

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

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18 MAR 2009

Sen Heffernan  
ELECTORAL

9<sup>th</sup> March, 2009

Dear Senator Heffernan,

I am writing to you with regard to an article aired on ABC radio from June 2008 titled "True North". In that article I heard you being interviewed and showing real concerns over the key issue of prime agricultural land in Australia's north being purchased and used for non food producing purposes such as agro-forestry and I could not help but feel that the farmers on the Liverpool Plains of NSW are in a similar situation.

As you may be aware the Liverpool Plains is one of Australia's rare gems in terms of agricultural production with crop yields consistently 40% above the national average, producing enough wheat for one million loaves of bread per day every day of the year (ABARE). Over 1000 agricultural enterprises produce an array of food items such as beef, lamb, canola, sorghum, maize, mungbeans, soybeans, chickpeas, olives, barley, sunflowers etc. The Liverpool Plains is contributing \$332 million to GDP just with it's top five agricultural commodities (NAMS).

The Liverpool Plains can be regarded as the best prime agricultural land in Australia and already some of that has been purchased from farming families by BHP Billiton's Caroon Coal Project and now with further exploration licences being sold by the NSW Government, the potential for mining interests to swallow up large parcels of land and compromise the ability for the remaining land to produce quality food is enormous. That is an unacceptable outcome for the people of Australia who have the right to expect high quality, uncontaminated food from the producer. We need to safeguard land such as this from the threat of mining through legislation.

A group of National Party senators toured the Liverpool Plains in January and met with the people and I am requesting that you also visit the area with some of your colleagues to fully appreciate the productive value of the region. Further information can be obtained by contacting my self or the Caroon Coal Action Group ([www.ccag.org.au](http://www.ccag.org.au)). I welcome your comments and thoughts on this.

Yours sincerely,

*Derek Blomfield*

Derek Blomfield

Food Producer - Liverpool Plains, NSW