

Submission
No 250

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

Name: Prof Richard Mackay AM
Organisation: Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory
Committee
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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Our reference
 Our contact

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

Dear Sir,

Re: Submission to the Coal Seam Gas Inquiry

The Advisory Committee for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA) is jointly appointed by the New South Wales and Federal Ministers for the Environment. The Advisory Committee provides advice and updates on the protection, management and presentation of the GBMWhA, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 for its outstanding natural values.

The outstanding universal values of the Greater Blue Mountains are protected in over a million hectares of National Parks and Reserves under the (NSW) *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. World Heritage values are a matter of 'National Environmental Significance' within the (Cwth) *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Advisory Committee has always taken a strong position that it is essential to consider any adverse direct and indirect impacts on World Heritage and other values from developments that occur adjacent to the GBMWhA.

The Advisory Committee therefore opposes coal seam gas exploration and extraction on lands adjacent to the GBMWhA and urges the Legislative Council to consider:

- 1) possible aquifer depletion/contamination under the GBMWhA and control of water (possibly contaminated) that may be extracted from the coal seam, to ensure it does not enter the GBMWhA; and
- 2) on site impacts (e.g. erosion, chemical spillage) and associated infrastructure (e.g. gas pipeline, power lines) that might impact on the GBMWhA.

One of the Advisory Committee's greatest concerns is the likelihood of lateral movement of gas and water occurring from underneath the GBMWhA as a result of drilling activities. This is a critical issue as these reserves are gazetted to the centre of the earth and accordingly gas and water under these reserves would be protected against removal by the (NSW) *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Richard Mackay, AM
 Chair
 Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory Committee

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Office of
 Environment & Heritage
 NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service

