

No. 54

Madam Chan & fellow Commissioners

Tom Bailey, farming at Pine ridge and breeze. I am a Pom.

I saw the Liverpool Plains in 1970 and immediately realised the fertility and production potential of these very special soils. I worked here for 2 years on 3 different properties including an irrigation farm near Quirindi and saw the really heavy crops which can be grown with this very good irrigation water .

Later I went round Australia trying to see the comparable farming areas ; they did not match the LPP  
*Where else do you get such good soil, good climate & rainfall & water for irrigation*  
I returned to the UK to help run the family farm for 35 years .

I revisited NSW on several occasions from 1985 to 1993 seeing many farming areas of NSW and southern Queensland. Everytime I came back to the LPP the crops were always seemed better than elsewhere

In 1993 I bought the farm at Pine Ridge , and employed a manager to run it, whilst I ran the UK Farm , visiting here twice a year . *The Philippines have sold* ~~The UK farm was sold~~ in 2008 and I am now based here. *I am a*  
*Australia Resident.*  
Why here ?

The cropping potential of the area is as good as anywhere I have seen in the UK, Europe, USA, South Africa, New Zealand and elsewhere in Australia. This is a very special area.

How can the NSW and Federal GVTs allow this area to be wrecked .

Is it not through stupidity ,short sightedness and mistakes that we are here today?

It had to be Wrong for the then Minister of Resources to grant the ELs to BHP and Shenhua as he did. Have subsequent EL been treated the same or was there a realisation that there had been a mistake?

Is the same Minister the one who was troubled by ICAC and is now awaiting prosecution ?

Is it wise to proceed with these two applications while the whole procedure may be subjected to litigation? What will the ramifications be if persons have gone beyond their responsibilities?

Were the governments aware of what was going on ?? If so were they not responsible for this debacle too.

Were the mining firms given permission beyond the EL? By whom? If so were the GVT or their minister allowed to do that?

What a fine mess the gvts are in and now financially beholden to the Chinese Gvt .?????

The system we have all been through..... It ends in one decision

Anytime the opposition is dealt a good card the miners call foul and the government orders a re deal of the pack So the opposition can never win ? What a truly wonderful method .

Due Process. Is this True Democracy at Work ? ( Is this the Australian Way ?? )

The Gateway system is toothless yet it was supposed to be a safeguard.

~~The Pac have already been reprimanded for going beyond their remit.~~

The mines seem to be telling the Commission what they can or cannot do.

You seem to have your wrists tied behind your back.

~~I'm sure the rumour that you have already been told how it ends is not correct.~~

*What are your powers - Especially since the 1st PAC*

Can you refuse to sign off ?? Could you resign if you felt the system was wrong ?

Where would that leave the GVT.??

You know it is wrong.

The Federal Minister of Agriculture knows it is wrong but he has failed us, as has the local MP.

Many miners Know it's wrong to be mining and wrecking the best ag areas.

The gvt are calling us names, so does this mean they know they are wrong too?????

It was wrong for the minister to grant the ELs

It was wrong to grant them in the way of an auction?

It was wrong that Shenhua were also expected to pay \$175m for local infrastructure ?

It was wrong that they were expected to cough up a further \$200m when permission was granted.

It was wrong that the Gvt sat back and watched both Shenhua and BHP buy up farms ,

Without reminding them that permission may not be granted ..... or had it already been!!!!

It would be wrong surely to promise anything other than a 'possible' EL.

It was wrong to string us farmers along with the idea that it was anything other than a done deal

And to waste our time and your's if there was always to be the one result.

It was wrong for the system to promise any agricultural areas which ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> of National Significance and then to find that even the LPP was to be denied this recognition and priority and always

Second best to king coal. The world cannot eat coal.

It was surely wrong for the experts were allowed to be guided by the miners in which way to present their reports, But what can you expect. " He who pays the piper calls the tune".

It was wrong of the Dept of Resources to allow their Minister to act in this way.They are at fault too.

Do the gvts not realise that once the LPP are mined that no ag area is ever off limits ?

It must be wrong for the coal mines to monopolise the railways (which were I believe initially funded largely by agricultural exports) . The old farmers must be turning in their graves.

How can mines or governments possibly think that mines and farms can function symbiotically

And harmoniously side by side. One ransacks and despoils to get the quick buck and the other

Has to attune himself to nature and looks to leave the farm hopefully in a better state than when he started as steward of that farm.

While we are encouraged to develop and improve farms for better production

We will not to be compensated by the mines for those improvements . If the boot was on the other foot would n't they squeal All the way to their buddies no doubt you would see a change in the law.

It must be wrong that every time a non miner has a win in the courts etc the law is changed.

Vis the Coolmore /Hunter Valley fiasco. Unfortunately we are further from the smoke and with far less money to engage such advice and legal team as we perhaps need .

It is surely wrong that Mr Windsor's Bill was not used to stop this threat to the LPP.

The mechanism is there, but the Fed Gvt determinedly ignored it and sneakily tried to bury it amongst other matters going through the senate only a couple of months ago .(Presumably to curry favour with the Chinese Government and the free trade agreement.)

If the mines cannot be stopped then .....

Are there enough safe -guards for the water and the Plains? The miners must be pushed further up the hill.

Some say water modelling is only "best guess theory" . Can it be relied upon. This is too important to get it wrong.

. Do the same gravel beds of the aquifers continue under the black the black soils up the valleys such as the Watermark valley? Will the water not flow at times into the mine workings under hydraulic pressure within these gravel beds ?

What will the mines do with this water ?

The mines may be banished from the black soil plains, but what happens where these same plains are covered with red soil ?

The same for Flood plains . What is the definition ? I recently had a definition which came straight from the geography textbook paper and this was from from a NSW Minister. This is not the DPI

Definition.

What is the difference between shallow and deep aquifers ? I fear there are not suitably watertight

Understandings of such fundamental words.

I hope you appreciate that once up and running the mines will not miss an opportunity to try to bend the ear of the relevant Minister to ~~give~~<sup>GET</sup> permission to go under the Plains? This must not happen.

Alarm bells go when we read on

page 52 ,appendix 3 of PAC 6 June 14 ref to..."The resource on this Watermark site was said to be an isolated open cut resource ,with scope for underground mining in the future." So longwall mining is not ruled out ? and is there a hidden agenda ??

Everyone should be absolutely clear on these vital Points. Nothing but open cut and no extensions. Ever.

Remember Much of Shenhua 's world wide mining is longwalling so what's the go here .?????????

Once the aquifers are affected and draw down does occur we will be stopped irrigating from the Ground water to save such water for human and livestock use.

When this happens there will be many farm workers laid off and cutbacks all round with production and system and financial changes. Will the Cotton Gin may well go etc. with less cotton grown in the area ?? *We will be cutting our staff by half.*

Without the irrigation income the reliant farm service industries will do the same resulting in many more redundancies than miners ever employed . ( 1500 have been mentioned.)

Our argument has always been .....Mine on the less productive land. Not on the very best soils where there are very good aquifers.

This is an extreme example of first in best dressed and bugger everyone else. The LPP should be the very last area to be mined , not one of the first.

You have coal to spare so why start on the LPP.???

What a waste of a fantastic farming resource???

Is this project in the national <sup>long term</sup> Interest, or is it  
~~the short term~~ <sup>Benefit</sup> of the government & mine interests.

Mark You