

**Submission
No 198**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

The activities of the coal seam gas mining companies are dangerous to both people and environment and are not welcome or necessary anywhere. We should not be trying to cater for gross overconsumption by Australians, but instead be looking to train our population to think differently about their 'needs', use less of everything and to take responsibility for their consumption and activities. The only sensible way forward is to find non-finite, non-fossil, non-greenhouse-gas-emitting fuels for our future, to reduce what we think we need, and to use what we need to cautiously and mindfully. It doesn't matter if the solutions are not politically or economically expedient. What is the point of an economy or a political system if our lives are unlivable because of climatic change and industrial damage?

We as residents of the NSW Sthn Highlands (near Mittagong) are raising a young family and working a small holding on 15 acres where we take every responsibility for our land and environment as well as the broader country and globe. We grow our own organic food, use our vehicles as little as possible, do everything by hand, and have even built our own solar passive house out of local and sustainable low energy materials and we are appalled to learn that our whole way of life and beliefs are under threat due to the greed and thoughtlessness of others. I don't mean to suggest that everyone has it within their means to grow their own food, or own enough land to support themselves but every single person can tighten up their act a little, and in their own small way prevent the so-called 'need' for more planetary devastation. Our energy and resources should be focused on developing our ability to take responsibility for ourselves, not on further trashing our land.

If miners use our land or the land around us (we border onto Crown Land and commercial grazing on all sides) we won't be able to farm without a bore (an irresponsible use of water which we have so far managed to avoid), we won't be able to use our dam due to pollution from wash off from the neighbours' paddocks should they be mined), our children won't be able to walk the 1km to the bus stop to go to school due to massive traffic on our tiny dirt road, our cows will be too stressed (by gas burning off at well sites, tree felling and service traffic) to give milk, our grass and vegetables will be rained on by acid rain or polluted dust, and our house and land will lose most of its value (because let's face it, would you want to buy our house under these circumstances?) so we would be unlikely to be able to relocate and start again. There are two creeks running through our property both of which flow into the Nattai which feeds into the Sydney water supply, and both of which we treat with the utmost respect. There is not an inch of our land that we don't use productively or are in the process of developing into productive land. We are not registered as commercial agricultural producers but I would be prepared to say that the land is just as valuable for the way it is tended. I have personally created the top 6 inches of soil in our paddocks, vegetable patch and orchards through years of careful husbandry. There is no way that that will ever be good again after a mining company has covered it with hard core and poured polluted water all over it - whatever their contractual obligations.

Our immediate area is known to contain important aboriginal sacred sites and is home to three rare glossy black cockatoos, echidnas, wombats, large mobs of kangaroos, wallabies, a rare marshland habitat, lyre birds and hundreds of other native birds and small animals as well as pink flowering iron barks, the rare slipper orchid and other plant species of interest. Our area is famous for its small scale productive farms, its tourism, wineries, state forests, national parks, purity of water and picturesque landscape. All of these will be harmed by massive scale CSG extraction. Even without the threat of fracking chemicals, the sheer scale of physical disruption is too damaging and dangerous to allow to proceed.

The 20 year relationship between CSG companies and landowners suggested by current thinking will have impacts more in the region of 5 human generations, but will in all likelihood annihilate native wildlife in the area for ever.

There have been many many precedents of poorly operating mines (Queensland), dangerous practices (Pilliga), and careless risk assessments (Mullaley). Even if the mines were harmless when operating properly, accidents and human error will always happen. But the real outrage is that these mining companies are known to be harmful and yet are exempt from the laws that keep the rest of us in line.