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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Windsor to address farm land rally and mining conference **Will ask miners to co-fund independent study**

A rally in Gunnedah next Tuesday morning (Sept 16) for people to show their support to “protect this region’s prime agricultural land” from the long term effects of mining will be addressed by the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor will then later in the day address the Gunnedah Basin Coal Conference on the topic of “The impact of coal mining on productive agricultural land and groundwater systems”.

During his address to the Coal Conference, Mr Windsor will seek the industry’s support for funding of an independent study into this issue with particular focus on the Liverpool Plains and the downstream offsite impact in the Namoi Valley which is also the subject of a funding application to the Federal Government.

“The issue of long wall coal mining on the Liverpool Plains has become a great concern to many people particularly those carrying out agricultural pursuits on the very productive land of the area.

Their concern is that the mining activity will cause subsidence of the land above the mined area and also cut the interconnected groundwater systems that provide the lifeblood of the area not just in the mined locations but also further down the Namoi Valley.

What the Liverpool Plains Land Management Committee and through it the Caroon Coal Action Group are seeking is an independent study into the issue so that the full ramifications of the proposed mining of the area is known.

At the moment, the Federal Government is baulking at helping to fund such an independent study so in my address to the coal conference, I will be asking the industry to assist and in so doing make the proposition more attractive for the Federal Government to support.

If mining and agriculture are to co-exist as everyone wants, then hopefully the mining industry will see the benefit of supporting this request not only for mining on the Liverpool Plains but also for other areas contemplating long wall mining,” Mr Windsor said.

For further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 66 8868