

**Submission  
No 312**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

**Name:** Mr Christopher Noonan  
**Organisation:** Central West Livestock Health and Pest Authority  
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6 September 2011

Ms Beverly Duffy  
Director, GPSC 5  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000  
Email: gpscno5@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Duffy

**Re: Coal Seam Gas Inquiry Submission**

The Board of the Central West LHPA would like to make the following submission to the inquiry into Coal Seam Gas. We make this submission as custodians of the travelling stock routes (TSRs) in the Central West LHPA district, and as a voice for rural landholders in this district.

- 1) A gas pipeline has been proposed to be constructed from the Narrabri Gas Project area to Wellington via Coolah. Due to objections from private landholders along this route, it has been proposed to construct this pipeline along TSRs (Crown land). The Central West LHPA objects to this construction of infrastructure on TSRs, primarily set aside for grazing and movement of livestock, on the grounds that:
  - a) TSRs in NSW are acknowledged as some of the best examples of remnant vegetation in the state, and as such are a valuable natural resource to be protected;
  - b) Central West TSRs are a vital part of a network of contiguous wildlife corridors through the state;
  - c) TSRs are home to a number of threatened and endangered wildlife species;
  - d) Construction of the pipeline will interrupt normal business activities and reduce income for the authority; and
  - e) The additional role of TSRs as a refuge in time of drought, flood or fire may be impeded by the pipeline.
  
- 2) Insufficient scientific information is available at this time regarding the environmental impact of 'fracking' on artesian and surface water supplies. Australia's water resources are precious and should be protected for future generations. A thorough investigation of 'fracking' is needed before allowing extraction processes to potentially cause irreparable environmental damage.

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- 3) Research into CSG exploration and extraction practices reveals that large amounts of water are required to expedite the process. In a dryland farming environment such as ours, there are profound concerns that a permanent and irreplaceable depletion of the water table will result, affecting current farming activities and indeed the rural communities in which we live.
- 4) Land adjacent to or containing gas wells has already lost value in many areas. If gas wells are allowed on TSRs (with the concurrence of LHPA, LPMA and Dept Primary Industries), there would be a significant equity devaluation for ratepayers which would not be in their best interests.
- 5) In addition to concerns regarding water table contamination, the threat of waste water contamination on soils is of concern to local residents. While waste water pits are *now* required to be lined (a relatively recent change), mining companies admit there can be no guarantees as to their integrity. The potential exists for serious contamination of prime cropping and grazing land, which ultimately could affect international market access for Australian primary produce.
- 6) Loss of agricultural land from primary production in favour of gas extraction would impact rural communities as agricultural enterprises reduce or shut down, followed by support industries. Loss of jobs in these centres would be socially devastating: with less jobs leading to less workers/families, school downsizing or closure, loss of services, etc. CSG extraction jobs would not replace agricultural jobs – once sites have been established only skeleton maintenance crews are required.

The Central West LHPA offers this submission for the consideration of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Noonan  
Chairman