

**Submission  
No 607**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

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Groundwater is spread widely beneath the surface of the Australian continent and major sedimentary basins lie beneath 60 per cent of the surface. Groundwater initially supported settlement particularly in the drier regions of the continent. I was a partner in a farm enterprise that used Great Artesian Basin water, it was the lifeline of the district. Our bore had to be put down 1,900 feet and through various aquifer layers. These were carefully sealed off and inspected to ensure the job was adequate to preserve the groundwater. In my view adequate supervision when these water levels are penetrated through coal seam gas mining is not undertaken according to current reports. In the near future food security will be an enormous problem. Water security is essential to ensure food security. I argue that these matters, groundwater purity and food security go hand-in-hand and contribute to ensuring social order, for if people are hungry there is a groundwork laid for social unrest. Historically, Australian authorities aimed for food security with ensuring that there were free settlers to farm the agricultural land. Even today the water supplies of farmers must be secured. A major finding of the thesis I have recently completed and is currently being examined (UNSW Sociology and Anthropology Depts) is that farmers are concerned about the security of their water supply as mining of various forms increases and water supplies are required by the mining enterprises are not closely monitored and controlled as they have been in the past.

My recommendation for action is that coal seam gas mining enterprises must be closely monitored. All drilling and opening of aquifers must ensure that water sources are sealed off and not contaminated. From what I understand fracking work to entail it is not compatible with ensuring that water tables are carefully controlled and monitored to facilitate their sustainability into the future.