

Madam Chair, Mr Woodward and MS Murrell

As president of the SOS (Save our Soils) Liverpool Plains I thank you for the opportunity to address the PAC on the proposed Shenhua development.

The SOS Liverpool Plains group represents the women of this community. We are mainly farmer based but have members from all walks of life who are genuinely concerned about the impacts that mine will have on our environment. Since 2008, our group has worked tirelessly to protect our environment and our right to farm these magnificently productive Liverpool Plains

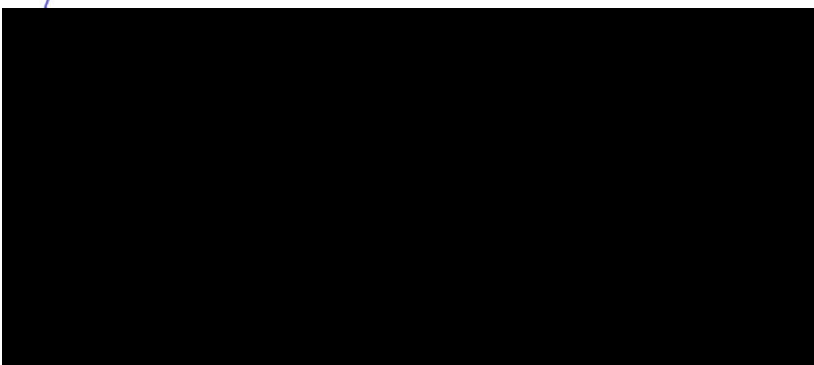
Madame Chair, we have little faith that our environment will be protected by the proposed conditions.

To quote the latest release from the Environmental Protection Agency, the role of licence conditions "is to ensure the activities of industry, do not adversely impact on the health of the community and the environment."

We find the conditions so far imposed on the Shenhua development to be woefully inadequate. We know that these conditions will not be enforced and will do little to protect our environment, our water resources and our quality of life. Just yesterday Tarrawonga Coal was fined for breaching its annual limit for coal production by 136,045 tons of coal. This equates to approximately \$9M and the fine for this massive breach was \$15000. There is no incentive for a mining company to follow the rules and abide by license conditions and clearly, the government is lacking the will to enforce these conditions. How can we have faith that current mining conditions in anyway encourage the protection of our environment?

Mining is a dirty business which will impact our air quality, our health and our precious water supplies. Our group strongly believes that this mine is the wrong mine in the wrong place and the agricultural productivity of this region will be severely impacted. I now hand over carriage of our submission to the good strong women of the SOS Liverpool Plains.

Your sincerely,



1. We know the Liverpool Plains is one of the best farming regions in Australia producing 40% above the National average of all farming regions in Australia. The soils, water supply and climate make this region unique for agricultural production.
2. We know that while the rest of Eastern Australia suffers from a crippling drought, the Liverpool Plains produces, and continues to produce, good crops essential for food and fibre production, as well as wide range of oilseeds and meats.
3. We know our farmers are innovative and world leaders in sustainable agricultural practises. We are NOT the Ma and Pa Farmers of Paul Howes' world. Our farmers run highly capitalised business with extensive infrastructure and the latest technology.
4. We believe that food and its ongoing security should be prioritised in a world where the population is estimated to reach 9 billion by 2030. We believe that the rising world population, estimated to reach 9 billion by 2030, is threatening global food security and this requires an immediate and urgent response by our government to protect this area.
5. We know farming on the Liverpool Plains is of State Significance and therefore this area should be set aside for farming only, for the benefit of future generations.
6. We know that water is the life blood of this driest continent in the world. Depletion and contamination of our water resources will severely limit production on the Liverpool Plains. We know that if our water resources are further compromised by mining we will be unable to grow food. It will devalue properties and make it impossible for farmers to operate.
7. We know that the Liverpool Plains location in the Namoi Catchment and at the head of the Murray Darling Basin, makes it essential to conserve our water resources – not just for our local farmers but those farms and communities that rely on groundwater of the Murray Darling Basin.
8. We know that our hills and ridges such as the proposed Watermark location are inextricably linked to our aquifers and are watersheds for the Liverpool Plains.
9. We know that Mining and agriculture cannot co-exist on the Liverpool Plains. This is the wrong mine in the wrong place.

10. In response to the Recommended Conditions of Consent, we accept that the former PAC no doubt answered the Terms of Reference with the best of intentions. However,

11. We believe that regardless of the scientific water monitoring scenarios undertaken by Shenhua, they do not account for real life climatic unpredictability and as such are rendered useless in managing risk.
12. We do not accept that the Applicant has fully assessed impacts to the whole catchment. An aquifer has no boundaries and yet farmers who live outside the proposed mine license areas will suffer impacts which have not been addressed. We will not have the baseline testing sufficient to either be compensated fully, or indeed take advantage any "make good" arrangements. Instead our business will suffer and our properties will be devalued.
13. We know that all aquifers are interconnected. Given that the neighbouring BHP mine clearly states in their Environmental Impact Statement, that immediate drawdown in the region may exceed 180 metres, and that aquifers will be impacted up to 20 kilometres away. How can Shenhua be so dishonest as to claim that drawdown will be minimal and able to be mitigated?
14. We note that the conditions imposed on this mine rely strongly on self-monitoring

and reporting. We know that in the past, the extractive industries have failed to adequately self-monitor. We know from instances in Queensland, that once a project is given the green light, conditions such as self-monitoring, and three yearly audits financed by the proponent never eventuate. We know that there is no check or brake on these developments should the proponent fail to live up to a license requirement.

14. We know that the Department's recommendation condition that '**modelling predictions be reviewed and validated every 3 years during mining, and monitoring continued for at least 10 years after mining ceases**', to be totally unacceptable to our community. This gives farmers no confidence or guarantees regarding the long term potential impacts on the land after mining concludes. It further encourages a "piecemeal approach" where farmers do not have the confidence to plan long term.
15. We know that in the event of an "unintended consequence" mining companies are given trivial and inadequate fines which fail to address or repair such an unintended consequence.
16. We note that a website is to be developed to provide information to the public. We know that a website is only as good as the information provided by the proponent and that this offers little comfort to our farmers.
17. We note that a Community Consultative Committee is to be established. Many of us have sat on such committees and know them to be opaque, poorly recorded and strongly favouring the resource companies.
18. We know "adaptive management" is a poor second cousin to prevention and the "precautionary principle". When adaptive management is applied, it simply means that the mining company has not had the foresight or the ability to prevent an "unintended consequence." – or indeed choose to accept a fine instead of spending the money to prevent such a consequence.
19. We know that the Government of the day will fail to enforce these conditions adequately. There are not enough mining inspectors to provide regulatory oversight. With Government budget cuts happening regularly and the rapid expansion of the mining industry, this enforcement will be impossible.
20. We know that there has been no concrete realistic assessment in dollar terms of the risk of mining's impact on our water resources offered by the proponent. Instead it has been the community which has had to fund such assessments.
21. We believe landholders rights, access agreements, compensation matters, compliance and enforcement matters in relation to exploration licences, need to be discussed and finalised BEFORE mining licences are issued
22. We know that the cumulative impacts from the proposed Shenhua Watermark Project, the BHP Billiton Coal mining project plus the Santos Coal Seam Gas, will detrimentally combine to suffocate farming on the Liverpool Plains. We believe that all 3 projects MUST be examined together when assessing risk and all projects in their entirety. Indeed in a previous Environmental Impact Statement, the Applicant was very clear that this development was only stage one of their plans.
23. We know that our local councils see stars when a resource company comes knocking at the door. Local councils accept the blankets, trinkets and mirrors offerings just as the aboriginal communities accepted from white settlers. We know that local councils fail to consider the long term damage that resource companies do to our natural resources. Sadly they also fail to consider that with the eventual deterioration of their prime agricultural land comes with a reduction in their rate base.
24. We also know that rarely do resource companies adequately compensate for

increased traffic, wear and tear on roads or address the social problems that arise from FIFO workers and the eventual hollowing out of communities.

25. We are appalled that the rehabilitation objectives only require that 100ha of land to be restored to BSAL requirements. We believe that the objectives of the rehabilitation program are open to distortion and a loose translation into some very inferior grazing country. We note the sentence "It is accepted that some parts of the site that are progressively rehabilitated may be subject to further disturbance at some later stage of development." Surely this sentence is a license for the Applicant to only half heartedly restore land before the development is further extended into a far bigger mine?

26. We find the PAC Review Report Recommendation 9 insulting and totally unacceptable.

**'The Commission recommends that all residences predicted to be impacted by an exceedance of the air quality criteria should be given the following options:
Number 1. Sell their property to the mine or move elsewhere**

27. If this development is to proceed, we know that this magnificent productive region will become the collateral damage of a mining licence granted by a corrupt government minister.

We know that this mine is the wrong mine in the wrong place. We know that there are many that share our concerns and we ask the members of this community to stand with us.