

## Shenhua Watermark Mitchum Neave – 11 12 2014

My name is Mitchum Neave representing as a traditional owner of the Breeza and surrounding areas  
- I make the following statement

The purpose of the PAC is to "comment on the Department of Planning and Environment's assessment and recommended conditions of approval, before a decision is made."

I wish to strongly object to the removal of review and merits appeal and particularly object to s23F of the Act that reads:

**23F No appeals against decisions by Commission after public hearings**

Could I please ask the PAC to include my objection to this section of the Act for the record and include my request to have this statement on the record that s23F of the Act will not be applied for the Shenhua Watermark Project and that Aboriginal peoples rights are to be protected

I would like to Focus in the inadequacy and I believe the EIS and assessment by the Department is not adequate. And more study is needed before anyone should approve anything especially Shenhua because the risks to our health our community and our environment especially our water security is so high.

I am very angry that Shenhua have started tree planting and disturbed the soil without even having Aboriginal involvement to protect and collect our culture and heritage especially so close the special sites.

I have to admit that as both a traditional person and resident of Breeza I am angry that the PAC and government made so few conditions relating to Aboriginal cultural heritage protection and there is a level of stupidity that you think that you can move a huge grinding groove site which is bigger than 2 double decker buses- once you carve up our grinding groove sites they don't survive- there is no recognition of the inadequacy of the archaeological survey and the fact that even the small survey – the transects was done driving in a car!!! The government department is failing and let these people do whatever they want. I am sick of the proponent not being made to account for the DGRS in relation to archaeology

There does not appear to be any understanding of the impact and the loss of the grinding groove sites...

I am also concerned about is that the conservations areas are not promised in to be saved for ever- the conditons of the PAC are inadequate because they only use a little c and little conservation area which is not a formal forever saved conservation area- we have learnt this from the Hunter experience where some years later the little parts saved are then taken away from the Aboriginal community.

Inadequacies were identified in the EIS and yet the Department of Planning appear to have completely ignored their own policy and processes Under the EPA Act and NPW Acts there is supposed to be consideration of the protection of culture and heritage- we are alarmed that even though we have documented our cultural heritage concerns and we presented to the PAC – the PAC completely ignored this and the government completely ignored the need to protect our culture and

heritage and instead just agreed by the swipe of the pen the destruction of Aboriginal culture and heritage

It is also frustrating that the process of the PAC eliminates the opportunity to challenge the findings and accuracies in the EIS and assessment documentation which inform your approvals or non-approvals determination.

The ability for community to legally cross examine the documents and challenge the statements in the EIS reports and findings for such a large state significant project is alarming. It defies democracy and it defies the rights of Aboriginal people to have any hope of saving our cultural heritage places of importance and the biodiversity and water we need to protect.

I also worry about the non-declaration or examination of pecuniary interest of some businesses in Gunnedah- the social science of boom bust communities the lack of vision for alternative economy is not even part of the assessment. Sure we need jobs but not by destroying land and water and our farming communities and our culture and heritage .....you can't tell me there is not a better way....

The Independent Scientific Expert Committee and the Gomeroi Traditional Custodians and community have raised enormous issues about the methodology, the adequacy of the assessments about how they've established whether or not there are cumulative impacts, about how they've determined the connection between the coal seam and the Great Artisan Basin -yet the Department of Planning's response was just that Shenhua must buy water this is completely inadequate

The Pac and government think that everything can be mitigated and humans can manage everything- this thinking is arrogant and naive and flies in the face of reality. The government is playing GOD with our water security and I would like to leave a message for government YOU are NOT GOD

There are statements about employment but there has not been any discussion about what this region needs to have as employment options -the risks to the destruction of irreplaceable culture and heritage the purchase of even more homes and agricultural lands is a farce

The findings of the Namoi Water Study clearly highlighted the concerns about water security yet this appears to be ignored. The community does not understand how the PAC can make a report which states that "The Commission considers that the mine is approvable, subject to some further water modelling to corroborate the predicted level of impact on water," BHP admitted they would go past the water table and yet you agree to this madness. BHP report was misleading and you will let big business destroy our communities

I would like to ask you a question-

Why do you really think that the Shenhua project is approvable you have written a report which does not explain what you mean by this .....given the risks you didn't even take into account what I said to you at the PAC last time it just seems like you are here to put up with our voices but the actions will be hollow..... You will go back to your homes and you will go back to your communities and if you approve this mine and disregard what we have to tell you - you will put the nail in the coffin for our community and our water needs and you will destroy such a significant cultural site the government as the regulatory authority are supposed to protect

This is not about no coal ...this is about saving our water and our culture- our lores and customs our day sky our night sky our flora and fauna and our ancestors footprints. If you approve this mine and

destroy our grinding grooves and cultural landscape there will be a battle – we put government and Shehna on notice now.