

26.06.14

Good morning commissioners and public,

My name is Sarah Cudmore and I live at [REDACTED] on the Liverpool plains. I oppose the granting of the Watermark Coal mine License. Present today are three generations of our family who have farmed the Liverpool plains for over 100 years. My concern is that I will not see my children and grandchildren farming in this fertile and productive area. The cumulative impact of the Watermark Coal Mine will see our area become yet another Hunter Valley coal project, only larger and with greater impact on Australia's food security. As someone once said, 'you shouldn't put a toilet in your kitchen'.

The **precautionary principle** states that if an action or policy has a suspected risk of causing harm to the public or to the environment, in the absence of scientific consensus that the action or policy is **not** harmful, the burden of proof that it is **not** harmful falls on those taking an action. My opinion is the burden of this risk lies with those making the decision to allow this mine to proceed. We know that the proposed mining license *will* adversely affect the underground water aquifers on which the food security of our Nation is dependent. If we destroy our waters, we destroy a National asset. There is **no** backup water supply to our underground system.

While the PAC can always put environmental conditions attached to any mining approval, this is also fraught with danger. According to a recent report the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has recently suffered greatly from fiscal cutbacks and they are unable to supervise the workload they already have, let alone any future conditions that companies have to adhere to.

Production figures in this area are well above the national average, year in year out. The Liverpool Plains produces crops in the most adverse of seasons. We are living on the jewel of Australian farming land. Not only is it the most productive country in Australia but also is some of the most productive in the world. Risking the underground aquifers here is risking the major food bowl of our country. For the sake of future generation my wish is that Australia will NEVER be dependent on imported food.

As you will hear today the scientific evidence categorically shows that the risk to our precious aquifers is too high to proceed with this development. I implore, I plead with you to consider the future of food production on the Liverpool Plains. Make the right decision for your great grandchildren not the popular decision for the short-term gain that this mine could possibly achieve.

As Theodore Roosevelt quoted:

"To waste, to destroy our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our

children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed."