



13 October 2009



Jeanette Radcliffe  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Select Committee on Agriculture & Related Industries  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Radcliffe

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has been made aware by its NSW Councillors of a campaign by the Caroon Coal Action Group to prevent coal and gas exploration on the Liverpool Plains, specifically by BHP Billiton, Shenhua and Santos.

We have followed the arguments regarding concerns for the environmental impacts that coal mining would have on the area, specifically water quality, air quality and biodiversity; and the impact on agricultural production at a time when food production and food security are becoming increasingly important.

At ACF's most recent Council meeting in late July the following resolution was brought to Council and was passed unanimously:

"That ACF support the call for an immediate moratorium on any kind of resource exploration on the Liverpool Plains, NSW so that an independent, catchment-wide water study can be performed to understand the interconnections and intricacies of the aquifers beneath these prime agricultural rich soil plains"; and "That ACF petition the Federal Select Committee on Agriculture and Related Industries that proposed coal exploration by BHP and Shenhua and coal seam gas exploration by Santos on the Liverpool Plains, and the almost certain subsequent mining operations, will endanger the productivity of one of the richest agricultural areas in Australia, impact adversely on Australia's food security, adversely affect the water systems of the area and the Murray Darling Basin, adversely impact on other environmental aspects (habitats, air quality) and produce a real risk of subsidence within the area."

ACF also recognises that the issues of water quality impact directly on the Murray Darling Basin. ACF campaigns vigorously for better water management of the Basin and sees the potential for contamination of the valuable water resources of the





Liverpool Plains as one of the many real threats that have the potential to compound the problem. The catchment-wide water study which is currently being undertaken, while important, should not be allowed to cloud issues relating to whole-of-Basin water management and should not detract from the concerns of usage of prime agricultural land. In addition, ACF is concerned that the promise of only mining the ridges brings with it a whole suite of additional problems impacting severely on recharge water quality and biodiversity.

For further information about ACF's concerns please contact me on 03 9345 1131 or by email [d.boyd@acfonline.org.au](mailto:d.boyd@acfonline.org.au)

Yours sincerely

Denise Boyd  
Campaign Director

