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13 MAR 2009

Sen Hon W Heffernan
ELECTORATE OFFICE

Senator W Heffernan
Suite 703
Westfield Towers
Sydney 2000 NSW

Dear Senator

I write to implore you to please support us in our desperate need to protect the food security for Australia.

I live on the Liverpool Plains in north-west NSW, the most productive agricultural soil in Australia. This land is rich alluvial floodplain with underground aquifers, supporting not only farmers but also towns (Gunnedah, Narrabri etc) and many villages, then feeds into the Murray Darling.

There is only 6% of arable land remaining in Australia, our prime agricultural land is a fraction of that percentage. Our land is capable of producing two crops a year, summer and winter, plus all livestock industries, intensive and open range.

This plain is now being threatened by the granting of exploration licences for coal mining. This could, if allowed to occur, destroy not only the water supply, but also the soils themselves, due to destructive subsidence and poisoned overflows. Who will be held responsible if the land is ruined, as subsidence cannot be rehabilitated on the alluvial floodplain?

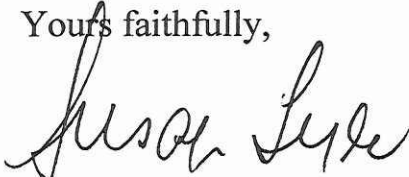
Australia is continually boasting the clean/green and many Australian farmers have become accredited (Cattlecare, Graincare, ISO) to meet overseas markets. Why are governments prepared to jeopardise production in these areas for what is a very short-term outcome, when many of the companies involved are offshore owned?

What we want is for the Australian Government to Legislate to Protect Prime Agricultural Land and have it treated as a National Asset.

precedent has already been set with the Federal Government's move to protect the Murray Darling Basin. To protect this agricultural prime land will secure our domestic food supply and offer us export growth and international leverage. At present Australia is the 7th largest supplier of agricultural and food exports. No.1 for beef and barley, no.3 for wheat and dairy. Food demand is forecast to rise 110% in the next 40 years.

I ask you to look at our website www.ccag.org.au for more information and let us remain the clever country for the long-term benefit of the generations of Australians to come.

Yours faithfully,



Susan Lyle
Member CCAG

Some production statistics for the Liverpool Plains (ABARE NAMS DPI)
\$332million from 5 agricultural commodities alone (cattle, cereals, sorghum, wheat, cotton, barley)

Relates to

365 million loaves of bread (wheat)

62.5 packets pasta (wheat)

144 bottles beer (barley)

58 million packets cornflakes (corn)

233,000 tonnes sorghum for stock to produce

29 million kg beef

77 million kg pork

90 million chickens

Cotton

276million pairs jeans

5.5billion pairs socks

Etc.etc.

Please remember this production comes from this very small area of incredible soils.