

**Submission  
No 402**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

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To Whom it May Concern

We write as residents alarmed by CSG activities in NSW and in particular, the proposed exploration and extraction processes in St Peters.

**The government must halt all CSG activities until the health and land impacts are understood.** Currently, CSG activities are underway in several states, including NSW, but there is NO long-term research of the impacts of CSG mining activities in Australia. Decisions appear to be largely based on claims and assurances received directly from CSG companies, based on their activity in other countries. CSG activity must be examined thoroughly, and directly in relation to the Australian context, and this must be undertaken by experts other than those employed or contracted by the CSG companies themselves.

In Australia, is no longer acceptable to make decisions on research and data from pharmaceutical companies alone or based just on overseas data when deciding upon the safety of a medication, device or treatment. It is likewise unacceptable to only base decisions on data from the CSG companies (who stand to profit) and based only on international legislative frameworks and different climates and terrain. Surely these companies will take those enormous profits once the resource dries up, leaving the mess, and seek their next fortune from another country willing to risk its land and health status for a quick, transient profit. It is vital to stop activities until accurate and relevant research is achieved.

**Money for ads but not facts.** The CSG industry has enough money, time and infrastructure to produce ads to convince the public that it is "GOOD" for communities, for farmers and for the economy. They even show babies in incubators to try to convince us of their goodwill and community spirit. This is blatant steam rolling of the real issues: that CSG mining techniques have NOT been shown as safe to the health of people and communities or to the short and long-term safety of the land, air and water. There is no long-term research of the impacts of CSG mining activities in Australia. Paying farmers or sponsoring communities for essential services while potentially damaging the immediate and long term status of land, air, water and health of communities is NOT a fair exchange. Glossing over the stealth and manipulation tactics that go into securing that land from so many farmers and communities is a cruel insult - how many farmers are truly happy with the process, the contract, the outcome? Laws are currently on the side of the CGS companies and not on the side of councils, communities, farmers and now inner city residents. The government must redress this unacceptable imbalance.

**True consultation.** Getting CSG company execs to talk to the local community in St Peters was a painstakingly difficult task, only achieved by the persistence and skill of the St Peters' resident action group. Dart energy brags 'consultation' as one of their processes, but they were slippery to say the least. When the 'consultation' at St Peters Town hall finally happened, the main presenter from the company had to leave early, after himself having requesting the actual date and time. More than that, it was Dart people 'telling us' how it would be - or not being able / willing to answer some questions at all. **This is NOT consultation.** It is insulting and alarming. There is a dangerous level of power given to a profit-driven out-of-town company with little respect or concern

for people's health, wellbeing or rights, and that power must be reigned in. This is further demonstrated by their determination to churn on regardless of community concerns, questions and opinions, and to even make costly ads to 'convince' people they are doing us all good!

**We want to know:**

- how will the government ensure sound, independent and accurate research into the true health impacts and the true environmental impacts of CSG activities?
- how will the NSW government assess the risks **and** ensure the safety of all its residents in relation to activities of CSG companies: **OR** how will the government inform the public of the risks they are prepared to take with people's health and environmental damage related to CGS activities?
- how will the government recompense home owners whose property prices plummet, or those residents who may have to relocate, due to the direct impact of CSG activities on their health, wellbeing and quality of life?
- how will the government take a strong, leading, accountable role in decisions about land, water, air and lifestyle in all communities: whether built up or rural?
- would YOU, the reader, approve CSG drilling activities within 200m of your home, or in a highly populated and thriving community? This is already underway in St Peters, 7kms from the Sydney CBD.

Yours sincerely

Alison Topaz (and Carmela Donato)  
Residents and ratepayers