

I am submitting this as a concerned citizen because I see decisions being, and about to be made, which fly in the face of commonsense and the sustainability of agriculture in this country.

I am particularly concerned about the suggested coal mining of the Liverpool Plains. This land has the best soil, farmers who are committed to maintaining the viability of their land, and wonderful underground aquifers with clean, pure water. I understand, for economic reasons, coal mines have to be situated near railheads and/or the coast but their record of returning mined land to its original state (rather than just planting grass and a few eucalypts) is woeful. I cannot believe that the mining will not damage the water table, and this would be irreversible damage, and the tying up of good food productive land for tens of years would mean not only the loss of the growing of food but the knowledge of farming the area.

I suggest that these sorts of short-sighted decisions, for short-term economic gain, rather than long-term sustainability are all too usual and need to be seriously reconsidered. We should be cherishing and carefully tending any land where the soil is rich and viable for growing food - there is much of Australia where this is not the case - and no mining of any sort should be allowed in, or near, these areas.

Susan Stewart  
Edgecliff NSW