

**Submission
No 797**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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The Director
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To The General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5,

Submission regarding the NSW Upper House Coal Seam Gas Inquiry

Please accept this submission as an attempt to express my deepest concern about the Coal Seam Gas industry and the devastating effects this type of mining can pose upon our environment and our country. I hope this submission goes some way toward demonstrating the negative feeling held by people within Australian communities about the hazard of Coal Seam Gas Mining upon our water, our environment and ultimately our futures.

There is still not enough known about the possible impacts of CSG mining to justify investment in this industry; and by doing so, we are putting at the risk the ability of future generations to live in safety and comfort in a healthy environment, as we have had the pleasure of doing.

Of the utmost concern to me are the following issues:

1. The lack of assessment into public health risks and adequate research into the dangers upon health caused by coal seam gas mining. Despite this obvious lack of research, there has been gung ho expansion of this type of mining throughout Queensland and New South Wales. This is in direct contradiction to the duty of care Government should take for the people it governs. Coal Seam Gas Mining threatens our water supplies, uses dangerous chemicals, degrades prime agricultural land, and leads to serious pollution of soil, water and air. There is evidence from other countries of the degradation, sickness and destruction it has caused. And coal seam gas exploration licenses have been granted for areas within Northern NSW (among others) which are not only pristine areas justifying conservation, but which, with rich volcanic soils and high rainfall, and with foresight, should be preserved for food production.
2. It is well known that Australia is the hottest, driest continent on the planet. Yet we are prepared to allow coal seam gas mining to access incredible amounts of our precious water resources in order for some to profit off what belongs to all. Putting at risk the safety of our water

and the preservation of our Great Arterial Basin is a crime against future generations of Australians. It is also diverting precious water resources away from agricultural uses, and will lead to less productivity and greater food insecurity for a country which should already be concerned about the amount of fresh water it has access to, to feed its current and projected future population.

3. Little is known about the impact of the extraction techniques utilized by coal seam gas mining. The piercing of aquifers, the disruption and fragmentation of the land surface, the resulting land subsidence and erosion, will all have serious detrimental impacts and there is no evidence that these practices are safe or that those extracting the gas have the ability to protect or restore those areas which are affected. And currently there are no legally binding regulations ensuring these companies have a responsibility under law to do so.
A study conducted by The National Water Commission reveal there is "less-than-perfect information" regarding the long-term impacts of coal seam gas mining, and "there are also significant potential risks to water and water management as a result of the scale of the development of the sector".
4. A strong point of concern for me is the secrecy with which deals have been made selling our valuable resources to overseas countries without public knowledge, consultation or even adequate research into the impacts of this. This makes me strongly doubt the integrity of our government to take care, and to act with the best intention, for our resources and our people. It seems very clear that this is a money grabbing exercise whereby players attempt to extract and rape public resources as quickly as possible before public outcry catches up with them.
5. The actions of countries internationally who are supporting and investing heavily in renewable energy, put Australia to shame. For a country such as Germany to invest so heavily in solar power, when a country with as much sunshine as Australia still seeks to invest in dirty, destructive and polluting energy sources is an utter disgrace. The amount of money propping up non-renewable energy in Australia is astounding and shows little foresight for our future.
6. A study by Cornell University discovered that escaping emissions from unconventional gas extraction may make it more polluting than coal as leaked methane is a powerful greenhouse gas. Although it is widely documented, the release of methane and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere in such vast quantities has never been acknowledged by the CSG industry. The propaganda that gas is a clean, green energy

source is a fallacy and its promotion as such should be criminal.

7. 85% of our mining industry is now foreign owned. Given this fact it is very difficult to understand how Australians are to benefit from this industry.
8. The presence of CSG mining is likely to reduce the value of land and nearby houses dramatically. Real Estate Agents in Tara, QLD, the site of large CSG operations, have closed their doors and land in that region which has CSG mining interests, is unsellable. Nobody would want to live in the shadow of an ugly, polluted environment, particularly when little is known about the potential impacts of chemicals used.
9. Coal Seam Gas seriously threatens the future of other local industries, such as tourism and farming.

In conclusion, I hope this inquiry into Coal Seam Gas Mining will result in the complete prohibition of future mining of this kind in Australia. I hope that we will instead see investment in renewable energy and a future we can all be assured will result in a clean, safe and healthy future for future generations of Australians to come.

Thankyou for the opportunity to submit my strong opposition to this industry.

Yours Sincerely,

Ms Amanda Shoebridge