

**Submission
No 362**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

Name: Mr Bruce Brown
Organisation: Namoi Catchment Authority
Date received: 07/09/2011



Contact: Bruce Brown
Phone:
Mobile:
Fax:
Email:

File: NSW Government inquiry into coal seam gas

Ms Beverly Duffy
Director
GPSC 5
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

5th September 2011

Dear Ms Duffy

Subject: Namoi Catchment Management Authority (CMA) response to the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 - Inquiry into Coal Seam Gas (CSG)

Namoi CMA is strongly supportive of the NSW Government's inquiry into the environmental, economic and social impacts of CSG and notes that this is a good step in ensuring that the State's environmental assets continue to provide a flow of services for future generations whilst still providing for growth opportunities for industry.

Notwithstanding the above comments, Namoi CMA is concerned that the rapidly expanding CSG industry has had nominal guidance in terms of minimising the potentially adverse environmental impacts, applying best management practice and maximising the development of socio-economic synergies. In particular, community unease centres on the lack of mitigation of cumulative impacts, the absence of a strategic land use policy and the potential damage that may occur to high value environmental, agricultural, water and community assets.

Namoi CMA has developed an Extractive Industry Policy which is strongly based on the "Precautionary Principle". A copy of this policy is attached. Additionally, Namoi CMA strongly believes that the community endorsed Namoi Catchment Action Plan (CAP) and the abovementioned Extractive Industries Policy should be integrated into the NSW planning framework, including the yet to be developed NSW Government's Strategic Land Use Policy.

Namoi CMA has a strong interest in both managing and maintaining the Namoi Catchment's natural resource assets whilst still focusing on outcomes that have a triple bottom line focus.

Concern about the cumulative impacts of multiple extractive industry developments has led Namoi CMA to commission a scoping study entitled "Cumulative Risk of Mining to the Nature Resource Assets of the Namoi Catchment". This study scopes out a framework for quantifying the unmitigated risks of cumulative impacts across nine natural resource assets in the Catchment – soils, land use, surface water, groundwater, vegetation extent, vegetation type,

155-157 Marius St Tamworth NSW 2340 PO Box 550 Tamworth NSW 2340

Telephone (02) 6764 5915 Facsimile (02) 6764 5995 Website www.namoi.cma.nsw.gov.au

vegetation condition, threatened species and landscape connectivity. The proposed framework is spatial in nature and will be consistent with the Australian Standard for Risk Assessment. Additionally, this framework will consider three mine sizes (large, medium and small) and three mine types (open cut, longwall and coal seam gas).

Importantly, it is anticipated that once the framework/modelling is completed, it will be an extremely useful tool in informing the NSW Government's Strategic Land Use Policy especially since it will be able to analyse both planned and hypothetical extractive industry developments on both a singular and cumulative basis.

This scoping study, following independent scientific peer group review, will be publicly available by 15 September 2011. A copy will be made available to Inquiry Members.

Namoi CMA is also a member of Namoi Councils (a regional organisation of councils) and it's Minerals and Energy Working Group, both of which are actively discussing and seeking to address the many issues associated with extractive industry development generally and CSG development in particular.

In concluding, Namoi CMA looks forward to meeting with Inquiry Members to discuss the cumulative impact modelling and a range of extractive industry issues.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Brown
General Manager
Namoi Catchment Management Authority