

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Draper urges NSW Government to heed recommendations from Federal Select Committee on Agricultural and Related Industries Food Production in Australia**

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Independent State MP, Peter Draper, has welcomed the second interim report of the Federal Parliament's Select Committee on Agricultural and Related Industries Food production in Australia. Mr Draper believes the NSW Government should heed the recommendations it contains, and act upon them.

"The committee recommends that the NSW Government investigate the total prohibition of mining under the floodplains of the Liverpool Plains, plus other areas of the state where similar conditions prevail, especially where evidence indicates that there will be damage to the floodplain or aquifers, or where it will bring the agricultural productive capacity of the floodplain into question," Mr Draper said.

"This is a finding for common sense, and strongly vindicates the position that has been taken by the Caroon Coal Action Group in their David vs. Goliath fight to protect their prime agricultural land," he said.

Mr Draper said there was a good cross section of political opinion represented on the Select Committee on Agricultural and Related Industries Food Production in Australia, with Senator Bill Heffernan (Liberal NSW), Senator Kerry O'Brien (Labor TAS), Senator Mary Jo Fisher (Liberal SA), Senator Christine Milne (Australian Greens TAS), Senator Fiona Nash (Nationals NSW) and Senator Glenn Sterle (Labor WA) making up the committee.

Mr Draper said he was heartened by the Committee's findings that prime agricultural land needs to be protected from mining developments. He said their recommendation to protect the most productive agricultural land is an important step in maintaining efficient and quality food production systems, while ensuring the nation's food security. He believes this is an important step towards all Governments accepting the importance of protecting prime agricultural land and water systems.

"I fully agree with the Senate Committee that as the driest inhabited continent on earth, and with only an estimated 6 per cent of arable land across Australia, the preservation of these productive lands and finite water systems is clearly of national significance," Mr Draper said.

"The bottom line of the interim report is that the Committee believes the floodplains of the Liverpool Plains should not be subject to mining activities. The Liverpool Plains with its climate, soils and unique groundwater make it one of the most fertile and drought-resistant agricultural areas in Australia," he continued.

"The Senate Committee have verified that the concerns expressed all along by the Caroon Coal Action Group have been totally justified and it is now time for the new NSW Mining Minister, Peter Primrose, to act to protect the Liverpool Plain's prime agricultural lands, floodplains and aquifers," he said.

"Minister Primrose invited me to give him my overview of the issue last week, and I will again raise the issue this week following the Senate Committee's latest report," he concluded.