

**Submission
No 728**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

Name: Mr Michael Howes

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Michael Howes

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The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Committee Members

RE: Coal seam gas exploration/ production

We read an article in the Sydney Morning Herald about coal seam gas, CSG, exploration and were shocked to think that the practices of these companies, such as Arrow Energy, which has already drilled 15 exploration wells in this region, could threaten our water quality and our food security. There are obvious reasons why so many farmers and members of our community have united against this practice. We also watched a documentary called 'Gasland' from the USA and found the content extremely disturbing. In fact we would call it criminal, what was being perpetrated against the people in the documentary. We would like to know that this is not going to happen here in Australia..CSG has been banned by the governments in South Africa and France. The risks posed to land, food security, water quality, land value, homes, businesses and personal wellbeing by the proposed activities of the coal seam gas industry are numerous. From our reading there seems to be an attitude by some coal gas seam companies of not being accountable once having achieved their exploration rights. These unchecked, unmonitored and unregulated practices of the CSG industry could lead to a decline of land values for farmers, interfere with farming practices, risks of toxic chemical leakage, risks to health of human, animals and crops and damage to our valuable underground water aquifers and our food quality.

Farmers generally know how to protect the land for future generations whilst still obtaining yields and benefits for the good of the community. Mining corporations have a history of short term gain and profit and often ignore the environmental cost and damage to the community leaving mining sites scarred and wasted and the communities disempowered and fragmented and in poor health.. Giving compensation to farmers in exchange for mining is not the solution either, as damage to farming land and water quality ultimately has wider effects further than the farm area compensated.

The state and federal governments need to have better controls and regulations in place, rather than giving unsupervised, unregulated permission to companies who are chasing fast profits. The policies that your government implements need to take into account the damage done through mining and the cost to the communities. All mining companies need to be accountable for the cost of returning the landscape and its people to its pre mining status. If they can not guarantee this then they should not be allowed to cause irreversible damage. If the risks to health, food security and water quality are high then is the profit really worth it in the long term? We can't eat or drink gas polluted water.

We do not want our rural amenities destroyed by this type of industrial development. The fast tracking of approvals for this industry needs to be halted and re examined before we do irreparable damage to our food security and water quality. The populated rural areas of our state are now in strong opposition to coal seam gas proposals. We live in a democracy, and we need our democratic rights to be protected.

Before you make a judgement you need to view the documentary mentioned 'Gasland'. Without viewing this you cannot possibly know the human suffering caused by this industry. It is a fair, truthful and accurate account. Please make the right choices and decisions for the wellbeing of all of us living here in the country and say NO to the coal seam gas industry, before its unchecked practices destroys our well being

Yours sincerely

Michael Howes