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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

Subject: **Food Security.**

Dear Senator Heffernan

We have a farm on the Liverpool Plains, this farm has been in the family for three generations. We are passionate about farming and our community and it is with grave concern that I am writing to you today. A major mining company is targeting us as being the next coal frontier. As coal in the Hunter Valley is declining and the Liverpool Plains has huge reserves of coal below its surface, these mining giants cannot wait to get their hands on it. We are currently in the exploration phase of mining. I cannot comprehend why BHP was granted a license in the first place by our state government, only to say that they were paid \$100 million for it. I cannot comprehend it, when food production and food security is so vitally important to our nation. As I said before we are passionate about what we do, about our water and its management, and our environment. We want to be here for generations so we will do what it takes to look after it, so we can keep on producing high yielding crops that are 40% above the national average (ABARE) and have a clean safe environment to live in. If mining takes over on these rich fertile plains and or the ridges, which plays a vital role in recharging the aquifers, food production in this area will be greatly reduced, not to mention the damage that will be done to the environment and our pristine uncontaminated underground water supplies. The Liverpool Plains is situated in northern NSW, and is world renowned for its exceptionally fertile volcanic soils. It is the definition of prime agricultural land. As the total world's food demand is forecast to rise 110% in the next 40 years (Professor Julian Cribb, UTS), Australian food security is extremely important to us all. This is why I am calling on you. We need legislation to protect Australia's Prime Agriculture Land and have it treated as a National Asset. Laws need to be changed to protect crucial food security zones like the Liverpool Plains. Australian arable land is now less than 6% and declining every year (NAMS), particularly as a result of the mining boom. Prime agriculture land is only a fraction of the total arable land, therefore not a lot of hectares to have treated as a national Asset and protected from destructive developments. I am not anti the mining industry but feel it is paramount that our food producing areas are kept secure and safe and let us do what we do best, producing good quality food from high yielding crops. I urge you to think about this very important national issue and would like to hear your thoughts on this issue. I extend an invitation to you to come and see for yourself the beautiful Liverpool Plains, our property and the proposed area for mining.

Yours faithfully

Rod and Kelly Grant

