

Madam Chair, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Sue Wilmott and I live on the iconic Liverpool Plains.

It concerns me greatly that the Government is not serious about climate change.

If it was, why would they even be contemplating yet another coal mine when all the scientific evidence suggests that coal is not the way of the future.

Fossil fuels are becoming a resource of the past.

As one of our speakers said yesterday, coal will not be mined in 30 years time.

We must move forward and embrace the challenges of our changing world.

In Australia our Government seems to be stuck in a fossil-aged thinking mentality.

The rest of the developing world are embracing renewable energy sources at a rapidly accelerated rate.

There ARE alternatives for our energy needs (solar, wind, tidal) but NO substitute for clean FOOD. Our food production and its ongoing security should be prioritised in a world where the population is estimated to reach 9 billion by 2030.

The Liverpool Plains is a food growing region-our capacity to produce food is the way of the future. The Liverpool Plains region is in a prime position to take advantage of this.

Immediate and urgent action MUST be taken by our Governments to capitalise on our position as a world leader in food production.

NOW, more than any time in our history, will food production be critical in feeding a hungry world. Our young farmer's presentation yesterday highlighted the keenness for the next generation to embrace this challenge.

I would like to make a few comments about the PAC recommendations.

1. If the PAC Review Report recommends conditions to an applicant of a proposed mining project, the applicant SHOULD accept the recommendations or WITHDRAW their application.

However, Shenhua has stated in its response to the previous PAC Review that it CANNOT accept some of the conditions '**as it does not provide sufficient certainty to justify its capital investment in the project**'.

If they cannot accept the PAC's recommendations they should withdraw their application.

What about the agricultural industries capital investments in this region over generations?

Have THESE been considered in real terms and given equal weight in this debate?

2. Another statement from the Governments PAC review report says,

' If Shenhua is not complying with relevant provisions of its development consent, it would be required to modify its operations to ensure compliance or face enforcement action under Part 6 of the EP&A Act.

These are just hollow words and threats as the Government has no way of adequately monitoring or enforcing when mining is basically a self-regulating industry.

3. All the water models and scenarios are only hypotheticals and not FACTS. What if the scientists predictions prove false? Where does that leave farmers?

What will be the effects of mining on our fertile soils and water resources in say, 50-100 years after the life of mine?

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3. The PAC Review Report Recommendation 9 reads,

Options available for residents predicted to be impacted by exceedances of dust criteria

'The Commission recommends that all residences predicted to be impacted by an exceedance of the air quality criteria should be given the following options:

1. to sell their property to the mine or move elsewhere

I ask the panel, how would **YOU** feel, if this was an option **YOU** were given to protect **YOUR** profession and **YOUR** home?

4. Words used by mining companies such as MINIMAL IMPACT, ZERO HARM, BEST PRACTISE, BEST ENDEAVOURS are meaningless and offer no reassurances to farmers whatsoever. Nor do they reflect the actual harmful affects of mining on the environment. One just has to look at the Hunter Region to see the real impacts.

Then there is the mining speak term 'MAKE GOOD'.

How can you possibly 'MAKE GOOD' when something is contaminated, damaged or broken!

Usually any attempts to MAKE GOOD only makes things WORSE!!

Any risk to our water resources will be irreparable.

What financial commitment in dollar terms has Shenhua invested in their "MAKE GOOD" Fund so that when our aquifers are contaminated or our bores dry up farmers will be adequately compensated?

5. Shenhua also states in their response to the PAC that, '**mining for coal is not a portable industry that can be moved to locations where it will have no effect on agriculture.**'

Similarly, **OUR** high yielding agricultural regions on the Liverpool Plains cannot be moved to another location where it does not interfere with mining!!

In this International Year of the Family Farm I believe it is time our Governments listened to hard working Aussie farming families when they say that the unrelenting pressure and real threat to their families and businesses is from mining, and is worse than any drought they've ever experienced. Our Governments must NEVER underestimate our determination and commitment to protect our farms and communities for future generations.