

**Submission  
No 862**

## **INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS**

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## NSW PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS SUBMISSION

I am the owner of a 100 acre property in the NSW Southern Highlands which is engaged in beef production. I believe that development of coal seam gas production in the area would be detrimental to the economy of NSW for many reasons. I will not reiterate the many general arguments against coal seam gas but concentrate on two points particular to the 'Southern Highland.

1. The Southern Highlands is an area of particular scenic beauty which is expanding economically as a result of tourism (mainly domestic but also international) and the move of 'baby boomers' from the city and suburbs to the area. This has helped alleviate some of the problems facing Australia at the moment , namely:
  - The lack of jobs in country areas for the younger generation with resultant migration of that generation to the cities.
  - The increasing strain on inner city resources and the escalation in city real estate prices.
  - The negative impact on international tourism as a result of the high value of the Australian dollar.
2. The Southern Highlands is a relatively small but significant primary producer of beef, lamb and agricultural products, in particular wine which is now facing difficulties due to the high Australian dollar. Most farms in the area are dependent on bore water, needing a stable and pollution free aquafer. The ongoing very high inflation in food prices is posing a significant problem for the world. Misguided destruction of agricultural land (such as that turned over into production of bio-fuels) has been shown to be economically detrimental overall.

International experience has demonstrated that production of coal seam gas in the Southern Highlands would be extremely detrimental at a local level insofar as the infrastructure required would damage the scenic beauty of the area and be a threat to the local aquafer, negating theb economic and social benefits outlined above.

It could be argued that the area is relatively small and that the negative effects are inconsequential. I would argue that the potential production of coal seam gas is inconsequential on a national and international level and the energy industry is better served by its development of more efficient conventional wells which still only recover about 40% of oil in place. I would hope that the 'NS government will develop a policy which benefits the overall community of NSW rather than that of a few individual and foreign companies.

