

Thoroughbred Breeders

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THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS SUPPORT CALLS FOR A MORATORIUM

Thoroughbred Breeders in the Hunter Valley support the NSW Farmers' Association call for a moratorium on new mining and coal seam gas applications and development in the Hunter Valley.

The land use conflicts in the Hunter Valley are at a tipping point. The Hunter's multi-billion dollar Thoroughbred Breeding Industry and other sustainable agricultural industries continue to be threatened by the increasing encroachment of mining operations in the region. The potential for permanent sterilization of productive agricultural land, the sovereign risks to significant investments by established sustainable industries, thousands of jobs and the health of our environment and regional communities hang in the balance.

In an opinion piece in the Newcastle Herald on 18 April of this year George Souris, Shadow Minister for Hospitality & Tourism, Racing and Major Events questioned whether the Upper Hunter had reached saturation point with mining. *"The cumulative impact of dust fall out alone has reached a point where it may dictate the need for a pause on any new mining. It may be that with all of that, the compatibility of other industries and their ability to co-exist is at a very fine point. An assessment of the cumulative impacts of existing mining must be made before new mining is considered"* Mr Souris said.

In its report to the NSW Government on 3 May 2010, the Planning Assessment Commission on the Bickham Coal Project in the Upper Hunter found that *"open-cut coal mining and a viable international scale Thoroughbred Breeding Industry were incompatible land uses"*. The PAC concluded that there was strong evidence to support the prohibition of open cut coal mining in the Upper Hunter Valley. It too called for a rigorous comprehensive study of competing land uses.

In May this year Premier Keneally recognised the need to protect NSW's multi-billion dollar Thoroughbred Industry by prohibiting coal mining at the Bickham site in the Upper Hunter. In her press release of 14 May 2010, Premier Keneally *"accepted the independent Planning Assessment Commission recommendations"* noting that *"incompatibility of land use – threatening the viability of the region's internationally renowned thoroughbred breeding industry."*

In July this year Minister Kelly announced the establishment of a Ministerial Sub-Committee to develop a strategy for coal mining in NSW by the end of the year.

We welcome reports in the media that the NSW Shadow Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Duncan Gay, says the Coalition won't rule out agreeing to a moratorium for new mining or coal seam gas development, Mr Messara AM leading Thoroughbred Breeder and proprietor of Arrowfield said.

70 per cent of NSW is currently under mineral and petroleum title and application.

The time has come for a sensible orderly pause, and a sustainable strategy to be developed before the Hunter Valley is irreparably and irreversibly damaged, Mr Messara said.

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