statements like:

- the Liverpool Plains, once a highly productive agricultural region of New South Wales until farms became unworkable due to contaminated crops and a lack of quality water for livestock and irrigation*

We all have a responsibility to ensure that the landholders of the Liverpool Plains are permitted to continue producing quality food and fibre and leading the way in farm innovation.

THANK YOU