

Submission  
No 314

## INQUIRY INTO COAL SEAM GAS

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Submission to "Inquiry into Coal Seam Gas" 1. of 3

(General Purpose Standing Committee No.5)

From: Linton + Robyn Smith.

(Local farmers)

We address your terms of reference in three areas:-

- Prime Agricultural land
- Water +
- Regulation.

### Prime Agricultural land

Australia has very limited prime agricultural land.

In our districts of Baerami Creek, Widdlen Valley + Kerabec (in the

South Western parts of the Upper Hunter) this prime agricultural land exists along the water courses and is narrow in nature.

We already have the river/creeks, roads + railway line dissecting this prime agricultural land, + it is inconceivable that pipelines + access roads for coal seam gas + there further dissecting of prime agricultural land would allow us to remain economically

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viable. A contemporary land use policy is desperately needed.

### Water

We only exist here because of the underground water. Coal Seam Gas puts this natural + renewable resource at an unacceptable risk of permanent harm.

Common sense would dictate that short term gains should not put at risk long-term resources such as water + food security. Engineers claim the risks are minimal but other jurisdictions (eg. Queensland + U.S.A.) have examples of unacceptable problems that are not fixable. We should err on the side of caution (especially when there are other less dangerous sources of energy).

### Regulation

If this industry is to exist, then regulation needs to be developed that force the coal seam gas companies to respect the land rights of the property owners with adequate compensation for losses caused. Full assessment of environmental and commercial impacts on all parties before commencement of each stage. Remedial policy for problems has to be stipulated before starting.

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World best practice has to be used, with independent audits at pre-determined stages. These companies have to be held to account & made socially responsible. A good starting point would be to make all expiring leases subject to the new regulations (i.e. not roll over, but re-issue).

A concerned farmer