

**Submission  
No 675**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

**Name:** Mr Noel Downs

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The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5  
Parliament House  
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Sydney NSW 2000  
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Submission to "Impacts of Coal Seam Gas Inquiry"

Dear Sir,

The undersigned of this submission totally reject coal seam gas exploration and mining in the Baerami Creek, Baerami, Kerrabee, Widden Valley, Martindale Creek and surrounding area's.

Interference with water

We oppose coal seam gas for the huge risks it poses to our surface water and underground aquifers.

Enterprises in our local area include – world renowned thoroughbred studs, cattle dairies, olive farms, pecan farms, vineyards, commercial beef cattle, extensive lucerne hay production, apiarists and various other niche enterprises which sell at the local Farmers Markets.

Every farming enterprise is dependent on clean reliable water for irrigation, stock and household requirements.

The potential risk of contamination and poisoning is totally unacceptable, particularly if the mining companies engage in 'fracking' with the accompanying chemicals. **The ABC four corners program clearly demonstrates the problems that can be caused to the aquifer and land by FRACKing. This process should be banned in Australia.**

Dewatering of the coal seam beds to allow gas flow is of huge concern. Where to store this saline and sometimes toxic water is an immense problem. Evaporation ponds on our floodplain flats would be unthinkable. Environmental damage from leaking or breached dams could be catastrophic.

**Evidence of such leaks can be seen in the attached photos marked Attachment 1 and Attachment 2.**

Adverse impact on rural land

Most farms in this area are small acreage. Any interference from exploratory work or coal seam gas production would have an extremely adverse impact on whoever's paddock it is in.

The noise, dust, potential gas leaks and unsightliness of drilling rigs would be totally unacceptable.

Access roads dividing small paddocks into smaller ones again, would certainly affect machinery movements such as ploughing, haymaking, seeding, harvesting as well as interfere with stock movement and watering.

The impact of abandoned sites that are not rehabilitated show the damage that can be done.

### **Evidence of such damage can be seen in the photos Marked Attachment 3**

#### Land values

As soon as coal seam gas mining is mentioned in an area land values can expect to fall 30% or more – that is if you could find a buyer. This has happened at Bunnan near Scone, NSW.

Compensation to landowners subjected to exploration and production is totally inadequate when considering the revenue generated.

#### Infrastructure impacts

The infrastructure associated with coal seam gas production such as pipelines, compressor stations and well heads are all unacceptable infringements on anyone's property or lifestyle.

Local roads could not be expected to cope with the thousands of vehicular movements needed to service the coal seam gas exploration and extraction processes. The roads up local valleys are only one car wide in many places. With so many extra vehicles, especially trucks, the risk of a serious accident is considerable, particularly at school bus times.

#### Social license

In this area the Aboriginal community are exploring a return to firestick farming as a means of connecting back to country and caring for country. After a 6 month planning process the community culminated with a training activity and a cultural burn day where they invited the wider community to participate. Fire and gas mix REALLY WELL.

#### Wollemi National Park

Wollemi National Park is part of the World Heritage Listed Greater Blue Mountains National Park and is home to the Wollemi Pine.

Martindale, Widden and particularly Baerami Creek are long narrow valleys. The economics of scale in developing a gas field within these narrow confines needs close scrutiny.

One must wonder if the miners intend extracting gas from under the National Park in order to justify the development of their Exploratory License.

Wollemi National Park had no depth restriction placed on it when it was gazetted. In other words it is regarded as 'to the centre of the earth' – no mining whatsoever.

How will mining activities be monitored several hundred metres underground, when gas companies can presently horizontally drill for up to 8 km's and frack up to 400 metres?

Yours Truly

NOEL DOWNS

Photo 10. Dewhurst 16H,  
exploratory corehole. Unlined drill  
pond overflowing on private land  
during rain event in the Pilliga.  
Taken 2010.

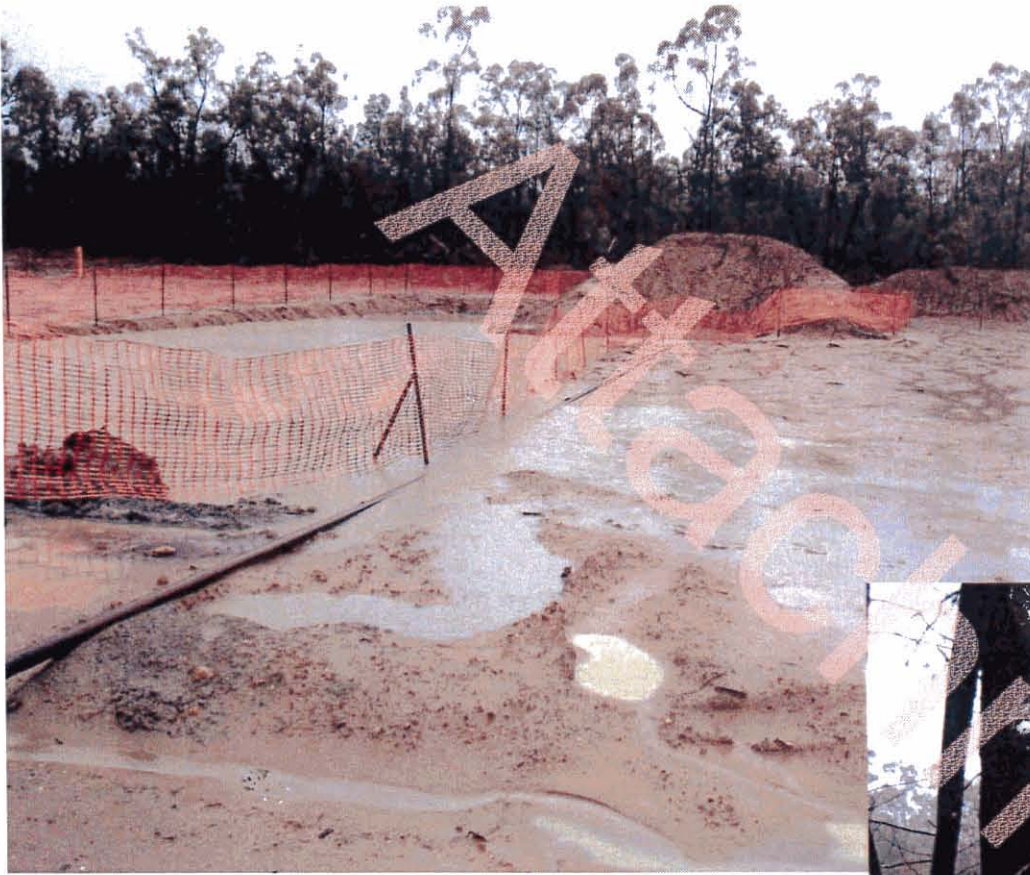


Photo 11. Dewhurst 16H exploratory  
corehole. Drill pond and wellpad  
flooding on private land during rain  
event in the Pilliga. Taken 2010.





Attachment 2



Photo 12. Bohena 2D exploratory corehole. Tree deaths from saline water spill, Pilliga East State Forest. Photo taken 2002.



Photo 13. Bohena 2D exploratory corehole. Tree deaths from earlier saline water spill. Photo 2011. Pilliga East State Forest.



Photo 7. Dewhurst 5 exploratory corehole. Pilliga East State Forest. Abandoned, not rehabilitated. Photo 2011.

Photo 8 & 9 (below). Dewhurst 6c, exploratory corehole, Pilliga East State Forest. Abandoned, not rehabilitated. Photo 2011.

