

Submission
No 298

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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COAL SEAM GAS INQUIRY SUBMISSION

I would like to strongly object to the relentless push to develop coal seam gas wells everywhere in NSW.

My reasons for objecting are specific to the area in which I live, the NSW Southern Highlands, but also apply to many other rural areas of NSW that are subject to coal seam gas exploration and licences.

The main reason I object to the development of coal seam gas is its detrimental impact on the environment. There is now ample evidence that the toxic chemicals used in drilling and gas extraction are leaking into the local environment around wells and will subsequently effect the whole area that is subjected to coal seam gas drilling. The Southern Highlands is an area of prime agricultural land and part of the water catchment for Sydney's water supply. It is criminal that anyone should even consider drilling for coal seam gas in this area. Once the chemicals enter the aquifers there is no way to stop them contaminating the underground water and water storages in this area. There must be no drilling here while there is even the slightest risk of contamination to water aquifers and agricultural land.

In addition, the huge number of wells that are drilled and tapped with any coal seam gas lease sterilise the surrounding land by limiting access, cutting off large sections of properties and making agriculture less viable. Australia cannot afford to lose prime agricultural land – surely food security is more important.

Finally, the life span of coal seam gas wells is extremely short – just 20-30 years max. While coal seam gas produces less greenhouse gas emissions than burning coal, it is not a zero emission, renewable energy source. Why are we even considering potentially destroying valuable land and contaminating essential water supplies for a short term “solution” to reducing greenhouse gas emissions that won't even fix the problem? Why isn't more money and effort being put into developing true clean, renewable energy solutions such as solar, wind and wave energy?

It is totally ridiculous that anyone could allow coal seam gas drilling to occur in the Southern Highlands and other agricultural areas of NSW when the risks of contamination to water supplies and loss of farming land is so high. The wells will be abandoned in just a few short years but the effects on the environment will remain forever and ever.

Thank you for considering my submission

Sue Attreed