

Submission
No 745

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 5/09/2011

Partially Confidential

I have grave concerns about the Coal Seam Gas mining industry, which has been expanding at a rapid rate in this country virtually unchecked for its impact on the environment, communities and our agricultural industries.

My chief concern is the potential environmental contamination and subsequent health concerns in people as a result of this industry.

Potential pollution of ground water and its overall impact on the Great Artesian Basin through the hydraulic fracturing process is something not to be taken lightly. Not only are many of the chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing not fully disclosed by companies, but almost all known chemicals and additives used in the process are untested for their impact on water, soil and air pollution.

The disposal of waste-water or fracturing fluid, after a well is fractured is also of deep concern. There are many potential dangers for surface water and soil contamination through disposal ponds that leak (and where chemicals evaporate into the air) or through dumping of chemicals into waterways illegally. Is there any safe way of disposing of such chemicals? I personally don't believe so. Some examples of these water contamination problems include the discharge of treated 'waste' water by

Eastern Star Gas into a creek in the Pilliga; location of CSG wells on the floodplain at Casino; exploratory drilling near Woronora Dam in water catchment areas of Sydney and the Illawarra; drilling near the Tomago sandbeds water catchment area in the Hunter; spillage of waste water leading to extensive tree death in the Pilliga; deliberate discharge of saline water leading to pollution event near Broke; native animal deaths at drill ponds in the Pilliga.

Our environment is something that sustains us and we should not treat it with such disregard. I fear for the long-term health of people and the environment, the affect on our agricultural industry and food production through the destructive processes involved in coal seam gas mining.

I request:

1. A full moratorium on all forms of coal seam gas drilling until the environmental, social and health impacts have been rigorously and independently assessed.
2. Coal seam gas exploration and mining to be made subject to all relevant environmental legislation, including the native vegetation and water management laws.
3. The provision of standing to ensure that the community has full legal

rights to challenge and enforce environmental laws under which coal seam gas companies are operating.

4. The provision of a right in the Petroleum (Onshore) Act to allow landholders to refuse consent for coal seam gas exploration or production on their land.
5. A prohibition on coal seam gas exploration and mining in important bushland, valuable farmland, groundwater aquifers, residential areas and public lands.
6. A requirement that all chemicals used in coal seam gas drilling or fracking must be assessed by the chemical regulator for use for that purpose before being approved for use.