

**Submission
No 214**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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Submission against Coal Seam Gas Extraction in the Southern Highlands

by Barbara Seay

My husband and myself left Sydney twelve years ago and moved to Sutton Forest in the Southern Highlands. We were particularly attracted to the area for it's beautiful countryside, the quiet way of life, the privacy we could have, and our love of animals would allow us to breed cows and horses. We desperately wanted to get out of the crowded rat race in Sydney, and this appeared to be the perfect setting for our retiring years.

We bought 100 acres of prime grazing land, and designed and built our dream home, which is a very large Rocky Mountain style ranch house, with a beautiful timber Barn, and many improvements to the property and landscaping. We breed cattle, have 30 cows, so for most of each year we have 60 cows and calves on our property. We also breed and race a few thoroughbred horses, who we get very attached to. We also have two working dogs and two cats. Words cannot describe how much we love our beautiful views and our quiet and private lifestyle with our family of animals.

Now all of a sudden, our heaven has turned into hell, with the real and present threat of both Coal Seam Gas extraction and Long Wall Coal mining in Sutton Forest and the Southern Highlands, and specifically on our property.

Property Values have fallen to almost half of their value with the threat of mining in our community, and there are no buyers in this environment. **Who is going to compensate us for multimillion losses on our properties**, and for the massive loss of tourist trade we now enjoy in our community?

As it is on most farms, the only water we have is tank water collected from our roof, and bore water from our aquifer. We pump bore water from our aquifer into settling ponds and a dam, and then pump the water with a windmill to the stock (cows and horses) and for irrigation.

We cannot survive on our property without our aquifer...

The extraction of coal seam gas is a major threat to our aquifer. It is a major threat to pollute our aquifer with chemicals and gasses. It is a major threat to deplete our aquifers since it extracts large volumes of contaminated water from the coal seam. It is a major threat to contaminate and pollute our valuable grazing land.

We own our land and we pay the rates, so why should we ever be forced to allow someone else to come and use our property in any way shape or form.

We will never ever allow any mining company to come on our property...Not for any amount of money...

We do not want our aquifers polluted,used depleted. or contaminated as they are essential to our existence....

We do not want our cows and horses either contaminated with chemicals and gasses or to have their water supply depleted....

We do not want unknown people or trucks or drill rigs or pumping stations or pipes or anything else on our property, and we should have the right to keep them off...

It is an invasion of our privacy to allow people to come onto our property against our wishes...

How can we possibly have a state law which allows a mining company to come on our property, against our wishes, to damage our property in many different ways, to invade our privacy, to make us feel unsafe, to pollute our beautiful views, and to deprive us of the quiet way of life we have come here to enjoy.....

How would the politicians, who have made these criminal laws, like it if a mining company was allowed to come in and take over their back yards and barbecue area, and set up a coal seam gas extraction station??? There is no difference...it is exactly the same situation....

We supply cattle for export, so we are among the very few people in Australia who are producing anything, since everything in Australia is now imported. **Our Primary Production land and our water resources are two of our most valuable long term assets.** When are our leaders going to exercise common sense and pass laws to protect these assets??

We need new laws to protect the rights of Primary Production landowners. In Western Australia, the owner of any type of primary production land has the right to refuse entry to his land and to refuse any mining operation either on or below his land....and so it should be.

No type of coal mining operation should ever be allowed either on or below: Primary Production Land.... in any populated area....or in any major or significant water catchment area....

The destruction, the health impacts, and the environmental impacts are all well documented, and the people, the communities, and the local governments do not want it.

"If we live in a democracy, we should not be forced to have something which the majority is against".

Coal mining operations should be restricted to sparsely populated areas where the land is non productive