



**Don Harwin**

Minister for Resources

**Niall Blair**

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Regional Water

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **LIVERPOOL PLAINS PROTECTED FROM MINING EXPLORATION**

The NSW Government has reached an agreement to protect the farming future of the Liverpool Plains by scaling back the section of the Shenhua Watermark Coal exploration licence that encroached on the flat fertile agricultural land of the plains.

Minister for Resources, Don Harwin said the agreement will see 51.4 per cent of the company's exploration licence handed back, with the Government refunding around \$262 million from the original amount received from Shenhua by the previous Labor government.

"While the previous Labor government granted the original exploration licence, this Government has determined there should be no mining on the fertile black soils of the Liverpool Plains," Mr Harwin said.

"In August 2016 the NSW Government also secured an agreement to buy back the licence for BHP's Caroon project, another exploration licence issued by the previous Labor Government on the Liverpool Plains.

"Any future mining activity will now be restricted to the ridge lands, with a commencement still subject to further management plans and the ongoing monitoring of strict conditions already in place."

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

"Shenhua's proposed activities on the ridge country have been exhaustively assessed and considered under the NSW Aquifer Interference Policy, and will be subject to continual monitoring," Mr Blair said.

"Today's agreement unlocks prime agricultural land for farming, helping to maintain the region's reputation as one of the great food bowls of Australia."

Shenhua Watermark must also comply with around 100 of the strictest conditions in Australian history, especially around water, and has had four expert reviews and two further reviews by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee.

The company must also receive approval for detailed management plans in a number of key areas, including water management, biodiversity and environmental management before mining can commence.

Member for Tamworth, Kevin Anderson said the agreement strikes the right balance between preserving agriculture on the Liverpool Plains, while also creating up to 600 new jobs and millions of dollars in investment for the region.

“Farming and mining have long been the backbone of this region’s economy,” Mr Anderson said.

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