



Caroona Coal Action Group Inc.

www.ccag.org.au PO Box 119 Caroona NSW 2343

All correspondence c/-: Secretary, Mrs Fiona Simson "Plain Station", Bundella 2343
Ph: 02 6747 6251 Fax: 02 6747 6204 E-Mail: plainstation@bigpond.com

CCAG Update 4th August, 2008

➤ **Public support**

The last two weeks have seen a snowballing of public interest and activity surrounding the CCAG blockade. As well as national media on A Current Affair, local stations (NBN and Prime), have provided excellent coverage, and ABC remain in the loop as well. Editorials in The Leader (2) and The Land (this week), have provided excellent coverage, and we are all amazed at the levels of support. Other programs are now contacting us, so we'll keep you posted as to further media coverage.

➤ **Court challenges**

The Duddy family case in the Supreme Court challenging the awarding of the ex-parte injunction is set for a directions hearing on August 7th. That means that the blockade will need to be manned until that date at least. The case will challenge the validity of the injunction, and will mean that miners such as BHP may not be quite so quick to jump in and flex their legal (and expensive!) muscle. After directions, a date will be set for the hearing of the case, and if we win, we will be awarded costs. Our chances are rated as "good".

➤ **NSW Farmers Funding**

Tim and Fiona attended NSW Farmers Conference last week. They have been amazed at
a) the level of support amongst grass roots members and the committee and
b) the lack of knowledge as to exploration and mining procedures and processes.

The word is spreading, and we have had messages of support from people across Australia who have heard our message, and are keen to support our study. We put mining motions requesting NSW Farmers support for our independent study, as well as others requesting lobbying regarding review of the Mining Act, Part 3A provisions, and public availability of core samples. All were passed with no debate. It was great to hear Jock Laurie mention Caroona in his opening speech.

➤ **Song of Support**

You may have heard our song (can be accessed and downloaded from website). Maybe it was exhaustion, but I had to reach for the tissues the first time I heard it. Let's flood the airwaves. Ring up the radio stations and request "Bring it On" by Steve Charles/Wendy Woods every day. We are currently putting footage to the music, and The Country Music Channel has asked to run it.

➤ **Australian Farmers Fighting Fund**

Although we were asked to keep it quiet, NSW Farmers CEO Shaughan Morgan broke the news in his speech at conference last week, so I feel it is safe to let you know that our application has progressed for AFFF funding. Although the decision still very much in the balance, I can report that we have had very positive feedback, and the AFFF are seeking legal opinions from the highest legal minds in Australia as to capital cases we may run. Our case would need to be able to set at least one precedent, and we would need to have a better than 50/50 chance of winning for them to take us on. We are hopeful, but fingers crossed on this one!!!!

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



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➤ **B team in court**

Families from the “B” Team attended arbitration hearings in Gunnedah this week, and from all accounts were unanimously disappointed in the process. It is truly a sham. The good news is that whilst at conference, Tim and Fiona were able to get the out-dated NSW Farmers generic Access Agreement repealed, with appropriate letters written to Mining Warden. Cases ongoing – please ring up your neighbours and give them support!

➤ **CCAG are a-political**

CCAG are a-political. We welcome support from any and every political party, or independent member of Parliament, both State and Federal, and are actively lobbying the State Government to fund the water study. We are appealing to people from every side of politics for their support.

➤ **Minister MacDonald maintains the party line...**

We were disappointed that despite our questioning at NSW Farmers Conference, Minister Ian MacDonald continued to maintain and support the “adequacy” of existing studies by the miners themselves. Bearing in mind the Southern Coalfields Review and leaked DECC Report (Google those), you might like to pen a letter to him outlining your concerns.

➤ **Independent testing on toxins the only way**

Recent reports in The Australian confirm that existing studies in Queensland are clearly inadequate as more children get sick in Mt Isa from mounting lead levels. The Queensland Government is now instituting independent testing of air levels. This report available via the website.

➤ **LPSC supports call**

The LPSC appear to have seen the light, and supported our call for an independent water study. Although we applaud this action, we wish that they had contacted us prior to making their submission to ensure that we were both asking for exactly the same thing.

➤ **EDO continues support**

The Environmental Defenders Office has also been more than helpful, and is currently pursuing a number of angles. Again, stay tuned as we await legal opinion.

➤ **Walhallow community support warmly welcomed**

Last week, aboriginal elders from Walhallow joined together to perform a smoking ceremony at Rossmar Park. This is yet another example of the community remaining united, and the Duddy family were very grateful for such a show of support.

➤ **Community support – we thank you**

Community support is overwhelming, and the CCAG wishes to thank each and everyone of you. For the people in the EL Zone who are actually living the fight every day, the support is unbelievable, and we have heard many positive comments about the galvanizing and polarizing effect this has all had on the community. Everyone is clearly pulling together on this one, and it is immensely powerful.

So – stay tuned. Much is happening, and we seem to be making great headway. Everywhere I go, everyone is asking about “Caroona”. At last it appears that our message is getting out. Maybe the planets are really aligned after all.

So, as our song says, Bring It On!!!!!!

Fi Simson, Secretary, CCAG

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