

**Submission  
No 30**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

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As a resident of the NSW Central West town of Mudgee, we are rapidly being surrounded by open cut and underground coal mining and the likelihood of coal seam gas extraction.

We have already witnessed only in the past 5 years, the all but total disappearance of two thriving, but small, communities due to the impact of coal mining. These are the towns of Wollar and Ulan. There are more that are reducing and, I fear, will also soon disappear.

While the argument is that known reserves of coal seam gas in NSW could power all current NSW residential energy use for the next 181 years, we must NEVER lose sight of the bigger picture. It is essential that both sides of this be looked into as I believe the downside far far outweighs the benefits. With Australia the driest continent on earth, the idea of risking the purity and amount of our already diminished water, and with coal seam gas drilling almost certainly risking contamination of this water, I believe that full and thorough investigations by an independent party MUST be carried out.

It is being said that the damage already done to the Great Artesian Basin, and this is just the beginning, would take 1000 years to repair. With our growing population and the need for even more agricultural land and its accompanying necessary water supply, for the people of this country to have access to good, pure and plentiful water and food should be of the utmost importance.

Once the aquifers have been damaged, they cannot be repaired. Without water, we die, the country dies. In 181 years what will the population be? What will be the water demands? What will be the food demands? What will be the state of health of this country? Will we, today, have done our very best to ensure that the population in 181 years has access to good, clean water, and will we be doing our best today to establish renewable energy to take us long into the future without risking the health of this wonderful nation.

Please please take a step back and look at the long term whole picture. Our water, our health, our food, our country. Thank you.