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16 MAR 2009

Sen Hon W Heffernan
ELECTORATE OFFICE

Senator the Hon Bill Heffernan
Suite 703, Westfield Towers, 100 William Street
Sydney NSW 2011

Dear Senator Heffernan,

RE: LIVERPOOL PLAINS – FOOD SECURITY

I would like to bring to your attention my concerns regarding proposed coal mining and gas exploration on the Liverpool plains. These industry developments are totally at odds with protecting Australia's food security and protecting Australia's prime agricultural land.

The Liverpool Plains is a unique area. The area has safe rainfall enabling the production of a broad range of both summer and winter crops. A significant amount of beef/pork and chicken are also produced. We consistently produce over one third of NSW's total summer crop. We also contribute at least \$330 million to GDP from our top agricultural commodities alone. Crop yields from the Liverpool plains are consistently 40% above the national average thanks to reliable rainfall, well managed, high output aquifers and exceptionally fertile volcanic soils.

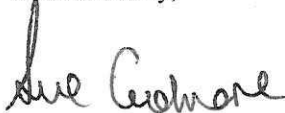
I implore the senate to address this issue now. Time is fast running out as the exploration licenses have been granted and exploration has already commenced. You need to come and see this area for yourself. Drive up the New England Highway and view the mines and rehabilitated mined areas in the Hunter. I challenge you to come and see the before and after. The mining companies with their slick PR recourses will produce attractive submissions and glossy brochures promising co-existence with agriculture and rehabilitation to the mined areas. Open cut or long wall mining of the proposed magnitude cannot co-exist without the permanent loss of agricultural production to this area. Once mined the soil and aquifers stand to be permanently damaged. This area is also part of the Namoi catchment area feeding the Murray-Darling basin. The risk to damaging this already struggling river system is too high.

Weigh up the health issues – coal increases the chance of kidney disease, respiratory disease and an increase in high blood pressure. It contains known deadly heavy metals such as lead, arsenic, cadmium and mercury (to name just a few). It also produces a large number of carcinogenic benzenes and radio actives. Whereas our food provides high grade proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, ant-oxidants and fibers.

Australia and the world are struggling with global warming and are trying to reduce carbon emissions. Coal is known to be a very high contributor with world environmental organizations pleading for a reduction in coal production and a turn to renewable fuel and power sources. On the other hand our agriculture is producing significant amounts of food for a world that is seriously struggling with food shortages. Australia stands to become dependent on imported food if mining continues at the current rate. With the world population growing at its current rate this puts our children's future in a very precarious position.

One doesn't need to be Einstein to work out which option is the best for Australians. However I feel the biggest hurdle is convincing politicians who seem unable to extricate themselves from the hold of large mining companies that issuing these licenses is signing a terminal death warrant to the agricultural industries on the Liverpool plains. I urge you to look into this matter and I look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully,

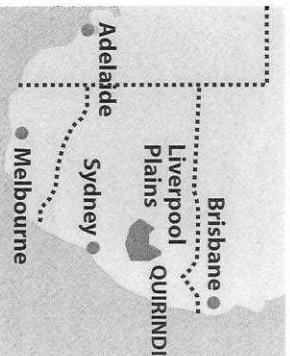


Sue Cudmore

Liverpool Plains

✓ Reliably Producing

- * 33% of Australia's pasta wheat
- * 17% of sorghum to feed poultry and animals
- * Bread wheat, making barley for beer, sunflowers, soybeans, corn, chickpeas, cotton, olive and canola oil.
- * Prime beef and lamb.



400kms northwest of Sydney.

- ✓ Part of the Murray Darling catchment including the Namoi and Mooki Rivers, Quirindi, Cox and Yarraman creeks, Lake Goran and world-class underground aquifers of the highest quality and quantity.

- ✓ Large areas of native vegetation providing habitat for koalas, kangaroos, wallabies, echidnas, bats, snakes, lizards and a huge variety of birdlife.

ALL THIS, NOW UNDER THREAT FROM COAL AND GAS MINING.

FOOD SECURITY

- ☺ Australian-grown food is subject to the highest quality standards making it safe, reliable and highly sought after, not only within Australia, but also overseas.

- ☺ Farming exports provide \$25 billion towards Australia's GDP (ABS average 2000-2005).

- ☺ Australia is already on NASA's 'Desertification Watch' as its arable land (a meagre 6% of land mass) comes under further pressure from climate change, dryland salinity, urban development and unprecedented levels of mining.

- ☹ We must not place Australia's food security (our ability to feed ourselves) or our food quality (the safety of our food), at risk from mining pollution or short term mining profits.

WATER

- ✓ Liverpool Plains is a priceless national asset: high quality, large quantity and well regulated.
- ✓ Our surface and groundwater flows supply the Murray Darling, our native environment, people, animals, and well-managed irrigation for food and fibre.

- ✗ The interconnectivity of these flows is poorly understood. Mining has already cracked river beds and aquifers across NSW. We are calling for a fully independent catchment-wide water study to assess the risks to this vital water from coal and gas mining.

HEALTH

- ✗ Coal contains toxic amounts of lead, arsenic, and mercury. It contains cancer-causing benzenes, radioactive uranium and thorium, lung irritants such as sulphides, nitrous oxides, fluorides and fine silica dusts.

- ✗ Mining communities have increased levels of disease including lung, cardiovascular and kidney diseases (Hendryx et al. 2008).

NO GOAL IN YOUR FOOD BOWL

NO MINES ON LIVERPOOL PLAINS - YOUR FOOD BOWL

DEMOCRACY

CCAG (Caroona Coal Action Group) was formed in 2006 by a concerned community wanting to protect Australia's food and water resources on the Liverpool Plains.

CCAG is not opposed to mining or miners. Coal and gas mining expansion must not put our food, our water, our health, our environment, our democratic and property rights or our communities at risk. No other industry is allowed to do so by law and the Mining Act should be no different.

CCAG, with the support of the community's blockade, is determined to oppose any exploration or mining in our area until the state and federal governments recognise the significance of our food and water resources and our biodiversity.

People power is calling for a fully independent catchment-wide water study and a revised planning process including Part 3A, to guarantee these national assets can continue to feed Australians for generations to come.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

✓ Join us: Click on 'Contact Us' on our website to find out how to help -

www.ccag.org.au

✓ Write to your MPs, state and federal, demanding that prime agricultural land, such as the Liverpool Plains and the Darling Downs, be protected from mining.

✓ Write to your MP to get coal trains' toxic loads covered.

✓ **Mine Dirt** - tell us your stories (anonymously if necessary) on the website.

**NO
COAL IN
YOUR FOOD BOWL**

NO MINES ON LIVERPOOL PLAINS - YOUR FOOD BOWL.

"The greatest danger to our future is apathy"

Jane Goodall

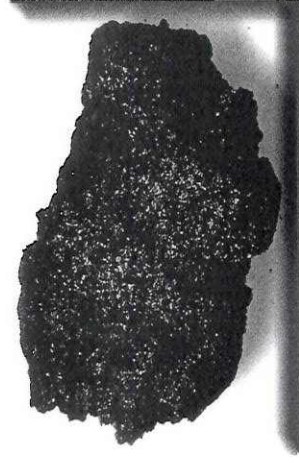
Produced by: SOS Liverpool Plains, a group of women, from all walks of life, concerned with the negative effects of coal and gas mining on our health, soil, water and air. SOSLP are committed to supporting the CCAG in raising awareness of these vital national issues.

www.ccag.org.au

COST OF FOOD GETTING YOU DOWN?



Just wait until the government allows mines in YOUR



FOOD BOWL!