

**Submission  
No 189**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

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**Date received:** 3/09/2011

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## SUBMISSION REGARDING COAL SEAM GAS EXTRACTION

I live in Sutton Forest in the Southern Highlands. Sutton Forest is a very upmarket farming community having probably the most expensive and best "green belt" primary production land in the country. Most of the landowners are very successful business people, thus the improvements to the properties are the very best possible, and the quality of the cattle being bred and fattened are as high as can be found anywhere in Australia. The value of the farms are among the most expensive in Australia, having unusually large and expensive homes, and also a large number of Heritage Listed and National Trust homes and Properties. Prior to the threat of Coal Seam Gas and Long Wall Coal mining, these were all multi-million dollar properties, as can be seen by recent purchases from Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban of \$6.5 million for a 100 acre property, and from Reg Grundy of \$16 million for a 250 acre property. With the THREAT of Coal Seam Gas extraction and Long Wall Coal Mining, the properties have been reduced to almost half of their value but more importantly, there are no buyers in this environment... WHO IS GOING TO COMPENSATE THE LANDOWNERS FOR THE MASSIVE MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR LOSS OF PROPERTY AND LAND VALUES FROM THE DESTRUCTION, POLLUTION, AND NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS RESULTING FROM MINING ? ? ?

The landowners of Primary Production land are subject to a massive number of NSW state and Local Council Laws and regulations, all designed to protect the land, the stock, and the water resources. We are required by law to keep all noxious weeds under control. We are regulated in the access and the use of our aquifers and bores as well as our dams. We are very regulated in the use of any and all chemicals, are required to take courses for chemical certification, very regulated in their use on land or waterways, and required by law to keep record logs of chemical use and boom spraying of paddocks. We are also required to keep records of all medications used on cattle or sheep, making sure of withholding time before sale, as well as declarations regarding hormone use. I agree with all of these measures we have in place to protect our farmland, water resources, and the food we sell. HOW CAN THERE BE ANY LOGIC IN ALLOWING COAL SEAM GAS MINING ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION LAND WHEN WE KNOW WITHOUT A DOUBT THAT IT USES MASSIVE AMOUNTS WATER FROM OF OUR AQUIFERS, POLLUTES OUR AQUIFERS WITH VARIOUS CHEMICALS AND GASSES, DEPLETES SOME AQUIFERS FOREVER, AND ALLOWS EXTRACTED WATER/CHEMICALS/GASSES TO POLLUTE THE LAND WE ARE GRAZING OR GROWING CROPS ON. THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN BANNED IN OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE IT HAS BEEN PROVEN TO HAVE NEGATIVE HEALTH IMPACTS. THE MINING COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY PROVEN THAT THEY CANNOT BE TRUSTED, WITH PROBLEMS BEING REPORTED ALL OVER AUSTRALIA AT THIS VERY MOMENT WHILE I WRITE THIS REPORT. THE NSW GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE PROPER REGULATIONS, PROPER INFORMATION, OR THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES TO REGULATE THE MINING COMPANIES, BUT SHOULD NEVER NEVER NEVER ALLOW THIS MINING PROCESS TO TAKE PLACE ON EITHER PRIMARY PRODUCTION LAND, OR POPULATED AREAS WHERE PEOPLE ARE LIVING.

When it gets down to the bottom line, our most precious asset, especially in Australia, is WATER. SYDNEY is the second most vulnerable large city in the world for having the potential to run out of water. (Mexico City is the most vulnerable) Sutton Forest and the Southern Highlands is part of the watershed that supplies water to Sydney. Coal Seam Gas Mining uses massive amounts of water from the aquifers to extract the gas. The recent study of the water resources in the Southern Highlands has proven that a reduction in the amount of water in the aquifers, from droughts over the past ten years, has also

resulted in a proportionate loss of runoff into the streams, rivulets, and rivers which supply water to Sydney. We have already found that desalination plants will not be practical to solve our future water problems. WITH THE MASSIVE AMOUNT OF WATER REQUIRED TO EXTRACT COAL SEAM GAS, AND POLLUTION TO THE RUNOFF AREAS, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NEVER ALLOW THIS PROCESS TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE SYDNEY WATER CATCHMENT SINCE ITS OPERATION WILL GREATLY REDUCE RUNOFF INTO THE CATCHMENT, AND INCREASE POLLUTION INTO THE CATCHMENT. NO MINING OPERATION WHICH USES OR THREATENS OUR AQUIFERS (ALSO LONG WALL MINING) SHOULD EVER BE ALLOWED WITHIN ANY MAJOR CITY'S WATER CATCHMENT. THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR MAKING THIS DECISION IS COMMON SENSE.....

One of the most important issues regarding Coal Seam Gas Mining or Long Wall mining is the basic human rights, civil rights, and constitutional rights of the farming landowners. At present the law is criminal, giving the mining companies the right to enter the farms without the consent of the landowner, stopping the landowner from using his property for the reason for which it was purchased, stopping him from making a living from his land, and being able to damage and pollute his property, pollute and deplete his aquifer, and use his property to construct TOTALLY UNWANTED roads, pipelines, drilling rigs, pumping stations, trucks, unknown people, and other facilities across his property. This unwanted infrastructure is intended to be there for many years since NSW does not receive royalties for the first 5 years...How can someone be legally granted this use of a landowner's property against his wishes??? My property is pristine. I bought my property for breeding beef cattle, and thoroughbred racehorses. I work my property hard and use every blade of grass and every inch of my land for my cattle and my horses. **I do not want my cattle or my expensive racehorses polluted, and I should have the basic common law right to use every bit of the land I own "for my own use", and to be able to refuse the use of my land to anyone else. I bought the land and I pay the rates, so why should someone else be allowed to come in and use my land without my consent????**

Western Australia has a common sense solution as regards the rights of landowners of Primary Production land, in that the owner of **any** type of primary production land has the right to refuse entry to his land as well as any mining either on or below his land. This is a good and fair law which respects the humane and civil rights of the Primary Production landowner, however I think that our politicians should be even more forward thinking, and pass laws to prohibit all long wall coal and coal seam gas mining on all primary production land, regardless of who owns the land. **We must pass laws to protect our food and water supplies as they are far more important than the present one time monetary gain from coal mining.**

Julia Gillard and the Federal Government have just passed law, which was deemed illegal in the High Court. **This proves that just because a government passes a law does not make it either fair or legal.** We have NSW state mining laws which were made by a totally incompetent, uneducated, desperate Labour Government, which had mismanaged the funds of the state, and were so desperate for money that they passed these illegal mining laws, which are a criminal act to the primary Production landowners, and totally against the best interest of Australia's future. **If there is any justice in Australia's legal system, and if our political leaders actually want to do what is right for Australia and it's people, then these absurd laws will be changed immediately.**

Australia is no longer a manufacturing nation. We import **everything** we use. The only thing we are able to export with any significance are minerals and food. The minerals are a short term item, so the only ongoing export for our future is food, wool, cotton, etc., all

specifically being from our regional areas, and all being products from our Primary Production Land. Why don't we exercise some **common sense**, and stop destroying the lives, the livelihood, and the moral and legal rights of our farmers, and at the same time pass **laws to protect our precious Primary production land and aquifers**, and thus not allow any type of coal mining either above or below our last remaining precious asset.

Coal seam gas extraction is both destructive as well as a proven health and environmental risk. Long wall coal mining is extremely destructive to land, aquifers, property, homes, and many other property improvements. **These mining operations should not be allowed, under any circumstances, in any built up populated area, in any significant water catchment area, or either above or below any Primary Production Land.** These undesirable mining operations should be restricted by law to sparsely populated areas with non productive land, to reduce the environmental and health impact on our people, our land and property, and our communities.