

**Submission
No 708**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

Name: Mr Philip Greenwood

Date received: 6/09/2011

Submission to the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 Inquiry into Coal Seam Gas

As the owner of a property adjacent to the approved CSG development in the Gloucester valley, I have grave concerns about the impact of CSG mining on: the property rights of landowners; rural communities; farmland; and remnant natural areas.

CSG mining developments in NSW, which are not subject to fundamental environment protection controls including the Native Vegetation Act 2003 and the Water Management Act 2000, present a major threat to natural areas through extensive clearing and fragmentation of native bushland and corridors on freehold and public land including State Conservation Areas.

The fragmentation of farmland by enclosed well sites and networks of access roads will have major impacts on farm operations, productivity and value. Property values are diminished and options for re-sale lost from the time when exploration licences are issued.

From my experience with CSG exploration on neighbouring properties and with the approvals process applied to the Gloucester CSG development, I have no confidence in the adequacy of the current legal and regulatory framework to properly assess the impacts of CSG developments or to apply controls that would minimise those impacts.

In light of the actual and potential impacts of CSG mining development in NSW and the inadequacy of the current legal and regulatory framework I urge the Committee to recommend the following measures:

- A full moratorium be applied on all forms of coal seam gas drilling until the environmental, social and health impacts have been rigorously and independently assessed.
- Coal seam gas exploration and mining be made subject to all relevant environmental legislation, including the native vegetation and water management laws.
- 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.
- 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.
- A prohibition on coal seam gas exploration and mining in areas of high conservation value, on productive farmland, through significant groundwater aquifers, near residential areas and on all public lands.
- 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.

P W Greenwood

6 September 2011