



Media Release

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Shenhua mine announcement won't help Liverpool Plains farmers: cotton growers

Cotton growers in the Liverpool Plains have expressed frustration and dismay at today's announcement by the NSW Government regarding the Shenhua Watermark exploration licence, which will make no difference to the potential significant impacts on water resources.

The NSW Minister for Resources, Don Harwin, announced an agreement with Shenhua that would result in just over 51% of the company's exploration licence handed back.

Mr Harwin says the Government had determined 'there should be no mining on the fertile black soils of the Liverpool Plains', and future mining activity would be restricted to ridge lands.

Further, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Water, Niall Blair, says future mining operations must abide by 'strict water management conditions'.

Cotton Australia CEO Adam Kay says the industry acknowledges the actions taken by the NSW Government to provide certainty around the protection of black soils. However, the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development (IESC) has also raised concerns, which have triggered Federal conditions to protect water resources – including the requirement for a Water Management Plan. As the footprint of the mine will not change despite the NSW Government announcement, water resources will still be impacted.

"While there is greater protection for agricultural land from this announcement, the reality is that a reduction in the exploration area for the mine will make no difference to the water impacts imposed by the mine," Mr Kay says.

"We will scrutinise the Water Management Plan that is required prior to activity occurring on the ridge lines."

"Regardless of the reduction in exploration area, farmers on some of the finest soils in NSW will still have an open cut mine in their back yard that will cut through aquifers, intercept water and undoubtedly have negative impacts on water resources and farm productivity."

Cotton Australia is the peak representative body for Australia's cotton growing industry.

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