

# Ian Macdonald

Minister for Primary Industries  
Minister for Energy  
Minister for Mineral Resources  
Minister for State Development



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Tuesday September 1, 2009

## Landmark agreement to protect floodplains

The floodplains within the Caroona Exploration Licence will be quarantined from long wall and open-cut mining in an effort to allay community concerns, Minister for Mineral Resources Ian Macdonald announced today in State Parliament.

"I am pleased to announce that BHP Billiton and the NSW Government have found a way to move forward," the Minister said.

"I propose to include a new condition in the Exploration Licence under the *Mining Act 1992* that will quarantine the floodplains from long wall and open-cut mining by BHP.

"This condition requires that any development approval sought by BHP Billiton within the initial term of the licence, or during any extensions or renewals of the licence, will not include any of the following activities:

- Long wall mining underneath the deep alluvial irrigation aquifers
- Long wall mining underneath the floodplain
- Open cut mining underneath the floodplain.

"This will ensure that community fears are comprehensively addressed. The exploration process can also proceed to evaluate the viability of the resource so that a development application can be submitted for public consultation and assessment," he said.

"This is a win-win for the State, for jobs, for the residents of the Liverpool Plains and for agriculture. I should add, once the exploration phase has been completed, any future mining proposals have to obtain project approval under the State's comprehensive public and rigorous planning legislation."

Minister Macdonald said work was also progressing on the Namoi Water Catchment Study, with the Ministerial Oversight Committee meeting for the first time recently" Mr Macdonald said.

The Committee, which is chaired by Mal Peters, former President of the NSW Farmers Association, is responsible for tendering of the project and the appointment of an independent expert

BHP has agreed to provide funding for the Minister's water study and has also committed to develop a new community engagement and communication program.

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