

**Submission
No 326**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

Name: Mr Daryl Dutton
Organisation: Upper Hunter Shire Council
Date received: 9/09/2011

Contact Name: Murray James
Contact No:
Our Ref:

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6 September, 2011

General Purpose Standing Committee No 5
Legislative Council
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Preliminary Submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry (General Purpose Standing Committee No 5) into Coal Seam Gas

The following preliminary submission is made to the inquiry into Coal Seam Gas being undertaken by the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5.

As a result of a number of companies indicating their intention to explore for coal seam gas in the Upper Hunter Shire, and the subsequent anxiety and resistance of the community to this sector of the mining industry, Upper Hunter Shire Council resolved to undertake investigations in an effort to determine the impacts of coal seam gas exploration and extraction on the environment and local communities.

In July 2011 Councillors and senior staff visited sites in the Gunnedah/Narrabri region to view first hand the infrastructure associated with the industry.

In August a tour of the Roma/Dalby region was conducted to gauge the impacts of Queensland's well established gas fields on local areas and communities.

As well as further site visits Councillors were able to meet with a number of local landowners, some of whom had CSG infrastructure on their properties, local elected members, representatives of the local communities including business communities and industry representatives.

Council's aim was to meet with as many stakeholders as possible, from both sides of the debate, in an effort to gain an objective and balanced perspective of the impacts and benefits associated with the industry.

Upper Hunter Shire Council will also be holding a two day public forum on 5 & 6 September 2011 in an effort to gain further knowledge of the industry and listen to the concerns of the local communities.

It is proposed that the forum will cover many issues including the cumulative impacts of the coal mining and coal seam gas industries, economic impacts, environmental issues, impacts on local infrastructure, land use conflicts, health issues and the future direction of the Upper Hunter Shire.

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All correspondence to:
General Manager
Upper Hunter Shire Council
P.O Box 208, Scone NSW 2337

Telephone:
Scone Office - 6540 1100
Merriwa Office - 6548 2109
Murrurundi Office - 6546 6205

Email:
council@upperhunter.nsw.gov.au
Website:
www.upperhunter.nsw.gov.au

Upper Hunter Shire Council generally supports the submission of the Local Government & Shires Association to the legislative Council Inquiry into coal seam gas and proposes to provide a further submission to the inquiry upon conclusion of its investigations and the public forum.

Council is expected to consider its position following its four (4) months of detailed examination and consideration of this matter, at its next ordinary meeting of Council on 26 September 2011.

Council will be in a position to finalise its submission to your Committee following that meeting and therefore respectfully requests your concurrence to make those further submissions for consideration.

Upper Hunter Shire Council has given significant time and resources to its consideration of this matter and it has been unfortunate that your due date of formal submission is prior to Council being in a reasonable position to finalise its views, though imminent.

Your concurrence therefore for submission within the next month would be respectfully appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Daryl Dutton
GENERAL MANAGER