

**Submission  
No 108**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

**Name:** Ms Jane Lemann OAM

**Date received:** 1/09/2011

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The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No 5  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW.2000  
30 August 2011

**RECEIVED**

- 1 SEP 2011

**LEGISLATIVE  
COUNCIL**

Dear Sir,

**SUBMISSION RE IMPACTS OF COAL SEAM GAS EXTRACTION.**  
Related to Southern Highlands and Sydney Drinking Water Catchment

I write this in the hope that common sense and decency and the need for intergenerational equity will prevail over short term gain and destruction of our life support systems.

I applaud the new conditions and requirement for stricter protocols for the Review of Environmental Factors and request the moratorium be continued until the science is understood.

It is imperative to consider the cumulative impacts of numerous drill sites on the water, the biodiversity, the agricultural land and the public right to quiet enjoyment of their property and surrounds.

The precautionary principle should apply to ensure that water storage and catchment areas are included in the list of 'exempted areas' for the security of the people of Sydney and surrounds who depend on the supply of clean water.

Every development in this catchment area is required by SCA to have a neutral or beneficial effect on the water quantity and quality. This requirement should apply equally to Coal Seam Gas extraction. and be enforced and include frequent and regular water monitoring .

**Surface Water**

It is unthinkable that the Coal Seam Gas industry can consume quantities of this water and produce quantities of toxic water which inevitably will enter the drinking water supply flow.

**Aquifers**

Many landowners are not permitted to develop new bores due to the aquifers already being overextended. Therefore, neither should Coal Seam Gas extraction sites have permission to bore for water extraction.

As these aquifers also supply the Drinking Water Catchment downstream it is unthinkable that they could be contaminated by the sinking of Coal Seam Gas extraction bores through the aquifers. Suitable conditions must also be placed on existing licensees through the Aquifer Interference Approvals.

**Agriculture**

There is a precautionary principle that requires that good food producing land with proximity to market, such as the Southern Highlands should be retained uncorrupted for future needs.

#### Recreational and Spiritual replenishment

There is a serious need for human beings to maintain contact with their natural environment in order to retain social and emotional balance. The Southern Highlands provides this facility for city people and it is an important economic industry in the area. This must be protected.

#### Quiet Enjoyment

This will no longer be a much appreciated quality of the Southern Highlands if the cumulative impact of transport, drilling, compressing and construction of infrastructure is approved for Coal Seam Gas extraction.

#### Visual Amenity

The community places great value on the visual amenity and ambience of the Southern Highlands as a unique and special place to be protected from visual industrial pollution.

#### Clean Air

This is an undervalued quality of the Southern Highlands that should never be at risk from escaping gas and the pollution of industrial vapours.

#### Biodiversity

There is a fundamental requirement to maintain and improve what is left of our natural biodiversity and to reconnect the remnants through unbroken corridors and patches of forest and woodland. This includes National Parks, State Forests and Road, River and other Reserves plus the proposed Great Eastern Ranges links. There are also increasing numbers of private conservation sites endeavouring to preserve the Endangered Ecological Communities found in the Southern Highlands. The infrastructure of Coal Seam Gas extraction should not be permitted to corrupt or fragment these areas.

#### Energy Production

It appears that most of the Coal Seam Gas is for export and financial gain of foreign developers and NOT for the provision of cleaner energy for Australia or local benefit. As the gas is a finite product it should be conserved for future Australian requirements. It appears that Coal Seam Gas extraction is for foreign gain leaving NSW with permanent damage.

#### Damage Repair

Should the Coal Seam Gas extraction proceed it is vital that substantial bonds are held for making good the damaged areas upon completion or abandonment in such a way that there is 'No Net Loss to Biodiversity'.

#### Embodied Pollution

It is imperative that any proposed development is assessed for whole of life embodied energy before claims for cleaner energy production can be made – just as the nuclear industry must include the uranium production and disposal in its footprint.

#### Private Property

Land holder rights should be respected and ensure that there is minimum harm and no loss of value through fair and favourable terms for compensation if access is granted. There should be a right to deny access.

#### Local Council

Should be properly informed and have power to impose certain conditions and tariffs on such development on behalf of the community; from road wear and tear, sediment control to water purification, and waste disposal.

#### Toxic waste Disposal

This should be the responsibility of the miner and completely removed leaving no residue. Evaporation ponds should not be permitted in the Sydney Water Catchment Area.

#### Exploration licences

should not be granted where mining/extraction licences cannot proceed.

#### Part 4.1

Exploration and production licence approvals should include notifications to local government and each affected private landholder for existing licensees as well as new – regional newspaper advertisement is not enough.

The points raised here are to demonstrate the long term value and importance of the Southern Highlands to the residents, wider community and to NSW which far outweighs the value of royalties that would be received in the short term.

I strongly submit that the Southern Highlands of NSW be permanently protected from Coal Seam Gas extraction .

Jane Lemann OAM