

**Submission
No 403**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS – GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO 5

Dear Sirs

I make this submission,, as the owner of a farm in the Southern Highlands, in response to the current inquiry relating to the potentially deleterious effect of coal seam gas exploration and possible extraction in our region.

It is incontestable that the effects of these processes are not controllable in all the circumstances in which the Coal and Gas Industry potentially intends to use them. The harmful effects of the processes are numerous but are of particular concern in relation to their effect on water systems. The Southern Highlands – which is slated for massive coal and gas exploration and, in all likelihood, extractive activity – is a very beautiful, highly fragile and agriculturally productive region. Its streams and water courses are linked to larger rivers which, in a number of cases, are linked to important sources of water in respect of the Sydney area itself. The aquifers in the area are of enormous importance to the ecology of the region and beyond.

The Coal and Gas Industry, itself, admits that it can give no guarantees as to the safety of its processes. It has not been able to make any convincing distinction between the risks associated with the industry in the United States (where a number of negative consequences have been caused by the same extraction methods) and what is proposed in this country, including in the Southern highlands. In such circumstances it would seem reckless in the extreme to allow these activities to take place.

We, who live in the area, are horrified by the overwhelming haste to push forward coal gas exploration and the unwillingness to face facts, currently being demonstrated by the state government. The people of NSW share our chagrin and there is little doubt that their anger at the powerlessness that they are being made to feel will ultimately manifest itself in future elections. The government is giving the appearance of denying farmers and other citizens any sense of fairness of treatment. The attempts by the government to control the anger and to side-track the objections of the people of this state seems flagrant and is entirely unacceptable.

Yours Faithfully

Anthony Abrahams