

## **Shenhua Watermark Planning Assessment Commission Hearing Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

My name is Robert Monteath and I am a registered surveyor and a certified practising planner and a partner in the business known as Monteath and Powys. We have offices in Gunnedah and Newcastle. From an economic perspective I believe the development of the Shenhua Watermark Coal Mine would be a great boost for the Gunnedah region. We are currently doing a boundary survey for Shenhua and if the mine was to go ahead we would most likely employ more surveyors in Gunnedah.

We have been working for various parties within the energy sector in New South Wales for many years. On behalf of Infigen Energy we prepared the Environmental Impact Statement for their Windfarm which has been approved on the eastern side of Lake George near Canberra.

In general, mining is vital to sustain our modern way of life. The bricks and mortar that make up this building are a result of mining of clay, limestone & sand; the roads we drive on are a result of mining of gravel and petroluem; the glass screens in our smart phones and tablets come from sand mining. The active ingredient in sunscreen is titanium dioxide which is also extracted from sand mining.

Just as these forms of mining are essential so still is coal mining. As quoted in the Planning Department's Assessment Report, 40% of the world's electricity is generated from thermal coal. According to the World Energy Council's 2013 survey, between 1993 and 2011, the amount of electricity generated by renewable sources such as wind & solar energy increased from 10% to 11% of total generation. This proportion is predicted to increase to 16% by 2020. This means that the world will still rely heavily on thermal coal to generate electricity for decades to come.

85% of the coal from this project will be used as coking coal as it has a very high energy component. Australia is the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest producer of coking coal because of the high quality of our coal. As a comparison Indonesia is the largest exporter of coal in the world but two tonnes of Indonesian coal has to be burnt to produce the same amount of energy as from one tonne of Australian coal.

As mentioned in the Department's report there are 8 mines operating in the Gunnedah basin which are situated in the Gunnedah or Narrabri Local Government areas. Including the Shenhua proposed mine, less than 1% of the combined area of these two Local Government areas is subject to coal mining.

There has been a lot of debate about the air quality in NSW's mining areas. The EPA has produced an action plan for the Upper Hunter. The report compares the airborne Particulate Matter in the Upper Hunter to metropolitan centres in Australia and this

air pollutant in the upper Hunter is at a similar level as that in Adelaide, Brisbane, Darwin, Newcastle, Perth, Wollongong and Sydney.

In 2011 the federal environment department produced a 'state of the environment' report for Australia. This report stated that airborne Particulate Matter in Australia's capital cities poses little or no health risk for 95% of the time. These facts suggest that dust pollution from mining isn't the health risk that some suggest.

The development of the Shenhua Coal Mine will be an economic boost to the Gunnedah region and since coal has to be burnt to support modern global life it's far better that it is Australian coal which is some of the least polluting coal in the world.