

16th September 2009.

Attention: Senate Enquiry into the impact of mining in the Murray Darling Basin.

My family and I farm 10,000 acres at Breeza NSW. The Mooki River, the Werries Creek and Whites Gully all flow through our country. Our family has been farming in this area for well over one hundred years and have been at Breeza since the 1930's. Parts of our farming country are in the Caroonia Exploration Licence Area and the Shenhua Watermark Exploration Licence Area. Our geographical position at the headwater to the Murray Darling together with the length of time our family have lived & farmed in this area give us a unique perspective on the matter before this Senate enquiry.

Regarding the potential impact of current & projected mining operations on all environmental values in the Murray Darling Basin, and, in particular, the potential impacts upon surficial and groundwater flows and quality in the alluvial floodplain at its headwater in the Namoi Valley catchment- Part a) of your enquiry. It is my opinion that current & in particular projected mining operation will have a catastrophic effect on both surficial and groundwater flows. The size of the proposed developments in our area are massive by any definition. They involve both open-cut and long wall mining techniques. Obviously I am not an expert on mining but I really cannot see that such developments will not destroy our fragile ecosystem & have wider repercussions on the entire Murray Darling Basin.

Regarding part b) of your enquiry -the potential impacts in the context of the Murray Darling Plan and agricultural productivity. I feel that our farming enterprise is under serious threat from these mining proposals. In an average year we produce 10,000 tonnes of top quality wheat, sorghum, sunflowers & canola & 250 head of prime shorthorn cattle. We have a dryland farming operation & every part of our operation is managed in the most sustainable way possible. We like to think that it is possible for our farming country to be feeding people for centuries to come.

These floodplains form a unique & crucial part in the catchment of the Murray Darling Basin. Both the surficial and groundwater flows and the plains themselves are national assets. They must be protected at any cost.

Yours sincerely,
Peta Craig