



Caroona Coal Action Group Inc.

www.ccag.org.au PO Box 4009 Caroona NSW 2343

CCAG JULY NEWSLETTER

Well, what an exciting time it has been! The battle has been active on many fronts, so here is a brief overview. For more information please look at our wonderful website www.ccag.org.au.

Victory in the Supreme Court...

In a landmark judgment in March, the NSW Supreme Court found in favour of two Liverpool Plains farmers who challenged the right of BHP Billiton to enter their farms to explore for coal. Supreme Court Justice Schmidt ruled that the Chief Mining Warden had erred in a number of ways when, last May, he granted BHP Billiton 'access arrangements' to explore for coal on the properties of the Brown and Alcorn families at Caroona. Justice Schmidt found the 'access arrangements' had been granted in clear breach of the requirements of NSW Mining Act and, as such, were invalid. She said:

"I order that the decision of the Warden's Court as well as the determination which accompanied it and the interim and final determinations of the arbitrator, be quashed and set aside." (Justice Schmidt - NSW Supreme Court, 5 March 2010)

The CCAG would like to acknowledge the tremendous support of the Australian Farmers Fighting Fund in this legal achievement.

And So The Blockade Ends...

As you would all be aware, the blockade came down after 615 days of existence following the Supreme Court win. We would like to sincerely thank the almost 5000 people who supported the blockade –the Supreme Court victory confirmed that this action was justified.

The Retaliation...

In response to the Supreme Court victory, the NSW government sought to legalise this very process declared improper with the Mining Amendment Act. The legislation was the subject of many late changes during the period of debate in Parliament. That the subject was even debated so hotly was the result of some very hard campaigning by the NSW Farmers Association, the Thoroughbred Breeders Assn and CCAG. Despite the legwork put in by all campaigners, the numbers of the Parliament ultimately made the decision and the legislation was passed. While it was a disappointing outcome, the ultimate impact on the situation here on the Liverpool Plains is that the existing imposed access agreements, with the exception of the Alcorn's and Brown's, will be upheld.

The Next Step... Visiting Ministers

With the recent announcement of the resignation of Minister McDonald, we are eagerly working on the development of a positive and constructive relationship with the new Minister for Mineral Resources, Paul McLeay. That the NSW Premier ruled out coal mining at the controversial Bickham mine in the Upper Hunter and upheld the independent Planning Assessment Commission's recommendation brings a glimmer of hope that perhaps the well vocalised concerns relating to water may be recognised also on the Liverpool Plains, and taken into consideration in the planning process. The CCAG shall continue to push for these issues to be appropriately addressed, and we have been assured that **both the NSW Minister Paul McLeay and Federal Minister Martin Ferguson will visit our area sometime this month.**

On the Gas Front...

"We must ensure mining does not destroy our environment, agricultural production, people's livelihoods, health and attachment to the land"



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Gas exploration continues around the region, with two pilot areas proposed by Santos around Carooona and Mary's Mount. This is immensely concerning since the potential impacts on water have not yet been comprehensively investigated and are thus unknown. For an alarming insight into possible side effects of gas exploration check out this documentary from the US –

<http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/613/index.html>

Your Committee

On the CCAG committee front, a huge thank you must go to Pauline Roberts who has retired from her post on the committee after three years of service. Pauline has contributed specialist knowledge which has been invaluable in helping the CCAG get to where it is today. Pauline and John, who has also made a huge contribution to the committee, are relocating to Inverell. Carol Mackerras has kindly taken up Pauline's chair at the table and will be instrumental in the coordination of the cooperation between CCAG and SOSLP. The appointment of Prue Green as our Executive Officer has been hugely successful; Prue has been a very welcome addition to the CCAG.

SOSLP – Online and In Store!!

The group has now opened a store in Quirindi, and has an online petition.

- The store is opposite the Post Office in Quirindi and open Mon-Fri 10-4. Call in for a cuppa and a chat, catch up on what's happening or purchase cards and other locally produced gifts.

Please contact Carol Mackerras on carol@wombalong.com if you would like to be involved in this or for further information.

And please visit the below link to sign the online petition:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/CCAGNSW/petition.html>

Water Study

Finally, in 2010, a Catchment wide water study is to be carried out over the next 18 months, with tenders having closed and currently being assessed. A joint MOC/SAG meeting is to be held soon, with the Terms of reference having been amended to allow a Commonwealth Government Representative to also sit on the MOC in line with their contribution to funding the study. We're looking forward to an independent and scientifically valid assessment of the water resources of the region and using this data in risk analysis and cumulative effects of development projects across the catchment. Furthermore, despite that exploration continues unabated, BHP have stated they will wait for the data model to be done before proceeding with a mining license application. Shenhua have said they will not wait for model to be completed if they are ready to apply for a license before that.

Grain Drive and Fundraising

The costs involved in mounting this campaign have been substantial. We are very grateful to all who have donated in the past, and hope that you feel your money has been well spent – we certainly do! However, legal and media costs continue and the time has come for another fund raising mission. For those interested in donating grain, livestock or cash, please email ccagweb@gmail.com. Donations to the Namoi Valley Environmental Protection Association are tax deductible, and details are below. Your donations are invaluable in ensuring the CCAG mission –

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Grain deliveries: To arrange pickup ring Michael Clift or Kate Davidson
To deliver into Graincorp quote NGR 12758812
For more information ring Michael Clift 0427 668936 or Kate Davidson on 0428 441752

For donations: Direct deposit to Namoi Valley Environmental Protection Fund.
BSB 082 842
Account No 828128725
Please send an email to ttodman@activ8.net.au with details of deposit

Post cheques to: PO Box 4009, Caroona NSW 2343



To become a 2010/2011 financial member of CCAG please fill out the form below:

Membership is \$25/person or \$50/family. Financial membership entitles you to vote at the AGM.

For subscription: direct deposit to Caroona Coal Action Group

BSB 082807
Account No 792955875

Please be sure to put your name as a reference and email Tony Todman on ttodman@activ8.net.au with full details of membership.

Alternatively, please make cheques payable to CCAG and post to

The Treasurer, PO Box 4009, Caroona 2343

Receipts will be issued upon payment.

Name(s).....

Address.....

Contact phone (H)..... (B).....

Email.....

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