

**Submission
No 644**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5
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Dear Sir

'No Thanks' to Coal Seam Gas Extraction in the Southern Highlands

I am writing to express my opposition to coal seam gas extraction in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales.

Coal seam gas - the packaging sounds pretty ~ cleaner fuel, less greenhouse gas, dinky little wells, etc. But beware the monster in lamb's clothing. Humans have a long history of rushing in on An Apparently Good Thing, pretending it's the panacea to our problems (but, in truth, to make the fastest buck), only to discover in a few years/decades/centuries, that people are dying. If only we had *Realised the Risks, Given it More Thought and A Lot More Analysis and Science or Asked People with No Vested Interest*. Need I mention most of the brilliant inventions of the past 200 years? Coal fired anything, asbestos, nuclear waste, most forms of mining, nicotine, poorly thought out water catchment, de-forestation, thalidomide, plastic and 10 million other things that we're now having to clean up, bury, compensate, re-think - and all of which have a detrimental effect on the viability of humans on this planet. Let's have a minute's silence for Japan and the devastation wrought by earthquake - a force of Nature, you say. Yes, but how much worse was it made by the Fukushima nuclear reactors badly placed on a fault line. Ooops, those eager beaver humans again. Glad it's not our back yard, aren't you! Please give this considerable thought in your enquiry. We need a very independent and very thorough investigation of this type of industry and its deadly chemicals before the first seam is fracked in NSW.

Please consider:

Water in the Southern Highlands - would you like to feel responsible for the pollution of the water in the Sydney catchment? Or even of a few tens of thousands of people who live in the fragile area of the Southern Highlands? Our aquifers are fragile, not carved in granite. There is a lot of sandstone here. Damaging and polluting aquifers, ground water, reducing the water table? The Central Tablelands and Southern Highlands have just come out of seven years of drought. (We think we're out but we didn't get much winter rain.) We don't have much water as it is. What if the Wollondilly and Wingecaribbee rivers were undrinkable? Unfit for any human activity? Think of the cost of piping water from somewhere unpolluted to every centre of rural population in NSW whose water

started exploding out of their taps, causing exotic cancers and killing off the residents and their livestock?

Contaminated Water - Getting rid of the poisonous water produced by the process. Where to put it? Back down the seam to continue the job of polluting aquifer? Into another big hole somewhere to pollute another liveable area?

Carcinogenic Chemicals used in Fracking – unbelievable that governments would knowingly allow cancer-causing agents to be injected anywhere near a human population – but they have. In the US and Queensland. But please don't do it here in NSW or the Southern Highlands. You wouldn't want to come for that winter weekend away or send your kids to our posh schools, would you? And why would you hurry down here to look at drill heads, processing facilities, pipelines, compressor stations? Why can't coal seam gas companies find a process which doesn't completely stuff the place for anyone else? It's probably more expensive!

Population expansion in rural areas - The Southern Highlands has been under attack these last few years from just about everybody – sand quarries, coal mining, coal seam gas, second airports. The reason is clear – we're on a great big expressway and only two hours from somewhere that matters, so transport is easy and relatively cheap. But that's not good enough – if State (and Federal) Governments, want to encourage people out of in the big cities, to expand rural areas and small country towns, we, the poor bastards who invest our futures, our superannuation, set up businesses, exchange city salaries for paltry ones, and give up metropolitan facilities to move to rural areas MUST have some sort of guarantee that you, the government, won't then rip the carpet from under the value of our homes and make us drink noxious chemicals.

Mining Rights over Land - And it's an extraordinary world where a farming family can break their backs and ploughs for generations, or even a city slicker make a tree-change (reference Population Expansion in Rural Areas above!) to feel the land beneath his/her feet, only to discover that they only own the top soil! And some Tom, Dick or Harry Mr Mining Company can come along and have a look underneath and there's not a damn thing that the rightful owner, who pays the purchase price, his rates and taxes, can do about it.

Have a look at the top banner on our Shire Council's website <http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/>.

Making the Southern Highlands A Better Place to Live! Don't those people look happy. Please bear us in mind when you go about your enquiry into Coal Seam Gas.

Yours faithfully

Sara J. Green