

Junella Farming YP

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Mr Mark Howe
Mining Regulation and Rehabilitation Branch
Minerals Resources Division
Department for Manufacturing, Innovation, Trade, Resources and
Energy (DMITRE)
GPO Box 1264
Adelaide
South Australia 5001

5th November 5, 2013

Dear Mr Howe,

Please accept our submission objecting to the proposed Rex Minerals Hillside Copper Mine, approximately 20km from our home & our farming enterprise. My name is Naomi Bittner, and I am writing on behalf of my husband Craig Bittner, his parents Neil & Judy Bittner, and our three daughters Nelly, Hazel & Olive Bittner.

We support the YP Landowners Group & share their concerns regarding the importance of protecting agricultural land.

Less than 6% of South Australia is cropped.

Food and farming contribute \$12 billion annually to the state's economy, with wheat alone earning \$1.8 billion last year.

Yorke Peninsula makes up 13% of SA's cropping land, and reliably produces 49% of SA's total legume crops & 16% of the state's total cereal crops. As such it provides 1/4 of our state's agricultural income.

Consequences for land resource availability arising from the Ceres wind-farm proposal

1 Context

The Yorke Peninsula is one of South Australia's most significant broadacre cropping regions. At the 2010-11 Agricultural Census, the region¹ comprised 13% of SA's total broadacre cropping area² and produced 16% of SA's total value of cereal crops, and 49% of SA's total value of grain legume crops.³ As illustrated by Map 1, broadacre cropping is the dominant land use on the Yorke Peninsula and hence a significant contributor to the regional economy. In 2010-11, 92% of the region's total farm gate value was generated by traditional cereal crops and newer legume and oilseed crops.⁴

The figures in Table 1 illustrate the region's most recent contribution to South Australian broadacre crop production in 2012-13.⁵

	Tonnes produced 2012-13	
	Yorke Peninsula	% of State total
Wheat	480,000	13.5 %
Barley	477,500	25 %
Durum	90,700	50 %
Lentils	68,500	70 %
Canola	52,000	13.5 %
Peas	32,550	28 %
Beans	16,800	16 %
Chickpeas	12,000	55 %

Table 1: Yorke Peninsula Broadacre Crop Production, 2012-13 (Source: PIRSA)

These production results are made possible by generally favourable soil and rainfall conditions combined with investment in advanced broadacre cropping technology and management systems. As illustrated by Maps 2 and 3, the Yorke Peninsula region comprises some of the highest yielding and most reliable broadacre cropping land in South Australia⁶

¹ For the purposes of this investigation the Yorke Peninsula region is defined as the District Councils of Yorke Peninsula, Copper Coast and Barunga West. This region and these council areas equate with the same Yorke Peninsula reporting region used in the PIRSA Crop and Pasture Report series.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012a) *Agricultural Commodities, Australia 2010-11*. (7121000016_201011 Released 9/11/2012) Accessed online 1 August 2013 http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/7121000016_201011?OpenDocument

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012b) *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia 2010-11*. (7503000014_201011 Released 9/11/2012) Accessed online 1 August 2013 http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/7503000014_201011?OpenDocument

⁴ Ibid.

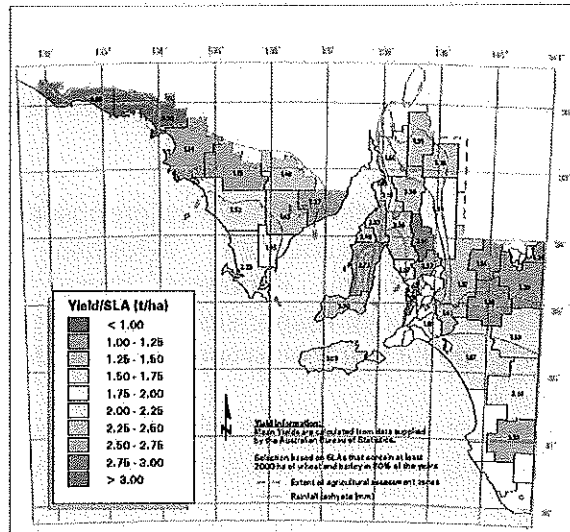
⁵ PIRSA (2013) *Crop and Pasture Report South Australia: 2012-13 Crop Performance Summary, March 2013*. Primary Industries & Regions South Australia, Adelaide. Accessed online 17 July 2013 <http://www.pirsa.gov.au/grains/cpr>

⁶ Map 2, which shows simulated crop yield for wheat under current climate conditions, has been developed by DEWNR as part of a project examining the implications of climate change for cropping practices. Liddicoat C et al. (2012) *Climate change, wheat production and erosion risk in South Australia's cropping zone: Linking crop simulation modeling to soil landscape mapping*, Government of South Australia through Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources. Accessed online 9 July 2013 <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/management/natural-resources/land/sustainable-soil-land-management/climate-change/mitigation-adaptation/climate-change-wheat-production-and-erosion-risk> Map 3 shows historical crop yield data collected by the DEWNR's predecessor, DWLBC.

With global populations rising (9 billion by 2050, Au population 36 million by 2050) and global agricultural land decreasing by 1% per year, agribusinesses are vital to our state's economic future indefinitely.

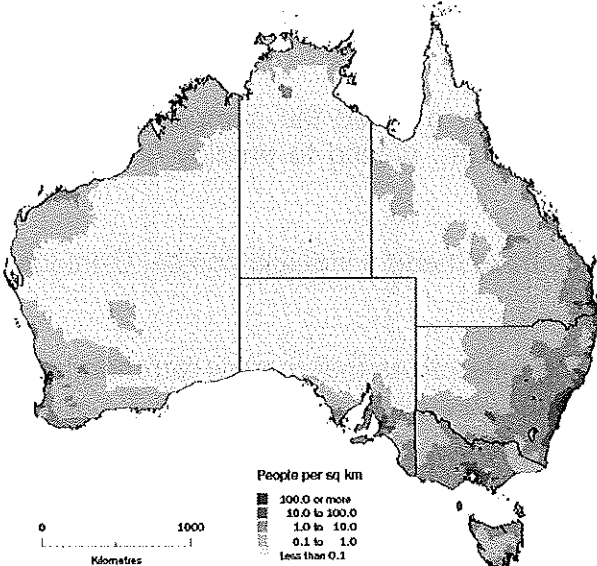
http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_AU/au/news-research/luckycountry/prosperity-next-wave/agribusiness/index.htm

The following map shows that the proposed Hillside Mine falls in what is the highest yielding, non-irrigated land in the entire state.



Map 3. South Australian grain yield (tonnes/ha) by Statistical Local Area, 1991-2000. (Source: DWLBC, 2004)

Population density, Australia - June 2009



Excluding capital cities & major rural centres, the Central Yorke Peninsula is one of the third most densely populated zones in South Australia. The towns of Ardrossan, Pine Point and Black Point are all within 12km of the proposed mine site, and these towns rely heavily on tourism (conservatively a \$20 million/pa income for the local region, <http://www.yorkeregion.com.au/Investment.html>) as well as agriculture to sustain them.

Source: ABS *Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2008-09* (cat. no. 3218.0)

[http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1370.0~2010~Chapter~Population%20distribution%20\(3.3\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1370.0~2010~Chapter~Population%20distribution%20(3.3))

No-one disputes the value of mining to our economy, but Central Yorke Peninsula is one of the last places that should be explored; it is both highly populated and highly productive agriculturally, with very low figures of genuine job-seekers.

Should the mine be developed, negative impacts will be realised throughout the YP district.

Even a "best practice" mining operation of the size proposed at Hillside will negatively impact local residents, agribusinesses & tourism. Noise, dust, light, mineral contamination, increased traffic, increased heavy vehicles, and increased transient populations without a social responsibility to the region concern us, and are no doubt covered in greater detail by other groups such as the YP Landowners Group.

The loss of prime agricultural land is irreversible. Thousands of hectares of land will be permanently lost to farming after the mine's short life expires.

Mark Parry, CEO of Rex Minerals, recently outlined to shareholders that there are 50 more potential open-cut mine sites within the region that will be actively pursued should Hillside be developed. These will require individual haul roads (separate to current public roads) through existing farmlands up to the processing plant at Hillside. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qGdyXgJVes>

Will the remainder of the state's best farming land be given over to short-term mining pursuits?

At Rex's recent public meeting in Minlaton, Mr Parry outlined the company's aim to source as much local employment locally as they can, aiming to employ 600, using buses to reach all regions of the peninsula.

The vast majority of YP's unemployed residents have made a lifestyle choice. Genuine jobseekers are minimal.

Our business is one of hundreds of local farming enterprises that employ farmhands to maintain a diverse & profitable business (The Australian average is 2.3 people employed per farm <http://www.nff.org.au/farm-facts.html>)

The award wage for farming is currently approximately \$18-20/hour, and we employ 5 FTE staff when we can.

The National Farmers Federation estimates that nationally there is a shortfall of 100,000 workers in farming.
<http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2006/s2202853.htm>.

Mining, paying over \$50/hr (<http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/mining-industry-pays-highest-wages>) will draw on this same employment pool of workers with experience in areas such as operating heavy machinery and welding.

Local farmhand employers will be detrimentally impacted; unable to match mining wages whilst remaining profitable. Decreased staffing will make many of these farms less viable, and add to the workloads and stressors of remaining staff & business owners.

Should Hillside be approved, local land-owners would face many more years of uncertainty, fighting to retain staff, protect their land assets and their income. Mental health is a grave concern in rural regions, and we have no doubt that this proposal is already adding to the anxiety of many. It is well noted that rural residents face many personal and structural barriers in terms of accessing mental health care.

<http://www.beyondblue.org.au/resources/research/research-projects/research-projects/depression-in-farmers-and-farming-families>

We urge our DMITRE to work in conjunction with PIRSA to map South Australia and create and implement a strategic plan to ensure that mining & farming can coexist, each in regions that don't cause such a conflict of industry. Mining is a short-term industry that will have long-term negative impacts on our state's agricultural industry.

As such, we recommend that DMITRE reject Rex Minerals' application to mine on the Central Yorke Peninsula.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Bittner

Craig Bittner

Neil Bittner

Judith Bittner

Nelly Bittner

Hazel Bittner

Olive Bittner