

**Submission  
No 24**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

**Name:** Mr Clifford Harris and Mrs Judith Harris

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The Director  
General Purposes Standing Committee No 5  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney, 2000, N.S.W

RECEIVED

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LEGISLATIVE  
COUNCIL

## SUBMISSION to C.S.G PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Dear Sir

We are landholders in the Loadstone district of N.S.W. Our property lies above a very large coal seam which runs from Tara in Queensland down to Grafton in N.S.W. It is also in close proximity to the proposed pipeline which would take coal seam gas from N.S.W into Queensland.

We believe that both the pipeline and the gas wells that would be connected to it would have a massive, negative impact on the environment should they be allowed to proceed.

Our beliefs on this matter would be unaltered no matter where we lived in Australia for the reasons listed below.

### PIPELINE:

- Proposed route involves destruction of natural habitat of many species of plants & animals, including endangered species. This particularly applies to the Lions Road area which passes through the Border Ranges National Park and World Heritage area.
- Proposed route involves passage through many farming properties with the ultimate effect of segregating the farm hence disrupting farming practices & disturbing farm animals.
- Introducing the risk to the environment in general and human safety in particular should any problems develop (leaks) with the pipe.

### GAS FIELD:

Procedures employed by the gas companies in exploration, drilling and production from the gas field involve a myriad of disruptions and potential hazards, some of which are listed below.

- Service roads
- Pipelines
- Catchment ponds

all of which take up agricultural space, for either cropping or grazing, and make it extremely difficult for the farmer and his animals to traverse the land.

- Noise (audible from kilometres, making the current exclusion zone of 200m ineffective)
- Dust (the practice of wetting access roads with water is not best practice as more times than not it is "produced" water which is contaminated either with toxic chemicals or salt)

The above are visible effects, what about those which are not so visible?

- Leaking gas from the bore (most likely methane, natural gas or BTEX, together with solid particles of coal & other chemicals)  
(methane gas is far more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas)
- Leaching of drilling chemicals which are injected – part of the fracking process - into the coal seam to facilitate the gas release ( acrylic polymers, ammonium persulphate, 2-butoxyethanol, 1-propanol, ethylene glycol monobutyl ether to name a few) into the soil and underground water

- Containment of "produced" water (all the water & gunk that comes up from the borehole) in catchment dams is ineffective with the produced water either leaching into the soil OR flowing directly into water courses at times of heavy rain when the catchment overflows.
- Leaching of chemicals into the soil or water table will result in these chemicals making their way into grasses and crops and hence into the grazing animals & finally humans. Any markets normally receiving these foods, once the contamination is detected, will no longer be available to the producer.
- Fertile soil, which is usually found in areas that is thought to be gas-rich, is converted to impervious soil (of little value for farming) when many of these chemicals leach into it.
- Leaching of chemicals, either from the surface, the boreholes, or the fractured coal seam will mean that the aquifers (and even the artesian basins) will become contaminated.. For a country such as Australia where water is such an enormously valuable (and rare) resource, this would be catastrophic.
- In many instances the chemicals which find their way into the aquifers, soil, waterways, produce, air and natural ecosystems have unknown long-term effects on living organisms. In some cases there are no known tests available to determine whether or not these chemicals are even present in these places.
- Large quantities of potassium chloride are contained in "produced" water. It is not simply a "fertilizer", as some mining companies claim. Rather it is akin to sodium chloride which is a veritable poison to plant growth.
- The "produced" water is either difficult, expensive or impossible to treat (so that it may be released safely), as the recognised methods of treatment are ineffective in the removal of some these chemicals and in the cases where certain chemicals cannot be detected it would be impossible to have them removed.

The claim that coal seam gas is a "clean" fuel is fallacious. Coal seam gas is far "dirtier" than other natural gases, perhaps even as poor as coal itself. Besides, it is still a fossil fuel and like all others puts carbon dioxide (& other noxious gases) into the atmosphere when burnt. Hence it should not be used & so there is no need to mine it!

We find it incomprehensible that those people who are willing to involve themselves in the mining of this substance are unable to see the far reaching devastating effects that it will have. How can they place Australia and all its people (including their own families) in such jeopardy simply for a dollar?

We hope that you have read this submission and come to the belief that this mining enterprise must be stopped. There is no way that the processes can be successfully regulated, monitored, etc in such a way that it is acceptable in any way for Australians or their environment.

Yours sincerely

Judith & Clifford Harris