

# WINE NEWS

## Mining company steps up compensation fight against Australian government

ABC Newcastle By David Marchese

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**A company stripped of an exploration licence in the New South Wales Hunter Valley in the wake of a corruption probe, has hired a Washington lobby group as part of its fight for compensation.**

NuCoal had its Doyles Creek exploration licence revoked in 2014 after an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) probe found the process for granting the licence had been tainted by corruption.

NuCoal has always maintained it has done nothing wrong because the allegations relate to a time before the company acquired the licence.

The New South Wales Parliament also passed legislation stopping NuCoal from seeking compensation over the cancelled licence.

But the company is seeking remuneration for its US investors under a free trade agreement and has hired a lobbying firm in Washington in recent months.

NuCoal managing director Glen Lewis said he was travelling to the United States for talks with politicians in two weeks time.



**PHOTO:** NuCoal's managing director is traveling to Washington this month to meet with lawmakers. (Ben Shafer, www.sxc.hu)

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"A number of people have requested further information so that they can progress enquires," he said.

"In addition to us going there and representing our shareholders, a number of our shareholders have started to engage directly with their relevant representatives.

"It's starting to gain some momentum which is clearly our aim."

### Ambassador briefed on situation

NuCoal says 30 per cent of its shares are held by US-based investors.

The company argues that the expropriation of its licence was a breach of the existing free trade agreement between Australia and the United States, AUSFTA.

Mr Lewis said NuCoal's chairman, Gordon Galt, also visited Washington earlier this year where he was involved in high level meetings.

"He met with Ambassador [Joe] Hockey while he was there and brought him up to date with exactly what's happening."

"We've engaged BGR, a fairly significant lobby group in Washington and they have been excellent to date in starting to gain traction on this matter," Mr Lewis said.

## Company looks to Queensland for mining future

NuCoal said it was now turning to Queensland to look for new mining opportunities, after selling off land in the Hunter Valley.

The company has offloaded properties around Jerrys Plains and is now searching for new assets in Australia.

Mr Lewis said NuCoal was committed to continue with its mining plans.

"We've done a lot of work, particularly in Queensland where we're looking to see if there are any assets we can purchase at an acceptable price and continue our overall strategy which was to build and operate coal mines," he said.

**Topics:** mining-industry, trade, government-and-politics, law-crime-and-justice, jerrys-plains-2330, newcastle-2300

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