

**Submission
No 588**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

Name: Ms Lorraine Yudaeff

Date received: 7/09/2011

RECEIVED

- 7 SEP 2011

LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL

The Director

General Purpose Standing Committee No 5

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Coal Seam Gas .

I wish to lodge my objection to the unregulated proliferation of coal seam gas exploration & mining throughout the State in general, & at Fullerton Cove in the Hunter Region in particular. Negative consequences are well documented in the United States experience, but evidence of the risks is building in this country & include:

- contamination of ground water, on which many local agricultural properties, livestock, domestic gardens & animals, as well as native bushland & wildlife depend. Because of the proposed deep drilling & the interaction of dynamic aquifers, there is an additional risk to drinking water supplies.
- consequent contamination of wetlands, estuaries & rivers, in this case the Hunter River with its fishing, prawning & oyster industries; as well as our international treaties with Japan & China (JAMBA; CAMBA); & a Ramsar site.
- unregulated land clearing with negative results on the environment.
- subsidence as a result of the extraction of massive amounts of water. Fullerton Cove, already subject to land & house foundations cracking in dry periods, cannot cope with the predicted removal of the equivalent of a swimming pool per day, every day, for the two years of the exploration period. Given even a small proportion of the subsidence experienced in Texas, the entire community would be inundated.
- methane leaks, which have already been well documented in Australia, & which pose a much greater risk to the greenhouse effect than carbon dioxide.
- coal seam fires, already experienced in this country & which are virtually impossible to extinguish. Methane would appear to provide the perfect ignition & accelerant.
- bush fires from continually burning exhaust flames, in the local case in a dry environment through two bush fire seasons at least in the exploration period alone.
- Explosions, as in the Dalby case that blasted contaminated salty water 100 feet into the air, presenting a real threat to human life & sterilisation of surrounding land.
- human health effects, already documented by the Australian Doctors for the Environment & the National Toxins Network. While the local mining company (Dart Energy) suggests they will not use fracking until the initial, largely untried, method has failed, significant toxins will be released in any case with potential effects on the tank water the local community relies on.

- inadequate plans for disposal of contaminated soil & water. Dart Energy has already unsuccessfully offered the contaminated water to a local Council & is apparently trying to offload it for wetting down the Kooragang coal mountains, where it will inevitably find its way into the Hunter River.
- human rights. For the first time in modern Australia, coal seam gas mining is threatening an infringement of the legal rights of property owners on what is shaping up to be a massive scale. Once gas is discovered under their properties, people seem to have no legal recourse to prevent destruction of their land or their life styles. They cannot live with the noise, the stress, the constant lights, the air contamination, the increased traffic or the health effects – but they cannot sell their properties because of significant devaluation.

Little wonder the Government is facing civil rebellion on an unprecedented scale unless it acts quickly to regulate an out of control industry. The fact that coal seam gas miners in this State have been given a five year royalty free period not only adds insult to injury, it provides an incentive to cut corners where there are already no Government guarantees of community safety.

Yours sincerely,

September 1, 2011