

**Submission
No 597**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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Coal Seam Gas – Fracking

The issue of coal seam gas has now risen to National prominence with more than 2/3rds of Australians or 68% supporting a moratorium on coal seam gas mining until more is known about its environmental impacts. Around 70% support a ban on coal seam gas mining in cities and towns, a view shared by residents in both city and regional areas.

The Galaxy pole was commissioned jointly by the Australian Greens and the NSW Greens MP Jeremy Buckingham, and was conducted over 3 days.

The NSW government has launched its own inquiry into the impacts of Coal seam gas, CSG. The government has issued CSG regulations including a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing - fracking until the 31st December. However CSG exploration and extraction will continue in NSW whilst the inquiry is underway.

This decision needs to be overturned and a halt needs to be called to exploration and extraction given the extremely serious implications of this industry.

[1] The coal seam gas industry has not been proven to be a safe and reliable industry. Indeed there is a mounting array of evidence that suggests otherwise.

In American communities where coal seam fracking has occurred communities have had their water supplies contaminated, and water has had to be trucked in to supply households. Visit 'Lock the Gate', read comments on Gasland. The chemicals used in the fracking process have proven to be carcinogenic and injurious to health. Google 'Lock the Gate', go to Fact Sheets, Click on Fracking chemicals their use and hazards. This gives a list of chemicals used. Moreover Carcinogenic chemicals have been detected in 5 water bores around the Queensland town of Dalby. [Get Up CSG]

[a] There is growing concern and mounting evidence about damage done to aquifers which cannot be repaired. Mr Dunn, a spokesperson for Australian Petroleum producers and Explorations Association, told a meeting in Sydney

that damage to aquifers was inevitable and unavoidable. In this driest of continents aquifers are our lifeblood. Anything that threatens to damage them must be banned. There should be Federal laws that make it illegal to damage aquifers as they are the life source for our Australian communities.

The integrity and preservation of our aquifers goes beyond the realm of individual states, it is a matter of national importance. The Commonwealth of Australia needs to become actively involved here.

[2] This raises questions of national security involving the safety of our water supply, and our capacity to feed ourselves from our prime agricultural land. The Great Artesian Basin is a national resource and part of a wider ecological system. It is a resource of National importance and lies under 22% of Australia. It is the only reliable source of water in arid and semi-arid areas.

There are no effective regulations in place regarding this industry which has the capacity to destroy our resources of National importance. The activities of this industry must be ceased until the nations resources can be properly safeguarded.

[3] To contemplate fracking around Warragamba Dam, the water supply for the city of Sydney, is environmental vandalism beyond description. That this has been done by stealth, and a national resource has been traded without the awareness of the communities involved, all for the bottom dollar line reeks of self serving self interest without regard to the constituencies they were meant to be representing.

Australia, it's still worth fighting for.

The States & the Commonwealth of Australia must enact legislation that protects aquifers and our prime agricultural land. It should be an offence to damage aquifers.

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Since the admission from The Australian Petroleum and Exploration Association Spokesperson Ross Dunn that damage to aquifers was inevitable and unavoidable when fracking to facilitate the extraction of coal seam gas it would be madness to permit this technology to be used in Australia, the driest continent on earth. Our aquifers are a national resource for the Australian people and for future generations. It is imperative that The Commonwealth act now in the interests of the Australian people to preserve food security.

No one would deny that it is attractive to have the resource of coal seam gas to provide an alternative form of energy for our own use, and as export income but it would be foolish in the extreme to exploit this resource if this means we risk our precious water

In addition fracking has been shown to poison the land where it is practised as shown in the film 'Gasland'. To also put carcinogens into the environment endangering the health of current and future generations compounds the issue. Methane is also known to be many times more potent than carbon dioxide as a green house gas. Wherever fracking has been practised methane has been found to escape into the atmosphere.[4 corners] . Moreover the leaking of methane gas from wells is highly explosive & dangerous.

It would be insane to allow fracking to be used to exploit this resource, far better to await the development of a safe technology to extract this gas. It cannot be beyond the capabilities of science and technology to discover a safe way to extract this resource. Greed must not be allowed to destroy our country.

There should be a moratorium on coal seam gas extraction until this can be done safely. Finally Australia feeds many millions as well as its own population. When a safe method of exploiting this resource is discovered it must not be permitted in prime and good agricultural land.

James & Maxine Blackburn