

THE **WRONG MINE** IN THE **WRONG PLACE**

50 REASONS WHY “THE WORLD HAS GONE MAD” BY APPROVING THE SHENHUA WATERMARK PROJECT ON THE LIVERPOOL PLAINS

THE AREA

1. Putting a mine in the middle of the Liverpool Plains shows **NO RESPECT** for the natural assets and resources of the region; **NO RESPECT** for agriculture, indigenous heritage, water resources, koalas and the future of Australia.
2. The size of the open cut pits will total 35 square km; equivalent to **4620 football fields** OR 1.5 times the City of Sydney.
3. **The mine site is NOT in the hills.** It is situated on a low ridge that is surrounded on three sides by floodplain, akin to a peninsula.
4. The mine area has an average height of only 40 metres above the floodplain
5. 35,845 acres of land at Breeza is now foreign owned. This land is made up of 15% irrigated cropping, 12% dryland cropping, 21% grazing and 52% mixed grazing which is capable of supporting occasional cropping and grazing.

THE AGRICULTURE

6. The Liverpool Plains produces 40% above the National average in agricultural output, producing 183,488 tonnes wheat, 233,175 tonnes sorghum; 5,438 tonnes oats; 2,126 tonnes soybeans; 63,709 tonnes barley; 29,018 tonnes corn; 19,829 tonnes sunflowers and 1,285,178 bales cotton.
7. The New England and North West region is the highest contributor to agricultural production value in NSW.
8. In 2012/13 the total **Gross Value of Agricultural production** in the region was \$2.4 billion, accounting for 21% of the states total.
9. In 2012/13 the region produced the highest value of **crops** in NSW of \$1.7 billion – accounting for 23% of the state’s total.
10. According to ABARE data published in 2014, the region accounts for 91% of NSW sorghum production, 58% of legume production, 54% of cotton production and 26% of cattle production
11. **Shenhua Watermark’s three proposed mine pits all intrude onto the mapped, legally gazetted FLOODPLAINS and onto mapped Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL)**

12. Shenhua's Eastern Pit in particular intrudes on the gazetted and mapped floodplain and BSAL
13. Shenhua Watermark's overburden dumps overlap with BSAL by the Eastern Pit and the overburden dumps extend further into the mapped floodplains

THE WATER

14. The floodplain aquifers are less than a kilometre (900mtrs) from the Eastern mine pit and even closer on the Southern Pit
15. **The aquifers on the floodplain are only 20 metres below the surface.** The mine plan shows Shenhua will **dig down to a depth of up to 300 metres**; that is **240 metres below** the surrounding groundwater aquifers.
16. This groundwater system is **extremely complex and unique**. It is the largest groundwater system within the Murray Darling Basin. Science, including the Independent Expert Scientific Committee (IESC), acknowledges **there is a knowledge gap** of how this groundwater alluvium is directly connected to the coal seams being ripped out by Shenhua.
17. These same aquifers **supply crucial water for the towns of Curlewis, Gunnedah, Breeza, Carroll, Quirindi and Spring Ridge**.
18. Shenhua and the Government **do not have the water data** to properly model the outcome of this mine therefore they have adopted an adaptive management approach.
19. This is like playing **Russian roulette with our aquifers** – once they have been breached/broken there is no possible way to put them back together again – **EVER**.
20. The Shenhua EIS said that the mine will produce 65.7 tonnes of **SALT** per day, 23,980 tonne per year (equivalent to 922 semi-trailer loads per year). Salt will continue to leach out onto surrounding farmlands and into the Murray-Darling basin for the next 500 years.

JOBS, JOBS AND JOBS

21. Shenhua Watermark Coal **CAN legally employ migrant workers**.
22. Werris Creek (approx. 25km from Breeza) has an already approved, yet to be built, **1,500 unit mining village** to house FIFO labour for the mine. Not local Gunnedah labour, most likely 457 or 417 visa worker brought in by Shenhua.
23. The Shenhua mine will **displace Australian owned coal** from getting into the China coal market. This mine is going to exacerbate the **loss of Australian coal mining jobs**.

THE ECONOMICS

24. The mine has a **finite life vs. perpetual production** of agriculture.
25. China is reducing the amount of coal it imports: it reduced imports by 5% last year and is projected to be 10% this year.
26. China is increasing the amount of wheat and sorghum it imports from Australia. Wheat and sorghum are just two of the crops grown on the Liverpool Plains.

27. Another new coal mine will only increase the amount of coal on the market and reduce the coal price.
28. Added to this it is coal owned already by a Chinese company and it won't face the strict importing rules that China has imposed to protect their own domestic coal mining industries.
29. Shenhua coal will get preferential quotas into China over coal imported from Whitehaven, Rio-Tinto, Glencore, Xstrata etc.

THE SACRED ABORIGINAL SITES

30. There are grinding grooves on the proposed mine site which are a **significant part of local Indigenous heritage**; this is where the ancestors of the Gomeri people prepared for war with foreign invaders.
31. The notion that Shenhua will just move the aboriginal sites, including the sandstone grinding grooves, is a complete insult to the Indigenous people as **they will lose their cultural value**.
32. The rock platforms of the two grinding groove sites Shenhua propose to move are low strength therefore it is **unlikely they can be moved without being destroyed**.
33. The revised **conditions** of approval by the Planning Department **do not include** the PAC recommendation that the grinding groove sites **cannot** be cut.
34. Aboriginal people **can no longer access these sites** without Shenhua staff being present.

THE KOALA

35. Gunnedah is **the Koala Capital** of Australia (and the World!)
36. The Australian Koala Foundation does not agree with the koala numbers Shenhua propose are located in the Gunnedah LGA.
37. The New South Wales koala population has dropped in the past 20 years and it is difficult to assess the actual koala numbers.
38. **847 hectares of koala habitat will be destroyed** over the 30 year mine life
39. Shenhua propose to translocate koala's that don't naturally move. There is evidence that **translocation programs result in significant high mortality rates**
40. EDO NSW is currently representing the Upper Mooki Landcare Inc. in a legal challenge in the NSW Land and Environment Court against Shenhua Watermark Coal Pty Ltd and NSW Minister for Planning

CURRENT AND PROPOSED MINING ACTIVITY IN THE LIVERPOOL PLAINS

41. This is the **beginning** of another Hunter Valley... Only bigger.
42. BHPB are currently preparing their EIS for an underground mine at nearby Caroona. 1794 hectares of **legally gazetted floodplain** is included in the Caroona mine plan.
43. If approved the BHPB mine will be the **largest** thermal coal underground mine **in the world**. Generally thermal coal is never mined in underground situations in Australia as the costs to extract are prohibitive.

44. The cumulative impacts **cannot be scientifically modelled** with any accuracy.
45. There are numerous examples of where **mines experience FAR greater impacts than “rigorous science” had forecast.**
46. The Werris Creek mine, located approx. 25km from the Shenhua mine, is experiencing bore drawdowns averaging 4 metres with the largest drawdown 15metres. In the EIS it was stated that there would be no significant decrease in yield with the maximum decrease of 0.1m for bores located closest to the project site. This is **AN ERROR OF OVER 4000%.**

THE GOVERNMENT

47. The Shenhua Watermark exploration licence was issued by the **corrupt** former Labour Minister Ian MacDonald who has been found guilty of acting in a corrupt manner over another mining licence.
48. The NENW **Strategic Regional Land Use Plan** dated 2012 states that the Liverpool Plains and Gunnedah LGA’s has the highest productivity in NSW due to its **exclusive combination of volcanic soils, rainfall reliability, climate and availability of surface and groundwater.**
49. The former Liberal Minister for Mineral Resources, Chris Hartcher endorsed a **definition** of floodplain **different to the already gazetted floodplain definition** under the Water Act. This redefining of the floodplain was essential to ensure that Shenhua Watermark met their exploration conditions – **under the generally accepted definition the exploration condition would have been breached.**
50. The “process” by which the State and Federal Governments have approved this project it shows they have **NO RESPECT** for indigenous heritage, koalas, agriculture, regional youth and the Liverpool Plains as our concerns have been quashed at every step in the “process” in favour of the proponent.

“The Liverpool Plains is a beautiful spot, the jewel in the nation”.

Premier Mike Baird

NSW Farmers Association conference 15th July 2015