

Rigorous assessment already takes place

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YOU wouldn't use a sledgehammer to crack a walnut. Indeed, you wouldn't use a fire hose to put out a match. So why would the NSW Farmers Association call for a complete halt to the future of the industry that accounts for just 0.1 per cent of the state's land use as fodder in a debate about land-use planning?

We recognise that there are genuine concerns about the growth of the minerals industry and there is a need for greater certainty about future land use in NSW. But the farmers' call for a blanket ban is irresponsible, ill-informed and will do untold damage to the state's economy and regional communities.

These are challenging issues. That's why we need a level-headed response.

The NSW minerals industry has always supported the need for strategic land-use planning, to provide all industries and the community with more certainty. However, putting a stop to new mines and even extensions at current operations while a strategic plan is developed is completely impractical. It is a disproportionate response. An extreme overreaction.

For how long would it last? The NSW Farmers Association says "who knows, how long is a piece of string?"

This type of blanket ban sends all the wrong signals about investment in this state. It also appears to be in direct conflict with the type of approach that the agriculture sector and every other business would expect from a responsible government.

There are more than 50 minerals projects and mine extensions planned for the next decade. They will involve \$13 billion in investment, generate 5000 new jobs and support at least 15,000 more jobs in **mining** regions.

The **mining** moratorium, as proposed by the NSW Farmers' Association, would not only make NSW the "ugly duckling" of Australian states for doing business, but it would put at risk the jobs of the hard-working miners in the Hunter that will rely on continuation plans at current operations for their future employment.

Like Queensland and Western Australia, NSW is very much a resources state. But it is important that there is an appropriate balance between industry, the environment and the needs of the community.

That's why we support the NSW government's subcommittee of cabinet on **mining** issues, which will develop a strategic plan for coal. It is also why there is a rigorous planning and assessment process in place that considers the social, environmental and economic benefits or impacts of any **mining** proposal before approval can be granted.

We want to continue working with the agricultural sector, other industries and the government for the benefit of the whole state, not just individual interests. Let's take a practical approach to the challenges ahead, not one that will disadvantage the people of regional NSW and threaten the diverse regional economies where agriculture, **mining** and other industries are all able to prosper.

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NSW Minerals Council.