

**Submission
No 307**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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BY FAX:

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To Whom It May Concern:

I wish to voice my strong concerns against Coal Seam Gas Mining in Australia.

I first found out about CSG mining in my area through a rumour that it was possible. I rang Metgasco the mining company in Casino and found out that they had a proposed pipeline planned from Casino to Ipswich. This pipeline would be located 2 kilometres from my house. I asked for a map of the proposed pipeline and was horrified when I saw that it came in over our district of Lynchs Creek crossing over the majority of farming land in our area. I own 150 acres of prime farming land. I was also amazed that it was proposing the go straight through the World Heritage Listed Border Ranges.

I asked around and farmers had spoken briefly with Metgasco when they came through in October of 2008, however, most farmers were under the belief that the construction had been canned and was no longer happening. So when we had a meeting and advised of Metgasco's intentions, needless to say the local farming folk were immediately worried, especially those with a pipeline proposed to run through their prime farming land. We then went about forming a committee which is now called GAG (Group Against Gas) Kyogle. We now have 50 committee members on this committee, the largest known committee in Kyogle district history and with a population in Kyogle of 3500; this is a huge response and shows the concern.

We have held 3 town hall meetings now with various guest speakers. We have now had over 550 people attend our meetings. All of this has been self-funded. You will find it hard to find a gate that does not have a "Lock the Gate" sign on it in the area.

I have serious concerns for the future of Australia should this destruction be allowed to continue.

In short these include:

1. Damage to our precious drinking water supplies
2. Damage to our beautiful countryside that we rely on tourism to see
3. Damage to our food production due to all our prime farming land being explored for gas
4. Dangers and the unknowns in relation to the waste treatment water, there is still to this day no known safe method of storage of unimaginable amounts of salt.
5. Clearing of precious bush, even World Heritage listed areas are not safe.
6. The huge social impacts psychologically to landholders who have been forced to have something they don't want on their own land.
7. Serious possibilities of civil unrest when landholders protect their lands, I have had farmers tell me they will shoot people who enter their land, this is the extent of fear people have out there.
8. Concerns for huge increases in suicide rates of landholders who are forced beyond their control to hand over their land to something they know is dangerous, something they know will reduce their land value to zero.
9. Resale values, real estate agents are already advising that any land with a well or pipeline through it, or even CLOSE to wells or pipelines are unable to be sold. Who compensates the land owner for this?
10. The unnecessary need for this gas, 95% of it being shipped overseas for profits for international companies, it isn't even for our own use.
11. The total lack of respect for environmental acts that are in place, i.e. water act, native vegetation act, all of these totally exempt for mining companies, yet enforced heavily on the landowners.
12. Leaking wells and the levels of ground water being significantly reduced.
13. Certifications of organic status are taken away from landholders anywhere near gas wells. If this is the case it is obviously known to be dangerous.

I could seriously rattle out another 50 examples of how dangerous this industry is, but unfortunately there are not enough hours in the day. I have dedicated my life to fighting this gas since finding out about it in February and will continue to do so till it is stopped.

I purchased my property to pass on to my children and to run an organically certified farm. Who is going to compensate me when I lose this when this gas line and inevitable wells are put in place?

Hundreds of thousands of Australians are facing what they see as a loaded gun. The best case scenario should gas come down our road is that we lose our privacy, we lose a portion of our farming land to infrastructure such as roads, pipelines, easements, power lines. We try to sleep around the 24/7 noise of drills and floodlights, and we come to the realisation that we can't sell our property even to get away from it as it will be impossible to sell, and we have a mortgage on it. The worst case is the above plus the possibility of contaminated water, and illness from the escaping gasses and stress of living in a gas mine.

This is why I say above that this cannot happen. There will be, without a doubt, severe civil unrest in this country.

I myself would never allow gas onto my property, so I would imagine the jails would need to be filled with farming folk like myself who are locked away for protecting the health of their children, their land value, and their animals and precious clean water. I speak with the farming folk on a regular basis and it breaks my heart to hear the fear and stress in their voices, many have broken down and cried about the possible losses and fights they see coming their way. This industry is more than un-Australian, and our Governments have let us down unimaginably in allowing this industry to prosper like it has, and to sign away on gas deals without even knowing the dangers to our country.

CSG is without a doubt the biggest fight we will ever have to face in our lifetimes, I hope Australia sees sense soon, or we risk a very dim future. Few greedy companies will walk away with loads of money, leaving the majority back home to deal with the devastation with city folk included. They need this water and food as well.

Leah Hobbs