

**Submission
No 11**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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As voters we require our government to change the way that coal and gas extraction is currently managed in Australia. We require our government to put the environment and community first, not multinational mining companies and to immediately suspend coal seam gas exploration applications and not to grant any further approvals for coal seam gas exploration.

The strategy should be designed to implement Environmentally Sustainable Development, including a transition to renewable energy, rather than seeking to maximise coal and coal gas seam production. Clean water is a valuable resource.

There should be an immediate moratorium on any further licenses or approvals, especially coal seam gas exploration licenses, until the system is reformed.

There should be up-front independent strategic planning that identifies and permanently excludes areas of important natural resources or productive agricultural land from exploration or mining.

There should be independent review and determination of all mine development proposals and statutory third party appeal rights.

There should be detailed environmental and social assessment requirements for each individual mine or gas extraction application, in those areas where it is considered a possible land use, including climate change impacts. Assessment should include quantification of the social and environmental costs of a range of mine intensity options.

The exploration licensing and approval process should be made transparent, with public exhibition of lease and license applications and full community notification and consultation required prior to the granting of approvals.

Strong legal appeals rights need to be provided to challenge exploration applications and rigorous environmental and social impact assessments required prior to their approval and improved support for landholders in negotiating access agreements.

Regional water studies need to be conducted prior to granting of Exploration Licenses or coal and gas extraction approvals and there needs to be a requirement for Aquifer Interference Approvals under the Water Act 2007 for any activities that will impact on groundwater. All water extraction should require licenses and strict water quality requirements must be enforced.

There needs to be cumulative impact assessment of all existing and proposed mining operations. The full impact of each mine needs to be considered upfront, including any proposed future variations, modifications or extensions.

There needs to be regular and thorough independent reviews or compliance with conditions of approval, mine operation plans and environmental management plans.

There needs to be an urgent analysis of the long term costs and benefits of the coal and gas industry including all external costs such as greenhouse gas emissions, loss of aquifers, loss of biodiversity, loss to agricultural land, health impacts, impacts on other industries and employment opportunities and loss of rural structures.

It is essential that fracking be strictly prohibited in coal seam gas exploration and production due to the severe risk it poses to water resources and human health.

Our natural resources that ensure food security and water health are well worth maintaining.

Lisa Doherty