



Caroona Coal Action Group Inc.

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MARCH NEWSLETTER

- It has been a very busy month for the Action Group as many politicians made time to visit our area prior to the State Election.
- Thankyou to the many people who took the time to come and meet with them and voice their concerns. We certainly had good positive feedback from all the visitors, and various promises of support. We must remember, however, that this will probably still be an issue at the next state election (and even the next!), so it is a continual process of education for whoever's in power.
- We were disappointed that the LPLMC's submission for an independent, catchment-wide study was knocked back by the National Water Initiative. Many of you will have seen media reports about it via John Anderson's office. There is great support for this, however, from both state and federal politicians, and they are continuing to pursue it.
- We are very grateful for the monetary support and donations that keep coming in. A large number of these are from people actually outside the EL Zone, so on behalf of our landholders and residents within, we particularly acknowledge and thank them for this support.
- We are pleased to announce that our Access Agreement is finally finished, and we have already begun its distribution. We are indebted to Andrew Higgins for the many, many hours he has spent on its drafting and preparation. Please be aware that the final version does differ slightly from any other draft, so it is important to make sure you are in possession of it if you intend to rely on or distribute it. David Noonan in Scone does already have a copy. The final version is dated 14th March, and is available via e-mail or hard copy. To receive a copy, please contact either:

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It is a very comprehensive (85 page) document, so would prefer e-mail where possible to save costs, but are happy to mail out or distribute hard copies if necessary. Any members of our committee are happy to discuss it with you, and we are also happy to hold an information evening if you feel there's a need. Again, please call to discuss. As with any legal document, we advise that you should seek your own legal advice regarding it and will not be held responsible in the event of any actions arising out of it.

We are holding discussions with Liverpool Plains Council this week concerning their signing of future Access Agreements with BHP. In discussions with them so far, we are encouraged that they believe ratepayers want to preserve our black soil plains, and they have already sent a motion to Frank Sartor asserting the same, and asking for their declaration for these lands as "state significant lands". We congratulate them on this stand, and hope that they will agree with us that the flimsy BHP Access Agreement poses too great a risk to our aquifers. Gunnedah Council is yet to reply to our invitation to discuss Access with them. BHP Billiton remain frustrated that very few landholders are granting access based on their own draft agreement, and most of the drilling to date has been carried out on Public Land.

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