



# Caroona Coal Action Group Inc.

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## FARMERS BLOCKADE BHP BILLITON.

Farmers are this morning maintaining a blockade on a property on the Liverpool Plains, south of Tamworth, stopping mining giant, BHP Billiton, from test drilling for coal..

The blockade started yesterday when more than 150 farmers parked their vehicles across the entrance to the Duddy family property, Rossmar Park, near Caroona.

The blockade followed an urgent ex-parte injunction granted to Coal Mines Australia Limited in the closing minutes of business last Friday, allowing the company access to the property for test drilling.

Doug Ranken, chairman of the Caroona Coal Action Group, says the State Planning Process has completely failed the people of New South Wales.

He says under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, such projects are given the green light without the proper comprehensive independent studies that should be part and parcel of any such development.

Mr. Ranken says his group is calling for nothing more than a full, independent catchment-wide water study ahead of any exploratory mining.

BPH Billiton has told the group it's not the company's position to support such a study and that it would be up to the community.

Mr. Ranken says, as a result, the State and Federal Governments should immediately commission a study into the impact coal exploration and mining could have on underground and surface water reserves.

He says considering the State Government has already pocketed an extraordinary \$100 million from BHP Billiton to allow it to explore the Liverpool Plains, \$8 million dollars for a major study is no major ask.

Mr. Ranken says BHP Billiton's Caroona exploration activities do not involve full-time on-site hydrologists or associated comprehensive water studies.

As a result, information about the aquifers is not being collected.

Mr. Ranken says the Caroona farmers are standing up for environmental protection against State and Federal Governments, who continually fail to put any meaningful limits on irresponsible mining developments across highly productive agricultural land.

"The profit interest of the mining lobby should not drive projects that will destroy the agricultural productivity of Australia for all time," Mr. Ranken said.

### FURTHER INFORMATION//INTERVIEWS.....

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