

**Submission  
No 719**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

**Name:** Mr John Heaton

**Date received:** 5/09/2011

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The Chairman  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5  
Inquiry into Coal Seam Gas

Please accept my submission for the above. I make comment on the following Terms of Reference:

**The environmental and health impact of CSG activities**

CSG activities presents the potential for drawdown and contamination of ground water aquifers and could have a major impact on the Great Artesian Basin. Moreover, there is serious questions of surface water systems from waste water. I notice the NSW Government has instigated steps to curb CSG activities since taking office and one of those initiatives was the cessation of the use of evaporation ponds. However, how is the waste water disposed of now?

Are CSG companies using acceptable methods to dispose of the waste water that has proven to contain a high saline content and contaminants? How is the Government going to monitor any acceptable safe and environmentally sustainably methods?

CSG mining activities uses large amounts of water in their operations to extract the CSG. Water and water quality should be paramount in any activity, including CSG mining activities.

CSG activities should not be on sensitive floodplains and in water catchment areas, such as the Casino and Kyogle areas. Moreover, they should not be located in areas that have historically been crop and grazing areas or in areas that contains various hobby farms and organic food producing farms.

World renown and respected Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith, from the National Toxics Network, has serious concerns about the environmental and health impacts of CSG activities and the NSW Government should take those concerns seriously.

The use of hydraulic fracturing should be banned completely as it is well documented of the serious environmental and health impacts that process entails.

The proposed Lions Way Pipeline from Casino to Ipswich through the Kyogle area and the world renowned Border Ranges National Park is of particular concern to me. Information available to me indicates Metgasco intends to lay the underground pipeline to follow the narrow, twisting Lions Way road through the Park. From my understanding, pipelines need 30 metre easements for inspections, maintenance etc. This will have a devastating effect on the National Park

**The economic and social implications of CSG activities**

The tactics the CSG companies use to negotiate access to property owners land is unethical and immoral and the confidentiality clauses within the contract prevents adjoining property owners from knowing what agreement was reached. There are questions on the work carried out on an adjoining property that affects the property owner who has not entered into a contract.

Surrounding property values are decreased due to the fact there is a mining activity within the area. Innocent, well meaning people who bought 5 acres, 10 acres, 50 acres, 100 acres etc. for the purpose of a different lifestyle and or to contribute to the food producing industry are threatened by a mining industry that cannot co-exist with that of a food producing industry.

There is also the problem of communities being divided. Property owners who have negotiated an agreement with a CSG company, be it with full knowledge of the repercussions or ignorance on their behalf, will be at loggerheads with other property owners and the wider community and feel alienated.

CSG companies will promote the economical benefits of their industry, but, they will not take responsibility for the social implications of their activities through higher housing rentals for outside workers and generally through other businesses cashing in on the CSG workers salaries at the expense of locals, most on a lower income.

### **The role of CSG in meeting the future energy needs of NSW**

We should not be continually relying on fossil fuels for our energy needs. Any fossil fuel energy will continue to emit pollutants into the air that contributes to climate change and our carbon footprint.

We should be putting our efforts and investments into renewable energy sources. Australia has the potential to be the leader in solar energy, geo-thermal energy, wind and tidal energy. The massive expansion in CSG production is delaying the transition to renewable energy alternatives.