

**Submission
No 264**

INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

Name: Mr Glen Walker and Mrs Michelle Walker

Date received: 07/09/2011

Wednesday 7th Sept 2011

Dear Sir / Madam,

We oppose coal seam gas for the huge risks it poses to our surface water and underground aquifers:

Enterprises in our local area include – world renowned thoroughbred studs, cattle dairies, olive farms, pecan farms, vineyards, commercial beef cattle, extensive Lucerne hay production, apiarists and various other enterprises, which sell at a range of markets from local farmers markets all the way to export markets.

Every farming enterprise is very dependent on clean reliable water requirements for:

Irrigation

Stock

Household

Our prime agricultural land plus the underground water is everything to our farming enterprise in our valley. The growing population of Australia & global demand for food does make food security a major priority.

The potential risk of contamination and poisoning is totally unacceptable, particularly gas extracting if the mining companies engage in "fracking" with the accompanying chemicals.

Methane gas is an odourless, colourless, gas that is extremely flammable. Not only the gas but also the increase dust from these operations could cause serious health problems. And the process of drilling & extracting gas involves heavy machinery.

The economic and social implications of CSG activities: noise, dust, potential gas leaks & the unsightly drilling rigs would be totally unacceptable. The access roads dividing small paddocks into even smaller paddocks would affect machinery movements such as ploughing, seeding, hay making (this has a number of movements within itself) – mow, rake, than rake again, bale, pickup, as well as get in the road of stock movements / rotations & watering.

Wollemi National Park - is part of the World Heritage Listed Greater Blue Mountains National Park and is home to the Wollemi Pine. The Park surrounds and divides our valleys. Martindale, Widden and particularly Baerami Creek are long narrow valleys – largely no more than one kilometre wide, with National Park on each side. The economics of scale in deveioping a gas field within these narrow confines needs close scrutiny. One must wonder if the miners intend extracting gas from under the National Park in order to justify the development of their Exploratory License.

Local roads in the valley are narrow & require cars to get off the road when passing. The increase in traffic movements particularly trucks will cause a risk of serious accident or possible death. It is also important to note that these roads are used as school bus routes.

The infrastructure associated with coal seam gas production such as pipelines, compressor stations and well heads are all unacceptable infringements on anyone's property or lifestyle. Land values - As soon as coal seam gas mining is mentioned in an area land values can expect to fall

and often more – that is if you could find a buyer. No one wants to buy land which has unsightly gas wells or leaking wells.

The EDO has called for "Mandatory Buffer Zones" to exclude any mining activities within 1 km to rivers, wetlands and water courses. This has also been suggested from conservation groups for the same around National Parks. If a Strategic Land Use Policy is forecast to identify prime agricultural land which will be excluded from mining activity.

At a coal seam gas info meeting which was held at the local community hall at Baerami on Sat 16th July, which was attended by approx 200 locals, from around the district, none in favour of coal seam gas. Mr Martin Rush the Mayor of Muswellbrook Shire, asked the Planet Gas CEO (Ian Halstead) to withdraw the gas company from the area because they did not have a "social licence". Mr Halstead told all of us that he would go to directors of the board & let Mr Rush know in 2 weeks, but to this date no response.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham MLC was also at this meeting & his call for a 12 month moratorium on coal seam gas, was met by **cheers & claps which was quite deafening.**

Please except this submission as disapproval on behalf of us & our family & the feelings of the Baerami community.

Yours Sincerely

Glen & Michelle Walker