



On page 29 of the Discussion Paper on the Mining Act Review, it is stated that "The Department's view is that the 'exempt land' framework under the Mining Act has been working well at striking the right balance around land access for over a century, and that it is fairer than the frameworks used in other jurisdictions".

Whilst this claim may have some validity in years gone by, during the last decade, with unwarranted and uninvited exploration and mining incursions onto South Australia's agricultural land, the right balance has been ignored or forgotten, and its true concept completely trashed.

#### THE FACTS

There are 98.4 million hectares of land within South Australia. About 4.2 million hectares, or 4.3%, of this total land mass is used for sustainable dryland cropping. There are NO known mineral resources beneath that agricultural land that are not found in significant quantities in the other 94 million hectares.

As we have seen in the last decade, the exploration and mining intentions at Warrambo, on Central Eyre Peninsula, the completely ludicrous and destructive proposals at Koppio /Yallunda Flat, on Lower EP, and the equally unprincipled mining invasions at Ardrossan and Paskeville on Yorke Peninsula, have provoked a flood of outrage and resistance from landowners and food producers who are appalled that their belief that the Exempt Land clause under Section 9 of the Mining Act 1971 has been so wilfully dismissed. Unless this Section is reinforced, and Section 9AA (which allows Section 9A to be over-ridden), is withdrawn and eliminated, then the State Government and its Parliamentarians and its relevant Departments will find that the "exempt land" framework is NOT, and will NOT work well at all. The planned incursions through exploration and then mining, on land that is already supporting an existing industry, and an industry that not only is a food producer, but one that has supported the South Australian economy and its people for 170 years, will be met with ever fiercer resistance by individual landowners, groups of farmers, and community revolt.

It is noted on page 29, the appendage 2, that the Department of State Development has quoted the Productivity Commission as saying that a "right of veto by agricultural landholders over resource development would arbitrarily transfer property rights from the community as a whole to individual landholders". So,.....which community, outside of the SA Chamber of Mines and Energy, the Department of State Development, and the Party captivated politicians of both major political parties, is wanting the mining of agricultural land? What are the property rights of the "community" that this fatuous statement seems to want to uphold? What community is there that wants its industry and its infrastructure and its people so affected by open cut mining on productive agricultural land?

It may be worth noting, by the DSD and Parliamentarians, that the Western Australian Mining Act 1978 Section 29 part 2 protects its agricultural land with the right of the landowner to prohibit the granting of a mining tenement upon their land. This is a State with the largest appetite for mining and exporting, yet it also is one which cherishes, values, and cares about its agricultural industry.

## THE HYPOCRISIES OF POLITICIANS

It seems common for mainstream politicians within SA to mouth the statement that agriculture and open cut mining are compatible. They are not. For any given piece of land and its immediate environs, one or the other can only exist. One industry uses the land resource sustainably, it produces food and revenue every year, it channels its income back into the local economy, and it enhances the soil resource for subsequent generations. This is the story of South Australian dryland farming. The other industry destroys what is and renders it useless for further food production, it takes what it can for the benefit of a few (of which more than 80% is foreign investment), and as we see at Kanmantoo, and in other Australian States, can leave an ongoing environmental legacy and economic burden for,....yes, the community.

We also hear, trumpeted loudly by politicians who have no "skin in the game", that denying the State the right to mine where it chooses in agricultural land, is denying the State a better income from that land resource. The hypocrisy of this statement is that the same politicians would not ever consider mining what resources there are beneath the vast SA Conservation Parks, even though they contribute not a whit to the State's economy. And which politician would consider overriding the veto of indigenous landowners who did not want mining on their Lands? But for agriculture, which this year contributed another \$2.5 billion to the SA economy, on top of what it did the years before 2016, and what it will do in 2017 and beyond, there is a complete absence of justice and probity.

## THE PROMISES

The mining industry with its vast public relations expertise, and its ever glowing reports to the Australian Stock Exchange, paints itself as the generator of prodigious wealth and jobs, and as the saviour of dying communities. As we can see from but a brief view of the aftermath of the last mining boom of 2000-2010, mining across Australia only employs around 2% of the Australian workforce. Compare that to Woolworths! The expansion in mining causes a contraction in other jobs and industries, exacerbated by its impact on the Australian currency. The SA manufacturing economy did NOT benefit from the last mining boom. And where are the infrastructure benefits from all the wealth that was apparently created by the resources we dug up out of the ground in the previous decades? As for "creating jobs", within 6 months of the Global Financial Crisis of 2007, the mining industry shed 15% of its employees. If the rest of the economy had behaved the same way, Australia would have experienced a 19% unemployment rate.

The other rather tragic joke about this industry is that mining companies are low tax payers with a corporate rate around 14% (when the average is 21%), yet Australia wide, Australian Governments, both State and Federal, subsidise the mining industry by at least \$14 billion dollars.

Within this State, we hear the promises of infrastructure development that the Iron Road project will bring to the State and Eyre Peninsula. There will be a massive electricity line to bring extra power to EP, (in a State that cannot deliver even its current needs), we will obtain a water source (in a region where there is no water resource but sea water), and there will be a multi-use deep sea port that will transform agriculture (though it is not discussed who will pay for those facilities and how the costs will be recouped). All this after the much heralded, but aborted iron ore mining proposals at Lock/Murdinga, the disruptive and costly (to local communities) proposals by Centrex/Eyre Iron within the major water catchment zone of Lower EP, .... yet whilst all this has been occurring, the existing iron ore mining operation in the Middleback Ranges west of Whyalla has been scaled down,

and the parent company gone bankrupt. Oh!, of course this can be bailed out by the citizen taxpayers,.... the same "community" of the Productivity Commission report.

#### WHY TARGET AGRICULTURE?

For the ignorant or misinformed, or for those people who have never ventured into rural South Australia, agriculture is a vibrant and productive industry that mixes the very best of producer funded science and research to annually produce around \$2 billion of revenue. This money is all spent within the State, within local communities. The land resource is not a commodity for exploitation. It IS the means of life. Graingrowers have an attachment to their land that has no parallel, because it is a stewardship, a husbandry, a nurturing love affair. It is not comparable to the much claimed indigenous affinity for land, because farmers do things to soils, to their land, that enhance and sustain. They make things better. The inherently infertile soils of this State have been turned into a community asset, not because of Governments, or politicians, or the Department of State Development, but by farmers' own investment, ingenuity, risk taking, and future thinking for their own families and their community. The aspects of soil nutrition, of amelioration of inherent deficiencies in structure and definition, the utilisation of limited rainfall, the preservation of the resource and the eco-systems that go with best practice, has turned this State's agriculture into the best value adding industry we have.

Each year, we take our land resource, we add nutrients and protectants to the seeds we plant, we take whatever sunshine and rainfall that comes, we capture tonnes of carbon di-oxide, and we deliver food for the world and oxygen to the atmosphere.

We are proud of what we do, we ask for very little from Governments and their Departments. And then we get served with a notice that some previously unknown mining/exploration company has the "right" to lay claim to whatever lies beneath the surface that takes their fancy, AND THIS SO-CALLED RIGHT is countenanced by Government, Parliament, and the party politicians who masquerade as the "people's representatives" . And this is aided and abetted by the very Government Department (DSD) that has been tasked with promoting and regulating this dubiously named "State development".

Would the DSD ever consider developing the existing industry in agriculture, that it so flagrantly chooses to ignore?

Has anyone ever considered what it is like to have your home/family plans/livelihood/future disrupted, threatened, imperilled, put on hold, left in an unknown state of limbo, devalued, having to be fought for, at great cost both financially and emotionally, in time and mental capital, whilst you in DSD, and within the Parliament, just don't give a stuff?

Yet, of course, you couldn't mine in the Clare Valley, not to mention the Barossa, or McLaren Vale, or anywhere where the political fallout might affect the outcomes for elections in marginal seats.

#### NO MINING ON AGRICULTURAL LAND.

This review has one major charter. Besides the many regulations (and their adherence), that need revision and alteration, the fundamental issue that needs to be resolved is the clash between agriculture and open cut mining. Agricultural land must be rendered exempt from mining, and hence all existing exploration licences are to be made redundant. Agricultural land, that is, like horticulture and viticulture, food producing land, must be protected and nurtured. It has a history of delivering,

