

**Submission
No 821**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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Members of the Standing Committee #5.

There seems to me some dispute about whether Coal Seam Gas is a less polluting fuel for the generation of electricity than coal. However this is not the primary issue because, even if it were, it does not make any sense to risk our food security by exploiting the CSG in deep lying coal seams. Nobody in the industry appears to be prepared to guarantee that drilling through aquifers to the underlying coal seams will not lead sooner or later to leakage between aquifers, not to mention the practice of fracking used to assist in the release of the coal gas. Any such leakage has the potential to seriously affect the artesian basin on which Australia depends for its food production.

Even if we assume that leakage between aquifers can be avoided, which on the evidence on hand is highly unlikely, the multitude of bores and the associated pipeline and road connections will impact seriously on the productivity of any rural activity but in particular to broad acre farming. Global warming is a universally accepted fact and it is likely that despite our best efforts it will progress to the stage where it impacts on the way we live. Cleaner energy will not save the world from starvation.

Our priority must be to do our utmost to ensure food security. So let us not progress with the destruction of productive land for the short term expediency of having a temporary energy source which may or may not be less polluting than coal.