

MEDIA RELEASE
6 March 2010

Mining companies on notice from farmers' Supreme Court win against BHP Billiton

Greens MP and mining spokesperson Lee Rhiannon has congratulated the Liverpool Plains farming community for their win in the Supreme Court and said the victory has statewide significance.

The NSW Supreme Court yesterday found that BHP Billiton's licence to explore for coal on the properties of two Liverpool Plains farmers were invalid because the company had not consulted all landholders.

"This is a most welcome decision that brings some balance to the mining approval process that is so weighted in favour of mining companies," Ms Rhiannon said.

"When the NSW parliament resumes next week I will question the Mineral Resources Minister Ian Macdonald on what action his department will now take to ensure breaches of the NSW Mining Act no longer occur.

"A finding in this Supreme Court case is that to abide by the Act mining companies must inform all landholders, including banks, of their exploration plans.

"This outcome is a great credit to the local community that have worked solidly for years to protect their farming land and the environment. Their determination has established that mining companies have to be accountable for their actions.

"All mining companies would be wise to put their exploration on private land in NSW on hold until they determine that they are not breaching the Mining Act.

"The Greens position remains that there should be no new coal mines and prime agricultural land should be protected from mining," Ms Rhiannon said.