

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 28 June 2014 3:51 PM  
**To:** pac  
**Subject:** Submission into review R020/13 Watermark Coal Project

Chairwoman Gabrielle Kibble AO  
Planning Assessment Commission  
NSW Government

27 th June 2014

I apologise for the late lodgement of my submission into the review of the Watermark Coal Project. After listening closely to the other submissions during the hearing last week, I became alarmed at the scant information which had been available in relation to the salinity of runoff water from the proposed site.

Like many of the other speakers, I am a landholder on the Liverpool Plains north and northwest of the proposed site. I am a third generation farmer and I have 2 sons wishing to follow in my footsteps also. The eldest has completed an advanced diploma in Farm Business Management and the other is currently studying the same course at Marcus Oldham College, Geelong.

Dr Jeff Taylor of Earth Systems delivered a submission highlighting the threat of saline runoff from the proposed sight. Runoff from the Watermark valley crosses the Kamilaroi Highway before heading west towards the village of Curlewis. This path it follows consists of rich black soil producing a range of high value crops destined for food or fibre production.

After flowing for approximately 8 km the water either runs into Crown land constituting the Curlewis common or heads north over further rich farming land and joins the Mooki river 3 km upstream of Gunnedah. Thence, the water flows into the Namoi river and is subsequently part of the Murray Darling Basin.

The consequences of this water becoming salinised are dire, both locally and for the broader Murray Darling Basin. I believe Watermark runoff inundates approximately 2000 ha annually.

Most of the landholders affected by these flows are longstanding residents of the area and have grown accustomed to both the good and bad effects on our crops of this broadsheet inundation. High levels of salt in this water would be catastrophic on our crops, both those standing at the time of inundation and those planted subsequent to the water flows due to the accumulation of salt levels in the soil generally. I have no doubt the land would be unmarketable. The Curlewis common is home to cattle owned by the residents of Curlewis plus multiple native species of flora and fauna, all of which would be destroyed. Part of the Curlewis common is designated swamp and large levels of saline water in this environment would undoubtedly enter the groundwater systems affecting domestic, irrigation and the Curlewis water supplies.

I believe it is our right to expect that the quality of the water exiting the proposed site should be of equal quality to that water currently inundating our farmlands. I also believe it is our right to expect that the amount of water constituting this runoff should not be allowed to increase under any circumstances.

This brings me to the 2000 megaliter dam planned by the proponent. The management of flows into and out of this structure will be critical. My concerns are that if water is held back and the storage is full, a large rainfall event may require the operators to release this stored water.

In this event we could be inundated with twice as much water as we could reasonably expect causing much larger crop damage and material losses by downstream landholders.

The delicate nature of the floodplain generally has been clearly described in many submissions.

I hope you will carefully consider the issues raised in this submission in your deliberations.

It is my belief that this proposed development should be halted before irreparable damage is caused to our unique, highly productive farmland.

Regards

Graeme C. Norman

Norman Pastoral Company Pty Ltd

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