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COALITION CONFIRMS SHENHUA PROJECT WON'T PROCEED PRIOR TO WATER STUDY AND LAND USE POLICY COMPLIANCE

The CCAG has welcomed undertakings by the NSW Coalition that mean Shenhua's attempt to establish a coal mine on the Liverpool Plains will not be allowed to proceed without full compliance with the outcomes of the Namoi Water Study and all aspects of the Coalition's new Strategic Regional Land Use policy.

After several requests from CCAG for clear and unambiguous commitments on those two questions, the Shadow Primary Industries Minister Duncan Gay MLC has now responded.

CCAG asked:

Q1. *Does the Coalition undertake that it will not consider any mining or coal seam gas development application on the Liverpool Plains prior to the completion of the Namoi Catchment Water Study and will require the study's findings to be properly applied to the environmental assessments of all D/As?*

A1: Mr Gay replied: "Yes."

Q2. *Does the Coalition undertake that as well as the Namoi Catchment Water Study, any environmental assessments of mining or coal seam gas D/As on the Liverpool Plains will also require full compliance with the terms of your Strategic Regional Land Use policy as announced?*

A2: Mr Gay replied: "I can assure you that the verbal agreement by Shenhua to adopt the Strategic Regional Land Use policy will mean all the conditions set out in that policy will certainly apply. I make it very clear we are committed to making sure a comprehensive assessment is undertaken with regards to Shenhua's Watermark coal project."

CCAG Chairman Sandy Blomfield said: "Despite Shenhua's repeated public statements that it would not wait for the Water Study before pressing ahead with a mine, we are delighted a Coalition Government will require Shenhua and all mining and gas companies to do the right thing - that is wait and fully comply with the study's findings.

"We are also very pleased that despite its last-minute Part 3A application, any Shenhua mine development proposal will still be required to comply with all conditions of the Coalition's Strategic Regional Land Use policy.

"I must say we remain a bit mystified and concerned as to why there needs to be any agreement from any mining company regarding the level of environmental assessment it is subjected to, but however it is achieved, we are pleased the Coalition has promised its Strategic Regional Land Use policy will be applied.

"Our community sought this clarity to understand where we all stand on these issues which are vital to the future of the precious Liverpool Plains environment and health of its residents.

"We've seen general promises made by governments and oppositions only to see those pledges later sidestepped. We certainly welcome these very clear commitments and will work to see they are fully carried out," he said.

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