

Committee Secretary,
Environment, Communication and the Arts – Standing Committee

Re: Impact of Mining in the Murray Darling Basin

I express my individual concerns as a resident of one of the prime agricultural areas of Australia, The Liverpool Plains, which is now under imminent threat from mining. It is also at the head of one of the tributaries which feeds into the Murray Darling river system so any problems arising from mining in our area will have a negative impact on the whole system.

My concerns are:

- Loss of individual rights with freehold land, and bullying tactics by mining companies and governments, once exploration licences are granted. There seems to be total disrespect for land owners at this point.
- Loss of major food producing areas when the world is already finding it difficult to feed the current population. Surely there are some prime areas that just shouldn't be mined.
- Our need to mine areas before we know the consequences. How long have we been waiting for funding for an independent water study on the Liverpool Plains? This should have happened before the exploration licence was granted. Once the aquifers are ruptured here, the possible devastating effects on the Murray Darling down stream are unimaginable. Where are the government policies to protect prime agricultural land and agriculture?
- In haste to mine we separate the ridges from the plains. They are interconnected if only because they are side by side. Mining one will effect the other. We do not need acid mine leakage anywhere but especially into food producing areas. We need to keep mining away from prime food producing areas.
- The impact of mining on our soils. Once we lose our fertile top soils through mining it can never be returned to pre mining fertility. Fertile soils and good water supply are precious icons but to have them in combination as on the Liverpool Plains is God's gift to continuing creation. To jeopardize such a gift is criminal. We need to keep mining away from fertile food producing areas.
- The consistent statement that mining and agriculture can coexist. If we are to produce good quality uncontaminated food and continue to

feed the masses we must keep them separate. There must be more policies in place to protect our food bowl.

Summary

We are at a stage when important decisions must be made and policies put in place, to protect prime agricultural land and our river and aquifer systems for the sustainability of future generations. Mining should not be allowed on prime agricultural areas, they should be kept away from river systems and mining companies should be made accountable for their actions as are every other section of the community. Mitch Hook from The Minerals Council said on 'Four Corners' July 20, 2009, that there was coal everywhere. If so we have plenty of scope to stay away from these precious areas.

Sue Willis
Caroona