

Planning Assessment Commission Hearing
Shenhua Watermark Coal Project, Gunnedah LGA 10/12/14

Submission by: Anna & Hugh Pursehouse

"Breeza Station"
[Redacted]

Good afternoon Commissioners and audience,

My name is Anna Pursehouse and this is my brother Hugh. We are speaking here today on behalf of the younger generation of our family, as well the young people of the district, to show our strong objection to the implementation of Shenhua's Watermark Coal Project.

We, along with our older brother James, have lived our whole lives on our family farm "Breeza Station", at Breeza. Our property is now a neighbour of the proposed Shenhua mining region, with 3 boundary fences bringing us too close for comfort to the criminal effects of this mine.

Our property is what we consider our life and our future. The three of us envisage a future on the land, not only for our generation, but for many more to come. If Shenhua goes ahead, our futures are put at stake. Our futures will be virtually dead. What is the point risking many generations of successful farming for one generation of coal mining?

- Who is to say that our farming land will still be as productive after the mine has begun as what it is today?
- Who is to say what consequences this will have on our future?
- Who is to say that this mine, if it goes ahead, won't attempt to extend its boundaries?

According to Shenhua's unreliable research, our futures cannot be proved.

Through our ongoing studies and education in agriculture, as well as working from a young age on our family property and others in the region, our knowledge and skills applicable to the land and its management are continually growing. But what is the point of putting our hearts into agriculture now when there is a chance that Shenhua may take our futures away from us?

As we have grown up, we have viewed our property – along with the other properties in the Liverpool plains – to be some of the best food and fibre production locations in Australia. This is illustrated by the successful production of both summer and winter crops, which despite changing seasonal activity, proves to endure its proficiency at the worst of times. This therefore ensures an all-year-round income for us, and an efficient resource supply to different sectors of the world. This area is reliable as a farming industry. With an increasing

world population, why throw away this permanent food and fibre supply for something so temporary?

Our income is derived from what we put into the land and what the land can give us back. With a mine neighbouring us, we cannot be certain that our farming will remain as it is – therefore we cannot be certain of our water availability and quality, which allows us to produce successful enterprises. We are relying on our property to maintain its productivity and sustainability. Our future depends on these resources.

Our question to the Government is, if you allow Shenhua to go ahead, who is going to fix the land when it becomes unproductive and unsustainable? There is no going back!

If Shenhua goes ahead, our farming land is at threat of deterioration, and therefore so are our futures on the land. Farming is not just our job; it's our way of life. Our land is our life.