

**Submission
No 39**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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Parliamentarians of NSW,

I have only recently become aware of the adverse effects on water quality, human health, native plants & animals, and food production which will follow unless the coal seam gas production industry is very tightly regulated and monitored.

re Term of Reference 1:

a/ The massive number of wells envisaged by CSG proponents means that even if we are lucky and only a small proportion cause contamination of aquifers, we have a serious problem which may not always be apparent early, and may cause contamination for thousands of years, and for which no remediation is possible.

Large amounts of precious water are needed for each well, some of which is recovered as "produced water" and is heavily contaminated by salts, heavy metals & volatile organic compounds (VOC's) and therefore must not be released into creeks or streams. When evaporation ponds are used for this water, significant volumes of VOC's (many of which are carcinogenic and/or greenhouse gases) will be released into the atmosphere.

b/ Of the hundreds of chemicals used in drilling & fracking, many are known to be toxic, and gas companies refuse to specify all of them, so it is essential to ensure drilling is only approved in circumstances where contamination of aquifers, earth, soil or air is not possible.

d/ As wells require great swathes to be cleared for access roads, pipelines & drilling pads it is completely inappropriate for any such activity in national parks or even state forest if significant amounts of valuable trees would be cleared.

e/ To date, instances where gas companies have damaged a water supply badly enough for it to be unusable have led to the gas company simply providing water from another source, or buying the property, as they are unable to fix up a fouled aquifer, whereas they should pay enough to compensate many future generations for what may be virtually permanent damage.

g/ Honest comparison of CSG to coal should ensure assessment of all leakages & escapes of chemicals, and their total effect on the biosphere as greenhouse gases, toxic substances or other pollutants, and ensure recognition of environmental damage caused by infrastructure. For many years, the coal industry has not paid anywhere near its true cost to the environment - we should not make the same mistake with a relatively new industry such as coal seam gas.