

“Answer the Call!” – Luke O’Shea

Let us all remember our forefathers defining ANZAC spirit & courage as they answered the call to join & help their mates already over the other side of the world fighting for their lives.

One hundred years on, the call for help and for backup is coming now from our own mates and family members, whose lives & livelihoods are being attacked in our own back yard, on our own Australian soil.

The enemy has not used bayonets or bullets to invade, but bureaucracy and bullshit. Too much of our country is covered in mining licences.

Protect our food and water. It’s simple. Why are the largest open cut coal mines in Australia coal seam gas mining being allowed to expand into our richest agricultural regions - the Liverpool and Breeza Plains?

We have been blessed with some of the world’s most fertile black soil. Somehow, upon the second driest continent on the planet, there is just enough water in the river systems and aquifers to allow the plains to yield crops which helps feeds our nation and the world. How is it that Whitehaven Coal at Maules Creek has licence now to 3 billion litres of freshwater from the Namoi River? That's 85% of the Lower Namoi High Security Water, not being used to sustain crops or the people within the communities, but to wash coal. They’re also drawing water from local aquifers, affecting farmers that rely on good productive groundwater.

Why are my Dad and I taking this action? This is not an anti-mining statement: this is an anti-greed statement. We have family members and close friends who work in the coal mining industry and now their own livelihoods and communities are at risk and threatened due to the saturation of coal on the market. The price of coal on the world market has decreased more than 50% within the last 18 months. Australian mines are stockpiling coal in the hope the world market prices rise. Coal mine employees are being forced to take long service leave, reduced work hours and pay cuts. We do not need another huge coal mine.

My father was born and spent his early years here in a house that my grandfather built with his father - on bend of the Namoi River. This place is by sad and beautiful coincidence the place where Whitehaven’s Maules Creek mine has laid a long giant pipeline that allows the three billion litres of water to be drawn from a drought affected region. That pipeline is the reason I first became aware of the region’s plight.

My responsibility as an Australian singer songwriter is to Sing Up the land and its people.

Any media attention coming my way from my recent success at Tamworth will be used to amplify the call from people on the land who are feeling abandoned and hopeless. Who will answer the call?

Two hundred and fifty people within the last thirteen months have been arrested on the Maules Creek blockade alone. These are not radical hippies - these are everyday Australians, mothers, fathers, grandparents, proud Gomeri people who I am proud to call my friends, doctors, lawyer, religious leaders, a famous rugby player, a 93 year old Kokoda War veteran, and now me and my dad - all deeply concerned about the direction Australia is heading. We are answering the call.

Who will answer the call?

Go to <http://frontlineaction.org/> to answer.