

**PLANNING ASSESSMENT COMMISSION MEETING**

**Shenhua Watermark Coal Project SSD4975, Gunnedah 10-11<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

**Commissioners:** Ms Lynelle Briggs AO (Chair), Mr Joe Woodward PSM and Ms Jan Murrell

**Submission by:** Mr Andrew Pursehouse "Breeza Station" Breeza, 2381

My family & I own and operate "Breeza Station" Breeza. I presented a submission at the previous PAC hearing 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. I am here today to again register my **strong objection** to the proposed Shenhua Watermark Coal mine at Breeza.

Our property shares 3 boundary fences with Shenhua. Under the recent PAC review of the project, 50% of our land is now classified as an additional area required for Voluntary Land Acquisition

My principal focus is on Water. I will also discuss Dust and Koalas.

**Water**

As an irrigation farmer relying principally on underground water, any risk to the aquifers would be catastrophic to our business and the local community. It is important Commissioners you are aware of the size and capacity of the irrigation bores in the district. They range from an output of 4 to 24 Mega litres per day, 1.0 Mega litre is the volume of an Olympic swimming pool. The aquifers vary in depth and capacity. On our farm we have six bores, some pump from just one aquifer others pump from up to four separate aquifers in the one bore hole. Our largest bore pumps from 35m below ground to 70 metres, an aquifer depth of 35metres of solid water bearing gravel. A nearby bore was previously in the Guinness Book of Records for output. All the aquifers are proven to be highly interconnected. The Mooki River and its tributaries are also very porous and interconnected to the underground aquifers.

The potential of damaging this unique aquifer system are too great, not only to agriculture, but also to the towns, and stock and domestic users. Farmers in this area have cooperated with the NSW Government to reduce water allocations by up to 68% to reach sustainability under the NSW Ground Water Sharing Plans. We now have a new player, mining, with the potential to destroy this delicate balance. An example is already occurring with the Whitehaven Mine at Werris Creek. This mine has intercepted an aquifer network and regularly has to blow water into the atmosphere by two large evaporators. This was never foreseen in their EIS and to me is criminal. This water had a previous destination, to the very aquifers we are discussing. Our community may also have to contend with the accumulative effect on water resources from the proposed BHP mine at Caroonna.

An aspect not adequately covered by the PAC process is the risk of water contamination from the mine to the Mooki River and surrounding land. The Liverpool Plains catchment does not have a regulated water source such as a large dam, to help mitigate the inevitable releases of toxic water, which will occur from the mine. Shenhua's EIS states the mine as a 'nil discharge' mine in one part and contradicts 'except in exceptional circumstances' in another part. History has proven mines cannot contain all discharges. At the head of the Murray Darling Catchment, we cannot afford the risk of contaminated water to flow downstream.

**Dust**

**COPY**  
*As presented*

Commissioners the proposed Shenhua mine is located on a peninsula like landmass, surrounded on three sides by the prime of agricultural land and pristine water resources.

When marketing grain and cattle we all sign a Commodity Vendor Declaration, and with cotton we are participants in BMP (Best Management Practice) indicating to the buyer, both local and overseas, the product we produce is proudly grown to a standard, and well documented. The effect of coal dust from mine/s in so close a proximity could potentially become a huge threat to our community and the reputation of this district. For example our farm is currently moving wheat to be containerised and exported to China. Chickpeas are currently being containerised and exported to India.

In June the PAC Commissioners were alerted to potential dust issues in cotton. A peer review indicated no such event has happened in Australia in the past. The opinion was because Australia produces some of the best quality cotton in world there is no issue. It was also noted the cotton picking machinery causes more dust than a mine would. The concern I indicated at the time was for vulnerable white cotton exposed for up to a month before picking occurs. On a dewy winter's morning with the wrong wind, who will pick up the tab from a cotton district left with discoloured cotton totally destroyed and unable to be marketed.

### **Koalas**

The subject of Koalas is well covered by others, but I would like to point out a concern we have that I believe has not been addressed in the PAC process.

Our Homestead area is located on the end of the peninsula like landform previously discussed. We always have resident koalas, with anywhere from 1-5 mothers in a 1.5km radius of our home. We are concerned about this population becoming isolated. Current movement or migration of Koalas appears to be from Gunnedah towards us in the south and east. The Shenhua mine will dissect this movement, and in our opinion eliminate the natural migration. Koalas are regularly seen to the south east of us towards Werris Creek, where never seen before.

### **Conclusion**

**Commissioners we need long term agricultural foresight here, not short term mining.** This mine is the precursor to an underground mine later to obtain the next two thirds of the resource.

Look at the youth in the room today, all keen, young, well educated and passionate about an agricultural future on the Liverpool Plains. I see a bright future in clean green agricultural products grown for our nation and exports to a hungry world. The Tamworth airport 60km away, is capable of air freight to the world.

Someone said to me recently if a terrorist came to the Liverpool Plains and wanted to destroy the aquifers what would we do? This is no different Commissioner's; coal mining on the Liverpool Plains is Terrorism. Our farming community will stand up and fight for no mining like never seen before in Australia.

**This is the wrong mine in the wrong place.**

# COMMODITY VENDOR DECLARATION



Please print clearly.

**Trading name of producer or storage facility**

**Vendor's name** (if different)

**Vendor's address**

FULL ADDRESS INCLUDING POSTCODE

**Tel no.**

**Vendor's contract no.** (if applicable)

**End user's trading name and address**

**End user's contract no.**  
**Tonnes represented by this declaration**

to DAY / MONTH / YEAR

**Commodity**

**Delivery period from**

DAY / MONTH / YEAR

ANSWER 1A OR 1B AS APPLICABLE.

**This commodity is ex producer:**

If applicable, please tick the relevant box, complete the following details and then go to Question 2.

Direct ex paddock  Ex farm storage

**Property name**

**Shire**

**Harvest date**

DAY / MONTH / YEAR

**Paddock I.D./s**

**This commodity is ex multi vendor storage:**

If applicable, please complete the following details and then go to Question 2.

**Storage location**

**Release number**

**Silo/pad no.**

**Does the property on which the commodity is grown, or storage facility in which the commodity is stored carry accreditation under an independently audited QA program which includes chemical residue management for the commodity being supplied?**

Yes  No If Yes, give details:

NAME OF PROGRAM

ACCREDITATION NO.

If the answer to Question 2 is Yes, go straight to Question 8. If the answer is No, please refer to the explanatory notes.

**Was the commodity tested for chemical residues by a NATA accredited laboratory and test method?**

Yes  No If Yes, attach details of testing results on delivered product

**Chemical applied to the commodity whilst under your control** (attach list if necessary)

List all agricultural chemicals (excluding fertilisers) applied to the commodity while it was under your control, as follows: a. from seedling emergence, or last cut, to this harvest for fodder; b. from commencement of flowering to harvest for grains; and c. all post harvest treatments.

Chemical applied	Rate/Ha or tonne	Application date	WHP and/or EI

**Chemicals applied on your property** (attach list if necessary)

List all chemicals (excluding fertilisers) applied to crops within 100 metres of the crop from which this commodity was derived, or which have placed that crop in a spray drift risk area, as follows:

- from seedling emergence, or last cut, to this harvest for the fodder supplied; or
- from commencement of flowering to harvest for grains supplied.

Crop/situation	Chemical applied	Rate/Ha	Application date	WHP and/or EI

**Neighbours' Crops** (attach list if necessary)

List all neighbours crops within 100 metres of the crop from which this commodity was derived, or which have placed that crop in a spray drift risk area, as follows:

- from seedling emergence, or last cut, to this harvest for the fodder supplied; or
- from commencement of flowering to harvest for grains supplied.

Crop	Approx. harvest month

**Has the crop been grown on a property with a chemical residue status classification?**

Yes  No If Yes, give details

**Having kept appropriate records and after making the necessary inquiries, I/we truthfully believe that:**

- all chemicals applied to the crops or commodity specified in this declaration, by me/us or by other persons on my/our behalf during the growing of the crops and/or during the storage of the commodity are disclosed, where required, in the responses to Questions 4 and 5 of this declaration; all chemicals were applied in accordance with their registered labels and at rates not exceeding the maximum rates set out on those labels; and
- any Withholding Periods and/or Export Intervals set out on the labels of the chemicals applied to the crop or commodity whilst under my control have been observed and, where required, are specified in the response to Question 4 of this declaration.
- the commodity supplied does not contain any materials that are prohibited for use as feeds for ruminant livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, etc) under state/territory legislation, specifically in regard to animal by-products.

**I/We further declare that I/we have read and understood the explanatory notes and declare that the information in this document is true and correct.**

**Signed by the representative of the organisation supplying this commodity who is responsible for the production and/or storage of this commodity prior to dispatch to the above end user.**

**Name**

**Position**

**Signature**

**Date**

DAY / MONTH / YEAR

**PURSEHOUSE FARMS PTY LTD**  
**"BREEZA STATION"**

**Farm Details - 2014**

**BREEZA N.S.W. 2381**

Pursehouse Farms Pty Ltd is a family owned & operated farming & grazing business, located at Breeza, on the Liverpool Plains (Breeza Plains) region, in North West N.S.W. Australia. The principals are Andrew & Cindy Pursehouse & family, James (24), Hugh (22) & Anna (20).

Key staff includes Operations Manager Peter Baldo (employed 24 years), Head field operator Bill Gray (employed 11 years), David & Harry Elms, Transport Manager/mechanic Anthony Trudgett, & casual staff and family employed as required. (James is an Agronomist for CGS Wee Waa, Anna is at University in Newcastle, & Hugh is also studying Farm Business Management at Marcus Oldham) Agronomic advice is provided by Pursehouse Rural. Matt Roseby operates a 'Premium Ag' intensive agronomic management service, and cotton consultant is John Nott (both based at Pursehouse Rural Gunnedah Branch)

The property aggregation is called "Breeza Station", and produces cotton, grain & beef. The historic property was originally settled by the Clift family in the 1830's. The Pursehouse family are only the second owners, purchasing the property from the original owners in 1984. Located next to & west of the Liverpool Ranges (Great Dividing Range) a reliable rainfall average of 650mm p.a occurs evenly throughout winter & summer. Tamworth is 65 km north east, Gunnedah 40km North West & Quirindi 40km south. Sydney is 4 hours drive south.

**Winter crops** grown include Wheat (bread & durum) Barley, Canola, Fababeans, & Chickpeas.

**Summer crops** include Cotton, Sorghum, Corn, Sunflowers, and Pigeon Peas.

**Cattle** consist of 120 Poll Hereford breeders, plus their progeny are fattened on farm.

**Land area** owned is 3,352 ha (8,279ac). A neighbouring farm is leased with an area of 1,036 ha. Of the total area 1,040 ha is furrow irrigated, 2,490 ha is dryland farmed, & 858ha is grazed.

**Soil type** is self mulching black earth, many metres deep. Basalt in origin, & predominately tree less plain country. Some areas of red brown soil exist, with native yellow, white & bumble box trees. Koalas are always prevalent.

**Irrigation water** is sourced from an underground aquifer, with 6 turbine pumps set 30-70 metres below ground level. The pumps extract between 5 & 14 Mega Litres /day each (50-140,000 gallons per hour each), of beautiful quality water. All tail water & stormwater is collected in water storages (800ML) & recycled. Stock water is obtained 20-25 metres below by windmills & also from the Mooki River.

**Dryland farming** has been no-tilled continuously since 1992-94. Permanent beds, and controlled traffic lanes, has been used since 1996.

New in 2012 was the introduction of 4 metre spaced tracks (instead of 2m) utilizing 2 John Deere tracked tractors, & 12 metre wide machinery (instead of 8m). Spraying is achieved by a Miller Nitro self-propelled sprayer with a 36 metre wide boom.

Yield mapping of grain production commenced 1998, & Cotton in 2000. This GPS technology has been used intensively to analyse all management of the farm. The philosophy of "*If you can't measure it, you cannot manage it*" is taken. GPS is also used for surveying & to steer the farms main tractors & sprayer to 2cm RTK accuracy. Laser levelling technology is utilised extensively, on both irrigated land, channels & also on dryland paddocks. The farm has its own laser levelling machinery.

In 2011 a major change occurred with purchase of a new John Deere 7760 Round bale cotton picker and associated handling gear and JCB Loader.