



## Caroona Coal Action Group Inc.

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### **NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER – AN UPDATE FROM THE TRENCHES**

#### **A New Commander**

After presiding at the helm for just over two years, Sandy Blomfield has stood down as Chairman of the CCAG. We, the committee, would like to extend our gratitude to Sandy for his hard work and perseverance during his time as Chair. It can be a challenging job at times, and Sandy's diligence and attention to detail has strengthened the position of the CCAG as a respected and effective lobby group. Sandy's valuable contributions will continue as an ordinary committee member. Susie Lyle has stepped up from Vice Chairman and now heads the group as Acting Chair.

#### **Things Are Looking Up.....**

It seems as though the hard work and campaigning of concerned citizens, landholders and environmentalists is finally being paid some attention!

***“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”***

But we think we've taken a few....

- After 19 days of the community blocking access to the Glasserton drilling site, Santos agreed to suspend any drilling on the site until after the Namoi Valley Water Study has been finalised
- Tony Windsor's pushing of this issue at a Federal level forced Ms Gillard into formally recognising the community concerns regarding the extraction of, and processes leading up to CSG in sensitive areas
- The result of the above is the promise of an Independent Expert Scientific Committee to assess and advise on proposed extractive developments using appropriate science and coercing the States into taking this advice into account when making approval decisions
- Our stance and strength on this issue has inspired people and communities across Australia who are being threatened by CSG to stand up to these companies and fight for what's right
- BHPB currently have four rigs operating on their own land and are waiting to find a suitable rig suitable for large diameter holes. They have also been completing seismic activity in the forest. The next Community Consultative Committee meeting will include a presentation on subsidence.

#### **The Next Hurdle**

Shenhua has applied to the Dept of Planning for Director General requirements for their open cut development at Breeza. Their Preliminary Environmental Assessment which accompanied their application is a startling read to say the least. For access to the 90 page document please follow the link below. The risks posed to groundwater, surface water, soil, ecology and so on are clearly outlined – but with such flippancy! It seems as though these issues are minor inconveniences to the mining giant. Furthermore, the not-yet-revealed intentions of Shenhua are beginning to crystallise as

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



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they seek to renew the exploration licence with the extension into reserves which would be long wall mined. Quite specifically, Shenhua has **only** ever said that it will not open cut mine the black soil plains....

Furthermore, Shenhua has stepped up pressure on the government in the hope they can get their assessment through prior to any legislative changes coming into effect from the strategic land use policy, agricultural impact statement, social impact statement and aquifer interference policy being enacted.

### ***The time for action is now.....***

Submissions can be made to the Dept of Environment regarding this application up to midnight 8<sup>th</sup> November. If you are concerned with the development at Breeza please do write to the Department – the more voices the louder we will be heard! The SEWPAC website regarding the Commonwealth process is:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/pubs/assessment-process.pdf>

### **The Immediate Mission**

The costs of continuing the campaign required to ensure the protection of our valuable landscapes across Breeza, Carroona, Gunnedah, Spring Ridge and the rest of the Liverpool Plains are expected to be considerable. The CCAG engages a PR/Media/Communications specialist who has been instrumental in getting the coverage we have received to date. As with all things in life of high quality, this expertise does not come cheaply. Our Executive Officer does infinitely more work than we pay for and has been instrumental in ensuring the professionalism of the committee. And as things escalate next year when applications are finalised and mining companies are leaning hard on politicians and department offices, we anticipate we may need to employ a professional to assist us through this current crisis. Although we keep administrative costs to an absolute minimum, we are going to need some serious income to finish what the community started and ensure mining does not destroy our environment, agricultural production, people's livelihoods, health and attachment to the land.

If you would like to donate we will be running a grain drive. Produce can be delivered to Graincorp sites across the Liverpool Plains under NGR number 12905632 or to the Amps Storage sites at Waverley or Premer.

Alternatively, if you have grain you would like picked up please contact Kate Davidson 0428441752.

We will be doing a ring around, so please have a think about how much you value our beautiful area and what it is worth to you to have the Liverpool Plains protected for future generations. Our community has come a long way towards these goals – it would be a shame to not see this battle through.

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