Submission to the Inquiry of Mining of the Murray Darling Basin

To: Senate Standing Committee on Environment and the Arts.

Background:

Haystack Road is an area just North of the town of Warra approximately 3hrs drive west on the Warrego Highway from Brisbane. The district known as Haystack has always been famous for many years. Its high quality soils and ability to produce high quality grain with very little in crop rainfall have made it a stand out in an increasingly dry climate. In more recent years has been known for its grain and fibre production with the growing of cotton in the area also. Now the area of Haystack road is at the centre of attention for all of the wrong reasons. Tarong Energy a Queensland Government owned Company owns MDL 383 which covers 13,000 ha of the Haystack Road area and plans to sell it off to the highest bidder for an open cut coal mine.

Haystack Road is situated on the western side of the Brigalow Jimbour Flood Plain.

The BJFP is an area consisting of 580,000 ha. All of the Creeks and Gullies drain into the Condamine River which form part of the Very head waters of the Murray Darling System.
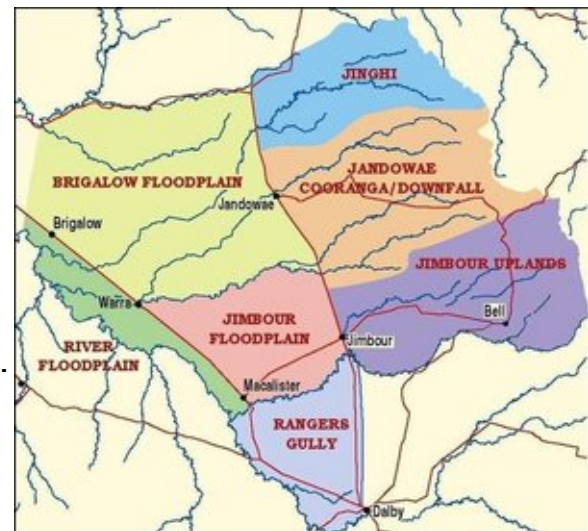
Source: Brigalow Jimbour Floodplain Group

Submission:

As a 33 year old 4th generation Farmer I am deeply concerned at the level of mining and exploration on prime agricultural land on the Darling Downs. The Darling Downs has been renowned for many years as one of Australia's premier food and fibre production areas. In the last few years it the areas around Dalby and Chinchilla have thrived on the development of the Surat Basin predominately on the Gas Industry but now coal also.

Whilst recognising the massive value to the Queensland and Australian economy the mining industry has we must not let the Agriculture Industry get left behind or more to the point be taken over.

There are no two ways about. Mining is a very disruptive business and in some cases mining and agriculture can coexist on the same land. In some cases mining and agriculture can exist beside on another but not on the same land.

❖ Noise and light pollution are a huge issue associated with coal mining.

❖ Haystack Road is in the middle of the Brigalow Jimbour Flood Plain. A coal mine in the middle of a flood plain would be crazy!

❖ Haystack road and other areas like the Jimbour Plain and Felton are very closely settled.

❖ Rehabilitation on prime agricultural land has not been proven a success on land of this quality and or at what cost? One would suggest that if the rehabilitation cost is so high than it just should not be mined in the first place.

❖ We have enormous areas of mineral resources under very poor quality land. Why destroy our most precious resource that we have, our soil.

❖ 1.5 billion People go to bed hungry in this world every day.

❖ What do Towns like Dalby and Chinchilla do after mining?

❖ If a balanced approach is taken than we can have Agriculture and mining.

Conclusion

At the recent National Farmer Federations in Brisbane Professor Julian Crib made predictions on the next 30 to 40 years of the world's population growth. It is expected to be 9 billion by the year 2050. How do we propose to feed the people of this Country let alone our neighbours that do not have the ability to grow food and fibre as we do?

We must protect our prime agricultural land for the very future and prosperity of this country. While we have must have our mineral and energy production, we must also have our food, fibre and agriculture production. May I remind you that you can't eat coal!coal4breakfast.

If the current plan of senseless unplanned mining on our best and most productive soils is not stopped we are on a heading towards absolute destruction. Those people who allow these practices to

continue without some balance will be condemned to highest degree by future generations like there children and grandchildren. Let's get a planning process in place and legislate to protect our prime agricultural soils for many generations over.

Brendan Taylor
Haystack Road Coal Committee Member